BERKELEY HOPE SCHOLARS
Cultivating Community & Academic Success on College Campuses

Cal Independent Scholars Network Class of 2015
What is BHS?

• Academic retention program at UC Berkeley providing support and resources to current/former foster youth or orphaned students.

• Goal to create safe and welcoming community in which students can thrive and achieve academic success
Program History

- Founded in 2005 by Housing Staff
- No support services on campus for FY
- Meeting called for key campus stakeholders to strategize
- Volunteer donations
- Completely donor funded program
Who We Serve

• Student is currently in foster care or emancipated from foster care within five years of admission to the university,

• Parent(s) died before student turned 18 and student completed high school within five years of admission to the university

AND

• Student qualifies as "Independent Student Status" under federal financial aid guidelines
Demographic

- 150 served/60 current
- 70% current/former FY
- 80% students of color
- 100% Pell recipients
- 98% 1ST generation
- Nearly 60% have GPAS > 3.0
- >95% retention/graduation rate
Program Mission & Objectives

Mission
- To support each student in reaching educational, personal and career goals through referrals to campus and community partners.

Objectives
- Create a safe and trusting community space
- Provide access to academic and personal support resources
- Facilitate academic enrichment and career opportunities
- Advance “paying it forward” – mandatory participation in community service: and
- Promote self-advocacy and life skills
Program Components

• Mentorship
• Community building events – Course, Workshops, Welcome, Holiday & Grad Celebrations
• Transition Course: Ensuring Success for Foster Youth in Higher Education
• EOP Academic Counseling
• Supplemental financial aid
• Referral to Campus & Community Liaisons – i.e. housing, financial aid, registrar’s office, career center, counseling services
Program Services

• Assistance with unmet financial aid needs, including:
  – Residential Hall/ Apartment Furnishings
  – Books & Supplies
  – Housing – interim, housing deposits
  – iPads/computers and repairs
  – Medical, dental, optometry, wellness
  – Food/meal assistance
  – Emergency funding – ie. travel expenses for funeral
  – Grad school preparation courses
  – Misc. expenses – ie. Fees to replace green card

• Finals Care Packages
• AB194 Priority Enrollment
• Referrals to campus and community resources
Supporting Foster Youth on Campus

- Encourage students to self-identify as current/former foster youth.
- Be sensitive to foster youth experience
- Be consistent in communication
- Connect students with the foster youth program coordinator/director and/or other campus resources
Student Experience
Building Community
Ensuring Success for Foster Youth in Higher Education

- Emphasis on cohort model in 2014
- Community check-ins & check-outs
- Sharing their narrative through technology
- Encourage self-reflection & emotional awareness
Course Overview

• Self-care & wellness
• Time-management & study strategies
• Understanding the research university
• Finances & budgeting
• Identifying shared experiences
• “A Chance in the World” by Steve Pemberton
A Chance in the World
“I am…” Video Presentation
“I really enjoyed the entire class and being able to connect with people on a whole different level. Without the CISN class my ability to believe in myself wouldn't even exist. With the constant support of CISN I was able to keep looking forward and to not give up”
Program Impact

“I feel that this course was helpful in keeping me sane. Through a crazy semester just having a group to express my emotions to who understood what I was going through was truly helpful”