

## 2019-20 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. Our program strives to foster a sense of self-sufficiency while working with our students by providing advocacy support and academic coaching to allow students an easier transition when navigating their educational trajectories. 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 create o 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**

- Sharon Quach, Program Services Coordinator, Guardian Scholars Program
- Jose Milan, Retention Specialist, Guardian Scholars Program
- Melanie Espinueva+Aure, EOPS Counselor/Faculty Coordinator

## **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 their educational achievement to graduate or transfer during their academic pursuits at Skyline college. The GSP program has dedicated staff members, Program Services Coordinators (PSC) and 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, most 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-on-1 introductions via email. Additionally, a comprehensive list of self-disclosed foster youth is obtained from the Skyline College PRIO and Financial Aid department. For new students not referred via warm handoff; each student is contacted via email 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 department and agencies.

### **Academic Development**

- Each student enrolled in the Guardian Scholar is required to complete a mid-semester progress report. Students earning 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 may need additional support in. Students with a C or above, will meet with the GSP Retention Specialist to continue to ensure they have the resources necessary to continue passing their courses accordingly.

- 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 submission of Mid progress reports.
- Beginning Spring 2020 GSP program hired one Student Ambassador and Student Assistant to support with the development of student-led activities and programming.

### **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 explored. If FAFSA is incomplete or gaps are determined in their financial aid packages, the student is referred to a 1-on-1 meeting (via email or phone call) with a financial aid representative. Students are followed up with within one week for the meeting to ensure all financial aid gaps have been addressed.
- Scholarship & Textbook assistance: Since Fall 2017 the GSP program partnered with Pivotal to work with students to provide scholarship for full-time and part-time eligible students. 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. This partnership is ongoing.
  - SMCCD Scholarship: Recipients of the scholarship funding receive funding anywhere between \$1,000- \$1,500 through financial aid to be disbursed to the student directly. This year we awarded four GSP students with the SMCCD scholarship award.
  - Pivotal Scholarship: Recipients of the Pivotal scholarship can be awarded approximately \$3,000 - \$5,000 per year (determined by part-time/ full-time enrollment). Additionally, each student provided funds to receive 1-on-1 tutoring and mentorship to support them through the academic school year.
  - John Burton Book Fund: Recipients of the John Burton Book Fund receive funding up to \$200 per academic year, to purchase textbooks from the Skyline College bookstore. The John Burton Advocates for Youth have allotted 15 students to utilize these funds. Students who are not EOPS or Promise Scholars eligible are first to receive these funds. This year we had 8 recipients of the book fund who were able to get subsidized financial support towards textbooks and school supplies.
- 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/ Career Development**

- The Guardian Scholars Program coordinator send weekly CANVAS post to promote 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: what can I do with my major, components of selecting a viable career, and housing right advocacy workshops.

## **Emotional Development**

- Historically, foster youth have a history of mental and emotional disorders such as chronic depression, anxiety, PTSD and a range of other coexisting conditions that can significantly impact their success within their college courses. To mitigate some of the coexisting conditions, GSP has developed a partnership with Skyline College's Personal Counseling (formerly Psychological Services). Counselors are located at the Health Center to serve foster youth students in crisis. This Spring 2020 GSP has worked with the Health and Wellness department to provide GSP a support group that will take place once services transition to in person support. Additionally, students who disclose the need of additional assistance are referred to the Disability Resources Center in order to evaluate their eligibility for appropriate accommodations.

## 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 the lack of funding the Guardian Scholars Program had 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. In the beginning of Spring 2019, GSP students were allotted 1 meal card for every 10 school days to be utilized at our on campus Pacific Dining common. Textbook assistance from the program had been discontinued (SP19) and grab and go snack are now sparse as they are provided by community donation. Despite these changes, along with the impact of shelter in place due to COVID-19 our students are now getting Safeway gift cards mailed to them as an alternative to support with food security through the Skyline Food Grant. Additionally, Skyline has the support of John Burton Youth Advocates who's kindly offer to support several of our GSP students with a \$200 book fund annually on a first come first serve basis to offset the cost of textbooks and school supplies. GSP students who are also a part of EOPS or Promise Scholars Program receive book support from those respective programs.
- Staff transitions have taken place within our program year 19-20, the program has had a new Program Services Coordinator and Retention Specialist come in to support the students.

#### External changes

- Due to the extreme cost of living in the surrounding area, foster youth students are becoming homeless due to evictions often time leading to unstable housing environments. Due to these extreme financial disadvantages many foster youth students discontinue their education, despite having a maximized financial aid package, GSP and other campus resources. The vulnerable population of students we serve often make difficult decisions about continuing their educational pursuits at Skyline College because they cannot afford to live comfortably and sustainably in the area. Additionally, San Mateo County has seen a significant decrease in AB12 youth (extended foster care) in the county, due to their placement out of the county that are more affordable, such as Fresno, Sonoma County, or out of state location.

## 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

PSLOs were assessed for the three year cycle this 19-20 program year. What we found was that refining our PSLOs from the previous year captured our metric outcomes more strategically. The changes in the PSLOS are as followed:

#### **PSLO 1 Persistence: Students enrolled in GSP will enroll in the next subsequent semester (ONLY ACTIVE PSLO to be assessed FA19)**

- Our previous learning outcome had a percentage affiliated with the success criterion. This term we wanted to assess whether students were maintaining a 2.00 GPA standing and completing at least 67% of their courses from fall to spring. By removing the 80% forecasted rate that was previously in the learning outcome, we can accurately capture the percentage extrapolated from our data to encompass the percentage of persistency among our students from the beginning of the program to any withdraws from semester to semester. Thus allow us to get a comprehensive overview of the retention rates from a year to year analysis. This semester our focus was on strengthening support services to help mitigate barriers that impact withdraws.
- We decided the success criterion to capture persistency was going to base on two measures (1) whether a student is able to maintain a GPA of 2.00 or above and (2) if the completion course was 67% or higher. 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. This 2018/2019 academic year, 70% of GSP student persisted from Spring to Fall compared to the College-wide Non-Guardian Scholars sample group which persisted at 69.5%. In the upcoming fall we hope to disaggregate the data even more to capture the retention rate.

