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Helping Former Foster Youth Graduate from College
Campus Support Programs in California and Washington State

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child welfare

Acknowledgments

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Introduction

The economic benefits of a college education are well documented. According to the National Center for Educational Statistics, young adults with at least a bachelor's degree earn significantly more than those with less education, and the gap in median income between college graduates and high school graduates has increased over time. In 2005, 25- to 34-year-olds who had at least a bachelor's degree earned, on average, 61 percent more than those with only a high school diploma or GED (Planty et al., 2007). Although more difficult to quantify, research suggests that graduating from college can also have nonmonetary benefits (Baum & Ma, 2007).

Graduating from college is no less important for young people making the transition out of foster care. Unfortunately, the limited data we have from studies of this population indicate that their college graduation rate is very low. Although estimates of the percentage of foster youth who graduate from college vary depending on the age at which educational attainment is measured, most range from as low as 1 to as high as 11 percent (Emerson, 2006; Pecora et al., 2003; Wolanin, 2005). By comparison, approximately 30 percent of 25- to 29-year-olds in the general population have at least a bachelor's degree (Snyder, Dillow, & Hoffman, 2008).

The lower rate of college graduation among young adults who "aged out" of foster care reflects a combination of factors. First, foster youth are less likely to attend college than other young adults. For example, Courtney et al. (2007) found that approximately 53 percent of 21-year-olds in a nationally representative sample had completed at least one year of college compared with just 30 percent of 21-year-olds who had aged out of foster care.

Lower rates of high school completion explain at least part of this difference (Burley & Halpern, 2001). Based on his review of several studies, Wolanin (2005) estimated that approximately 50 percent of foster youth complete high school by age 18 compared with 70 percent of their nonfoster peers. More recently, Courtney et al. (2007) reported that 77 percent of 21-year-old former foster youth had a high school diploma or GED compared with 89 percent of a nationally representative sample of 21-year-olds.

However, research also suggests that foster youth are less likely to attend college than other young adults even if they have completed high school (Brandford & English, 2004). According to Wolanin's (2005) estimate, approximately 20 percent of the foster youth who graduate from high school attend college compared with 60 percent of high school graduates in the general population. Likewise, Courtney et al. (2007) found that 39 percent of 21-year-old former foster youth in their sample who had a high school diploma or a GED had completed at least one year of college compared with 59 percent of 21-year-olds who had a high school diploma or a GED in a nationally representative sample.

Another factor that contributes to a lower college graduation rate among former foster youth is a lower rate of retention among those who do attend (Wolanin, 2005). That is, when foster youth are able to pursue postsecondary education, they are less likely to persist toward the completion of a degree. For example, Davis (2006) found that 26 percent of the foster care alumni in a 1995 college entry cohort had earned a degree by 2001 compared with 56 percent of their non-foster peers in the Beginning Postsecondary Students (BPS) Longitudinal Survey.[1]

The problem is not that foster youth have less desire to pursue postsecondary education. On the contrary, research suggests that the majority of foster youth have college aspirations (Courtney, Terao, & Bost, 2004; McMillen, Auslander, Elze, White, & Thompson, 2003). However, numerous barriers make it difficult for foster youth to achieve their educational goals

First, the child welfare system has traditionally done a poor job of encouraging foster youth to pursue postsecondary education (Merdinger, Hines, Osterling, & Wyatt, 2005).[2] Many foster youth are not given opportunities to explore their options or are not provided with information about applying to schools (Davis, 2006). This could be because foster youth are not expected to achieve much when it comes to education (Wolanin, 2005) or because child welfare workers and foster parents are not trained to help them navigate the application process.

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[1] The BPS is a study conducted by the National Center on Education Statistics that followed a representative sample of first-time undergraduates from the time they entered college in the fall of 1995 though the spring of 2001 (Berkner, He, & Cataldi, 2002).

[2] Nearly two-thirds of the emancipated foster youth at a four-year university reported that the foster care system did not prepare them very well for college (Merdinger et al., 2005).

Second, even if they have a high school diploma, foster youth may not be prepared for the academic demands of college (Emerson, 2006). This might be the case if frequent school changes disrupted their education (Courtney et al., 2004; Pecora et al., 2005), as often happens when foster care placements are unstable, or if they are tracked into high school courses for the non-college-bound (Wolanin, 2005).

Third, unlike many of their peers, most foster youth cannot depend on their parents or other family members to help them pay for college (Wolanin, 2005). Nor can they turn to their families for emotional support (Emerson, 2006). This, coupled with their lack of independent living skills (Courtney et al., 2001; Merdinger et al., 2005; Wolanin, 2005) and the academic demands of college, can result in former foster youth feeling overwhelmed.

Fourth, under federal financial aid law, all wards or dependents of the court are considered "financially independent," which means that parent or guardian income does not affect their eligibility for financial aid (Emerson, 2006). However, foster youth are often unaware of the financial aid for which they are eligible (Davis, 2006).

Fifth, foster youth are much more likely to exhibit emotional and behavioral problems than their nonfoster peers (McMillen et al., 2005; Shinn, 2006), and this disparity seems to persist into early adulthood (Pecora et al., 2005). These mental health problems may interfere with the ability of former foster youth to succeed in school, particularly if the treatment they were receiving while in care is discontinued after their discharge, an all too common occurrence (Courtney et al., 2005; McMillen & Raghavan, 2009).

Finally, the student services personnel at most postsecondary institutions are not familiar with or prepared to address the unique needs of this population (Emerson, 2006). Even programs that target low-income and first-generation-in-college students were not designed with the specific challenges faced by former foster youth in mind.

To help foster youth pursue postsecondary education and training, Congress amended the Foster Care Independence Act with the Education and Training Voucher (ETV) Program in 2001 This program allows states to provide current and former foster youth with up to $5,000 of assistance each year to cover tuition, room and board, or other education-related costs. Current and former foster youth can continue to receive this educational assistance until they are 23 years old if they

are making satisfactory progress toward the completion of their program and began receiving it by age 21 (Kessler, 2004).

Depending on where they live, current and former foster youth may also be eligible for state-specific programs. Many states, including Alaska, Colorado, Florida, Kentucky, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Oklahoma, Texas, Utah, and West Virginia have tuition waiver programs that allow foster youth to attend publicly funded institutions at no charge or at a significantly reduced rate. Other states, including Alabama, California, Connecticut, Delaware, Georgia, Hawaii, Idaho, Illinois, Iowa, Louisiana, Massachusetts, Missouri, Nevada, New Jersey, North Carolina, Oregon, Rhode Island, South Dakota, Tennessee, Virginia, Washington, and Wisconsin have scholarships or grants that target foster youth (Eilertson, 2002; Spigel, 2004). However, eligibility requirements and the amount of assistance available vary considerably across states.

Not much is known about the impact of the ETV program or state-specific programs on enrollment in postsecondary educational or vocational training programs. Moreover, although addressing the financial barrier to postsecondary education is critical, and may make college a more economically viable option, most of these programs do not address this population's nonfinancial needs.

One notable exception is the growing number of campus support programs for young people making the transition out of foster care.[3] Although each program is unique, they typically provide an array of financial, academic, social/emotional, and logistical (e.g., housing) supports to help former foster youth stay in school and graduate. They are currently concentrated in California or Washington State and are supported, at least in part, by private philanthropy.

More than a decade after the program began in 1998, not much is known about the supports they provide, the young people they serve or their impact on educational outcomes Pontecorvo, El-Askari, and Putnam (2006) examined five "college success" programs by reviewing written reports and by interviewing program staff, program participants, and community stakeholders. In addition to identifying three program models (i.e., the Guardian Scholars campus-based model, the Governor's Scholars "hub" model, and the Renaissance Scholars model, which features some

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[3] We use the generic term "campus support program" except when referring to specific programs.

aspects of both), the researchers reported that former foster youth who participated in these programs experienced higher rates of college retention and graduation than either of two comparison groups (i.e., former foster youth who had not participated in these programs and "disadvantaged" students who had not been in foster care). However, little data were presented to support this claim. In fact, the researchers cited a lack of data on which to base an evaluation as a major problem. They also failed to control for differences between program participants and the comparison groups that might account for the differences in outcomes they observed.

Schultz and Mueller (2008) examined seven scholarship programs that provide financial support and supportive services to former foster youth as part of the Foster Care Alumni Scholarship Benchmarking Network.[4] They used a Web-based survey to collect program-level data as well as individual-level data for the five most recent cohorts of scholarship recipients. Unfortunately, the program managers they surveyed were unable to provide much of the requested data related to academic performance. This limited the researchers' ability to analyze how recipient characteristics or program components were related to academic outcomes.