#### **PSLO 2 Educational Goal Achievement: Guardian Scholar Program students will graduate with a certificate, an associate degree and/ or transfer within three years.**

- Our previous learning outcome for 18-19 had a targeted timeframe that measured degree attainment within a four-year timeframe. In order to better align our PSLO with Skyline College's ISLOs, "Get in.... get through and Get Out.... on Time" component we get to evaluate this metric in a 3-

year cycle to more accurately provide us gaps in our deliverables while honing in on retention strategies that could encourage students to achieve their educational goal in a timelier fashioned.

- To address low degree attainment as outlined in the 2015 Student Equity Plan, the Guardian Scholars Program developed the following Program Service Learning Outcome -- Guardian Scholar Program Students will complete the requirements to graduate with a certificate, an associate degree and/or transfer, within three years. As of April 2020, six GSP students, roughly 11% of the GSP population will either be graduating with a certificate, an associate degree, or are anticipating to transfer to a four-year institution by Fall 2020. Of the six students who applied to transfer five students, roughly 9% of the GSP population was able to do so within a three-year time, frame. This is a significant milestone for our program participants who were able to do so in the three-year time period. GSP staff are extremely proud of the Guardian Scholars students striving for higher education attainment and want to acknowledge the impact of retention efforts in motivating students forward in achieving post-secondary success. In the upcoming term we would like to work on increasing the number of students who will be transferring and supporting them to do so efficiently within a three-year time frame.

**PSLO 3 Financial Aid. 100% of Guardian Scholars will have completed their financial aid application each academic year.**

- The last PSLO remained the same from last year as we recognize the important for our student to get proper financial support during their academic studies. Our goal is to encourage, track, and support our students to apply every aid year to ensure they maximize their unmet need during their time at Skyline. A GSP student financial aid package plays a significant role in determining whether a they will persist through their studies, as this population of student has benefitted greatly from the financial support given to them through CHAFEE, Pell, Cal Grants, and the CCPG. We want our students to continue to apply annual therefore allowing them to see which grants they can utilize sufficiently to mitigate any financial insecurity they may experience during their time at Skyline.
- In aid year 2018/2019 FAFSA Completion as of April 2018 revealed that 70% of students in the GSP program have completed their FAFSA. Upon investigation of the other 30% 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. Additionally, 75% of Guardian Scholars program participants successfully applied for aid. According to the 2018-2019 Financial Aid Data Summary Report in the year of 2017-2018, Skyline College had 8 total foster care students receive the Chafee grant. The total funding amount allocated towards CHAFEE amounted to \$32,500. Within a one-year time frame Skyline College saw a 62.5% increase in the number of CHAFEE recipients for the year of 2018-2019



servicing a total of 13 foster care students total. After reviewing the funding amount allocated towards CHAFEE for the aid year of 2018-2019 Skyline College increased its total funding amount to \$50,000, the change in funding is marked by a \$17,500 increase from the previous year. Through financial literacy workshop and widespread outreach efforts the Guardian Scholars program was able to increase the number of student recipients who have received the Chafee grant.

- For the aid year 2019/2020, Financial Aid APP data revealed that 94% of students from the previous 2018/2019 year applied for aid the following year. The other 6% of students 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. The percentage of students who applied for aid increased by at least 24% from the previous year with the support of outreach and the financial aid department we were able to ensure our students continue to apply annually.

### 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**

Through our examination of persistency from term to term we were able to capture the changes in enrollment more accurately as we are examining enrollment changes that may occur mid-year. The GSP program maintained a relatively steady rate of persistency throughout the previous years and it has for the most part stayed in the 70% percent tile range. During the first half of the year the program was operating without a Retention Specialist, thus impacting the overall retention support that could have allowed for a higher persistency rate. Additionally, research shows that there are several barriers that foster youth face that can either encourage or prevent students from pursuing their education, this is heavily influenced by the lack of stable transportation assistance and food insecurity. The implementation of food vouchers and transportation assistance to students are key contributing factors impacting the steady rate of persistency. Additionally, each is required to complete a mid-semester progress report to track their progression within the course every term. This has allowed for early interventions including tutoring, faculty assistance and resource referral (I.e. Disability Resource Center), to counteract students struggling in courses. Next term we'd like to focus our on retention so we can encourage our students to continue to be persistent from Fall to Spring and Fall to Fall.

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.

Currently the Retention Specialist provides an introduction email of GSP students in their courses with a variety of reasons they can contact him, should they need support with a GSP student in their course. Mid-progress reports are then handed to student for them to complete and bring back to GSP staff personnel during their second meeting. Additionally, we 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 Chromebooks 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.

**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**

GSP has not done a CPR but would like to move forward with assessing our current PSLOs and objectives utilizing APPs.

#### **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**

##### **Associated Objectives**

[1160-Career Exploration and Workforce Development Skills](#)

[1159-Expand Student Leadership Development](#)

[1158-Promote Transfer Going Culture](#)

[1161-Secure Funding Stream for Programmatic Functioning](#)