More recently, the Research and Planning Group of the California Community Colleges examined how community colleges throughout California address the needs of emancipated foster youth (Cooper, Mery, & Rassen, 2008) by (1) interviewing faculty and staff from 12 community colleges and conducting site visits at two; (2) analyzing survey data collected from Foster Youth Liaisons at community colleges; and (3) surveying former foster youth enrolled at 36 community colleges. Although this was not a study of campus support programs per se, two of its findings are nonetheless relevant. First, a lack of resources limits the ability of community colleges to address student needs and engage in outreach activities that could encourage more former foster youth to pursue higher education. Second, none of the community colleges they examined systematically tracks the overall progress of their students or measures outcomes that could be used to assess the effectiveness of their efforts to address student needs.

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[4] Participating programs will contribute data related to their programs and scholarship recipients to a common database. These data will be used to track recipient outcomes and to better understand the factors that either help or hinder their success.

Given our lack of knowledge about these campus support programs and whether they are having a positive effect on retention and graduation rates, a comprehensive impact or summative evaluation is needed. However, this type of evaluation can only proceed after a number of other questions have been addressed. Some of these questions are related to program implementation: What services are being provided? How many former foster youth are being served? In what ways does implementation vary across sites? Others are primarily concerned with whether the program can be meaningfully evaluated at this point in time: Is there an explicit program model? What are the program's goals? Are data being collected (or can they be obtained from other sources) about the provision of services and supports or participant outcomes?

Methodology

We addressed these questions by conducting a study that included two components: telephone interviews with program directors and a Web-based survey of current program participants. Each of these components is described below.

Telephone Interviews with Program Directors

We conducted telephone interviews with directors from each of the 10 campus support programs in California and Washington State that were fully implemented as of the start of the 2006–2007 academic year.[5] Each interview took approximately 45 minutes to one hour to complete. (See the Appendix for a copy of the interview protocol). The interviews were recorded, transcribed and analyzed for major themes. The 10 programs and their institutional affiliations are listed in Table 1.[6]

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[5] Although we refer to all of the individuals we interviewed as program directors, some had different titles. In two cases, we interviewed both the director and another member of the staff.

[6] Two major changes have occurred since we conducted our interviews. First, at the UC Santa Cruz, the Renaissance Scholars Program, which engaged in outreach to foster youth in high schools and community colleges, merged with the Page and Eloise Smith Scholastic Society, which provided supportive services to former wards of the court, to form the Smith Renaissance Society. Second, Seattle University's Fostering Scholars program expanded its target population to include foster youth from outside of King County (Seattle).

Table 1. Programs and Their Institutional Affiliations		
Institutional Affiliation	*Program*	*Established*
Northern California		
California State University, East Bay	Renaissance Scholars	2006–07
San Francisco State University	Guardian Scholars	2005–06
San José State University	Connect, Motivate & Educate Society	2005–06
University of California, Santa Cruz	Smith Renaissance Society	2003–04
Southern California		
California State Polytechnic University, Pomona	Renaissance Scholars	2002–03
California State University, Fullerton	Guardian Scholars	1998–99
Orange Coast Community College	Guardian Scholars	2001–02
University of California, Irvine	Guardian Scholars	2002–03
Washington State		
College Success Foundation	Governor's Scholarship	2002–03
Seattle University	Fostering Scholars	2006–07

Web-based Survey of Current Program Participants

With the knowledge gained from these telephone interviews, we constructed a Web-based survey that asked students about their experiences with and perceptions of the program. The questions were primarily close ended, but some allowed respondents to answer using their own words. (See the Appendix for a copy of the survey instrument.)

We sent an email to each of the program directors we had interviewed containing the survey's URL along with a message explaining the purpose of the survey and how students should proceed if they wanted to complete it. Eight of the 10 program directors distributed this information to

their current participants.[7] A total of 98 students completed the survey, and each received a $25 incentive payment.[8]

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[7] One program director told us that his students did not want to be identified as former foster youth and would not be interested in completing the survey. Another failed to respond to any email or voicemail messages about the survey.

[8] We devised a procedure that allowed us to provide survey respondents with a $25 incentive payment and verify that they were program participants without compromising their confidentiality. Some program directors sent us a master list of current program participants; others sent us a list of current program participants who gave permission for their names to be released. In either case, the lists were stored on secure computers at Chapin Hall to which only staff associated with the project had access. After respondents completed the Web-based survey, they were redirected to a secure Chapin Hall website which asked them to send us an email containing their name and the address to which they wanted the $25 payment to be mailed. The website also explained why their personal information was needed and how it would be kept confidential. Once we verified that a survey respondent was a program participant, we sent the incentive payment to his or her address. This procedure ensured that program directors did not know which participants completed the survey, and that no link was established between respondents' personal information and the survey data.

Findings

Results of Interviews with Program Directors

Common Goals but Cross-Program Variation

Although all of these programs aim to increase opportunities for foster youth to pursue higher education and provide foster youth with the supports they need to succeed in school and graduate, they are quite diverse. Thus, rather than develop a typology similar to the one developed by Pontecorvo et al. (2006), we identified five key dimensions which seemed to capture most of this variation (see Table 2.)[9]

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[9] This list of dimensions is not intended to be exhaustive. Other dimensions could be used to distinguish among programs. However, based on our interviews with the program directors, these dimensions stood out as particularly important in terms of understanding the cross-program variation.

Table 2. Variation across Campus Support Programs along Selected Dimensions

	Campus Based?	Selective?	Scholarship?	Provides Services?	Independent?
Northern California					
California State University, East	YES	NO	YES	YES	YES
San Francisco State University	YES	YES	YES	YES	NO
San José State University	YES	NO	NO	NO	YES
University of California, Santa	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Southern California					
California State Polytechnic	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
California State University,	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Orange Coast Community	YES	YES	YES	NO	YES
University of California, Irvine	YES	NO	HYBRID	YES	NO
Washington State					
College Success Foundation	NO	YES	YES	YES	YES
Seattle University	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES

Dimension 1: Is the Program Associated with a Particular Campus or Does It Operate Statewide?

Nine of the ten programs we examined are campus based and associated with a single college or university. The one exception is the Governor's Scholarship, which is administered by the College Success Foundation. 10 The Governor's Scholarship provides financial and other assistance to former foster youth at 56 public and private colleges and universities throughout Washington State.11 A mentor coordinator at each campus provides academic advising, connects students with tutoring or other resources, and matches students with a mentor.

Dimension 2: Does the Program Serve All Eligible Students or Is There an Application and Selection Process?

A majority of the programs we examined require students to submit an application and be selected to participate. Because applicants have already been admitted to the college or university, academic ability is not necessarily a major consideration. Rather, substantial weight is often given to personal characteristics. Consequently, programs typically require an interview with selection committee members. This emphasis on personal characteristics also explains some of the other application requirements. For example, a number of programs require applicants to write a personal statement about their backgrounds and the barriers they have had to overcome or about their reasons for wanting the scholarship and what they plan to study. Two programs require applicants to list the five accomplishments of which they are the most proud. Other subjective factors, such as a program director's intuition or experience working with foster youth, can also influence which applicants are selected.

However, we also examined programs that are non-selective and open to all students who are former foster youth. These include the Connect, Motivate and Educate (CME) Society at San Jose State University (SJSU), the Renaissance Scholars program at California State University, East Bay and the Guardian Scholars program at University of California (UC), Irvine.

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[10] The Governor's Scholarship is one of several scholarships that College Success Foundation administers, but the only one that specifically targets foster youth.

[11] This is the "hub" model identified by Pontecorvo et al. (2006).

This distinction between "selective" and "non-selective" programs reflects an understanding that was reached when California College Pathways Project launched campus support programs at a number of newly-funded sites, including California State University, Fresno, San Francisco City College, University of California, Davis, California State University, Sacramento, Sacramento City College and Cosumnes River College. According to that agreement, campus support programs at the newly-funded sites would serve all former foster youth. However, eligibility for certain relatively scarce resources, such as housing or small scholarships, could be limited as long as the criteria used to determine which students received those scarce resources were fair and could be justified.

Dimension 3: Do Students Receive a Scholarship or Only Nonfinancial Supports?

Most campus support programs include a scholarship component. This is typically a "last dollar" scholarship, which covers any remaining expenses after all other sources of financial aid (i.e., federal, state, private, and college/university) have been exhausted, thereby obviating the need for student loans. Depending on the program, former foster youth may be eligible for the scholarship for up to five years. The CME Society at SJSU, which does not provide members with a scholarship, but helps them identify other sources of financial aid for which they can apply, is an exception. Another exception is the Guardian Scholars program at UC Irvine, which is somewhat of a hybrid. It provides services and supports to all former foster youth, but only those from Orange County are eligible for the scholarship, which is administered by the Orangewood Children's Foundation.

Dimension 4: Does the Program Primarily Make Referrals to Other Campus Resources or Does It Provide Some Services Directly?

Although most of the campus support programs we examined are engaged in some direct service provision, at least two, the Orange Coast Community College Guardian Scholars program and CME Society at SJSU, are more akin to referral agencies that work with liaisons from other campus departments and direct students to on-campus, or in some cases community-based, resources.

Dimension 5: Is the Program Independent or Part of Another Program that Targets "Disadvantaged" Populations?

Most of the campus support programs we examined function independently, although they are often located in the same department or division as the Educational Opportunity Program (EOP).12 One exception is UC Irvine's Guardian Scholars Program, which was folded into the larger TRIO-funded Student Academic Advance Services program for first-generation, low-income, and disabled college students. This makes sense from an administrative standpoint because former foster youth would generally be eligible for TRIO-funded programs. It may also allow program participants to "blend in" with other students rather than be identified as former foster youth. The risk, however, is that the unique needs of former foster youth may go unaddressed. Another exception is the Guardian Scholars Program at San Francisco State, a joint effort involving both EOP and the School of Social Work. This too makes sense administratively in that former foster youth would generally be eligible for EOP. Moreover, the association with the School of Social Work, which provides case management services, may reduce the likelihood that the unique needs of former foster youth will be ignored.

Challenges Facing Campus Support Programs

The program directors described the challenges they face in their efforts to help former foster youth succeed in school, and several of these challenges are discussed below.

Failure of Child Welfare System to Promote Postsecondary Education

Several program directors expressed concern about foster youth not being given or not having access to information about postsecondary educational options, college admissions requirements, financial aid, or campus support programs. They were also distressed by the system's failure to encourage foster youth to apply to college despite the importance of postsecondary education to labor market success. In response, some program directors make a point of giving foster youth

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[12] The Educational Opportunity Program (EOP) is a state-funded effort designed to increase educational opportunities for and improve the educational outcomes of students from economically and educationally disadvantaged backgrounds.

information about several different campus support programs and of encouraging them to apply to more than one school.

Identifying Eligible Students

In the past, the only systematic way for campus support programs to identify eligible students was a question on the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) that asks "Are you (or were you until age 18) a ward/dependent of the court?"13 Using the FAFSA data to identify eligible students is problematic in two respects. First, the FAFSA data can arrive after all of the slots in the campus support program have been filled. Second, as Pecora et al. (2005) note, the wording of the FAFSA question can be confusing, particularly for young people who spent a significant amount of time in foster care, but left before their eighteenth birthday, and for youth placed with kin who may not think of themselves as court wards or dependents.

An item that asks students to "indicate if you have been in foster care (e.g., foster home, group home or placed with a relative by the court)" was recently added to the admissions application for California's public colleges and universities. Although this item addresses some of the problems with the FAFSA question, it has shortcomings of its own. First, there is no way to distinguish between students had ever been in foster care and those who "aged out." Second, adding this question to the California application does nothing to help identify eligible students in Washington State. And third, some young people who would be eligible for these program do not identify themselves (and do not want to be identified) as former foster youth. This is important because campus support programs can only help students who, in the words of one director, "want to reach out for help."

Recruitment and Outreach

Nearly all of the campus support programs we examined devote a considerable amount of time and other resources to recruitment and outreach activities. They send representatives to college fairs and other events attended by high school students; organize campus visits, tours, and information sessions; meet with individual students; and give potential applicants a chance to talk with current program participants.

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[13] The same question appears on the EOP application

These activities can involve special events. For example, the College Success Foundation hosts Make It Happen, a four-day summer program that teaches foster youth in grades 10 to 12 about applying to college and the Governor's Scholarship. Some involve working with other programs. For example, Seattle University's Fostering Scholars Program works with the Tree House Coaching to College Program to match King County (Seattle) high school students with mentors who help them apply to college and for financial aid.14

Some of these efforts appear to have paid off. A number of programs are on target to meet their recruitment goals or have more qualified applicants than slots to fill. However, other programs have not experienced a significant increase in applications.

Lack of Awareness

Raising awareness of these programs is important not only for recruiting new students but also to increase support for investing in these programs with public funds. Efforts to increase awareness of campus support programs include conference presentations to professionals who work with foster youth, outreach to school counselors and designated foster youth liaisons at community colleges, mass mailings to foster youth and their caregivers, and working closely with independent living programs, local public child welfare agencies, and community organizations that serve this population. Other efforts, such as providing information to residential advisors or talking with faculty and staff, are more internally focused.

Students Unprepared for College-Level Work

One reason recruitment and outreach activities have not always led to a significant increase in the number of applications is that far too many foster youth are not academically prepared for the demands of college-level work. In some cases, California foster youth who are unable to meet the California State University (CSU) or University of California (UC) high school course

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[14] The Coaching to College Program has been replicated statewide as the Foster Care to College Mentor Program.

requirements may be conditionally admitted. But, as at least one program director noted, some foster youth are so poorly prepared that even community college may be beyond their reach.15

One indication of this lack of academic preparation is the high percentage of students required to take remedial courses (which do not count toward college credit).16 Most of the directors estimated that 50 to nearly 100 percent of the young people in their programs are required to take remedial level courses (which don't count toward college credit). Remedial course-taking was especially high at the one community college-based program, probably because California's community colleges have an open admissions policy (i.e., students are not required to have a high school diploma or GED). There were, however, three exceptions. Directors from the two UC-based programs as well as the from the program at the University of Seattle noted that their schools do not offer remedial courses because the admissions processes screen out students who are not fully prepared for college-level work.

Retention

Although a major goal of campus support programs is to increase retention, students do drop out for a variety of academic, financial, and personal/family reasons. In some cases, program directors continue to work with students who have dropped out because they can be readmitted as long as they were in good academic standing when they left school. They will also refer students who are no longer eligible for the program to community resources.

Long-Term Financial Sustainability

Much of the funding for these programs has come from private foundations as well as corporate and individual donors. The academic institutions with which the programs are affiliated generally provide in-kind support, such as office space, or cover at least some personnel costs. Program directors expressed concern about ongoing support once their start-up grants expire. They also noted that it is important for programs to have the backing of the college or university administration if funding from other campus departments is to replace foundation support.

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[15] However, this same program director also told us that campus support programs do help these students to the extent that they can.
[16] CSU students are required to take the Entry Level Math Exam (ELM) and English Placement Test (EPT) to determine whether they should be placed in college-level or preparatory/remedial-level courses.

Student Mental Health Service Needs

Because mental health problems or personal crises can adversely affect academic progress, campus support programs often make referrals to student counseling services.17 Moreover, because former foster youth may have a greater need for mental health services than do typical undergraduates, several campus support programs have negotiated a doubling of the number of sessions for which students are eligible each year or arranged to have the cap lifted altogether. In some cases, students must be referred to community-based clinics because the mental health services they need are not available on campus, and at least one program uses some of its foundation funding to pay for services provided by community agencies. Students may also fail to "follow through" when a referral is made due to their distrust of mental health professionals.

Housing

Most of the programs we examined provide year-round housing. This is critical for former foster youth who may have nowhere to go when school is not in session. Addressing students' housing needs was especially challenging for the campus support program at Orange Coast Community College, which like most community colleges, does not provide on-campus housing. Affordable housing near campus is difficult to find, and transportation becomes an issue if students have to commute from far away.

Other Common Themes

Program directors also discussed a number of other topics, often in response to specific questions.

Collaboration

Collaboration among campus support programs, particularly within the same region, is common. Many of the California programs belong to formal organizations (e.g., Southern California Higher Education Foster Youth Consortium; Northern California University Foster Youth Consortium; Southern California Council of Colleges), which some program directors described as "support groups" for sharing ideas about best practice. Program directors in California also work with the

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17 The program at San Francisco State seemed particularly attuned to student mental health and the negative impact that mental health problems could potentially have on school success.

Foster Youth Success Initiative to facilitate the transfer of foster youth from community colleges to four-year schools. However, collaboration does not necessarily involve formal partnerships. For example, established programs commonly assist in the development of new programs, and programs often share information about potential recruits. Program directors also work closely with other departments and divisions on their own campuses.

Contact between Students and Program Staff

The amount of contact students have with program staff depends on several factors. Students who are doing well academically may "check in" a couple of times each month. Those who are experiencing academic or other problems tend to interact with program staff much more frequently. A number of programs have official policies regarding how often students must meet with staff, and several directors told us that staff will initiate contact with students who fail to "check in." In fact, one program director has been known to use course schedules to "hunt" these students down.

Opportunities for Interaction among Program Participants

Programs vary with respect to the amount of interaction that participants have with one another. At one extreme are the College Success Foundation's Governor's Scholars who are scattered throughout Washington State and rarely come together. In fact, Governor's Scholars are more likely to interact with recipients of the other College Success Foundation-administered scholarships. At the other extreme are the San Francisco State Guardian Scholars who live together year-round in a residential theme community. There is a lot of variation between these two extremes. Some programs mandate attendance at certain events (or a minimum number of events) in part to help sustain a sense of community. Others use peer mentoring, which involves pairing older students with younger students to help them navigate the transition from foster care to college, to promote interaction.

Role of Donors

Some programs limit donor involvement to making financial contributions. Others match students with donors who serve as mentors. However, at least one program director expressed concern about donors who become involved with students for the wrong reasons and want to probe deeply into their family or placement history.

Ongoing Scholarship Eligibility

Students whose campus support programs include a scholarship component are generally eligible for up to five years of financial aid.18 Some programs require students to meet certain conditions, such as maintaining a GPA above some minimum (typically a 2.0) or taking a full course load (generally 12 credit units). More broadly, students must be making academic progress toward a two- or four-year degree. Students who are no longer eligible for the scholarship may still receive supportive services.

Expectations

Some programs require students to sign an agreement that outlines what they are expected to do. For example, students may be required to meet with staff a certain number of times each academic term or attend a certain number of program-sponsored events. A number of program directors made the point that although they "try to meet students where they are" and "help them in any way they can," they also hold students accountable for their actions.

Program Staff

Most of the campus support programs we examined have a very small staff---one or two people in addition to the program director. Staff turnover is generally very low, so students have an opportunity to develop lasting relationships with adults who are genuinely concerned about them and their success in school.19 This may be a new experience for students whose caseworkers changed frequently while they were in foster care.

Director Qualifications

Several of the program directors we interviewed had worked with foster youth in other settings, with other at-risk youth (e.g., homeless youth), or for other, similar programs (e.g., EOP, campus support programs at other schools). A few are foster care alumni with personal knowledge of the challenges that their students face.

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[18] Students at the two programs funded by the Orangewood Children's Foundation (UC Irvine, Orange Coast Community College) are eligible for financial support until age 24.

[19] One exception is Cal State Fullerton, which has had three program directors since its inception in 1998.

Data Collection

All of the programs we examined use data to track student progress. Some maintain a customized database that includes information about GPA, course grades, courses taken, academic major, and/or credits earned. Program directors frequently described these customized databases as "in development." Most of the other programs are able to pull individual-level student data directly from a campus-wide system, but a couple must submit requests for the specific data that they need.[20] By contrast, only two of the programs we examined have a system for tracking the provision of services and supports. Both collect those data in narrative form, which might explain why they have been used so infrequently.

Programs use the data they collect in a variety of ways. Not surprisingly, the most common is to measure student progress. Of particular concern is whether students are meeting academic requirements and are on track to graduate within five years. Another common use is end-of-year reporting, although this often means that programs only track what their funders want to know. Interestingly, only two of the program directors we interviewed specifically mentioned research or evaluation in the context of data collection.

Results of Web-Based Survey of Program Participants

The 98 respondents who completed the Web-based survey were predominately female but racially and ethnically diverse (see Table 3). Nearly one-third self-identified as African American. A majority of the others self-identified as either Latino/Hispanic or Caucasian/White. Respondents ranged in age from 18 to 26 years old, with 20 years old being both the mean and median age.

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[20] Two other ways of monitoring student progress were also noted. The College Success Foundation receives reports from their college mentor coordinators. Other programs rely on midsemester grade reports from professors.

Table 3. Demographic Characteristics (*N* = 98)

	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Males	21	21.4
Females	77	78.6
Race/Ethnicity		
African American	31	31.6
Latino/Hispanic	22	22.4
Native American/American Indian	1	1.0
Caucasian/White	22	22.4
Asian or Pacific Islander	6	6.1
Biracial/Multiracial	11	11.2
Other	3	3.1
Missing	2	2.0
Age		
18	22	22.4
19	24	24.5
20	19	19.4
21	10	10.2
22	10	10.2
23 and older	13	13.2

The 98 young people who completed our survey do not comprise a random sample of campus support program participants in California and Washington State. However, when their demographic characteristics are compared with what the directors told us about the demographic characteristics of the young people in their programs (see Table 4), our sample of program participants looks similar to the larger population, at least in terms of gender and race/ethnicity.[21] Although this is somewhat reassuring, it would be wrong to conclude that the experiences and

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[21] Some program directors reported exact numbers; others could only estimate relative proportions. A few sent us information about the demographic characteristics of their program participants after the interview.

perceptions of program participants who completed the survey reflect the experiences and perceptions of their peers who did not.

Table 4. Demographic Characteristics of Current Participants as Reported by Program Directors		
	Gender	Race/Ethnicity
Northern California		
California State University, East Bay	Disproportionately female	Diverse
San Francisco State University	Not reported	Diverse
San José State University	Not reported	Largest group is African Americans
University of California, Santa Cruz*	Not reported	Diverse
Southern California		
California State Polytechnic University, Pomona	65% females 35% males	Largest groups are African Americans and Latinos
California State University, Fullerton	60% females 40% males	Diverse
Orange Coast Community College	59% females 41% males	~ 50% African American or Latino
University of California, Irvine*	75% females 25% males	~ 50% African American and Latino
Washington State		
College Success Foundation	Not reported	Not reported
Seattle University	Not reported	Not reported
*No students from these programs completed the survey.		

The two largest groups of respondents were from Cal Poly Pomona and the College Success Foundation (see Table 5).

Table 5. Distribution of Survey Respondents across Programs (*N* = 98)				
	#	%	# of participants reported by program directors in fall 2007	% of participants who completed the survey
Northern California				
California State University, East Bay	11	11.2	30	36.7
San Francisco State University	13	13.3	29	44.8
San José State University	13	13.3	65	20.0
Southern California				
California State Polytechnic University, Pomona	18	18.4	42	42.9
California State University, Fullerton	15	15.3	43	34.9
Orange Coast Community College	6	6.1	17	35.3
Washington State				
College Success Foundation	17	17.3	156	10.9
Seattle University	5	5.1	11	45.5

More than one-third of our respondents were college freshman, and most of the others were in their sophomore or junior years (see Table 6). The one graduate student was from Cal State Fullerton Guardian Scholars program, which recently expanded its Guardian Scholars program to include students pursuing master's degrees.

Two-thirds of our respondents had been participating in their campus support program for less than two full years when they completed the survey. This is due, at least in part, to the fact that four of the programs they represent were not established until the 2005–2006 or 2006–2007 academic years (see Table 1).

Interestingly, the percentage of respondents who had been in the program for less than one full year is considerably higher than the percentage who were freshman. Some of this difference may reflect transfer students from community colleges. It could also reflect respondents who did not participate in the program during their freshman year---approximately 17 percent of our sample.

This happens when students who would otherwise be eligible for the program do not become aware of its existence until after the application deadline or when eligible students outnumber program slots. In either case, these students may have received some of the program's services and supports until they became full-fledged participants.

Table 6. Current Year in School and Number of Years in Program (N = 98)		
	Frequency	Percentage
Year in school		
First-year undergraduate	36	36.7
Second-year undergraduate	22	22.4
Third-year undergraduate	21	21.4
Fourth-year undergraduate	12	12.2
Fifth-year undergraduate	4	4.1
Graduate student	1	1.0
Missing	2	2.0
Year in program		
1st	47	48.0
2nd	27	27.6
3rd	12	12.2
4th	5	5.1
5th	3	3.1
Don't know	4	4.1

More than two-thirds of our respondents identified themselves as EOP, EOPS, or TRIO students (see Table 7), but the actual percentage is probably higher.[22] Not only did 12 percent of the sample not know if they were EOP, EOPS, or TRIO students, but former foster youth, who are considered "financially independent" when it comes to eligibility for financial aid, should automatically qualify for EOP. Respondents who did not identify themselves as EOP, EOPS, or

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[22] Extended Opportunity Programs and Services (EOPS) is EOP's state-funded community college counterpart. TRIO Programs are federally funded educational opportunity outreach programs that target low-income, first-generation college students. EOP, EOPS, and TRIO students are eligible for a variety of services and supports.

TRIO students were primarily from SJSU's CME Society, the College Success Foundation, and Seattle University, which does not have an EOP or TRIO program.

Table 7. EOP/EOPS/TRIO Status (N = 98)		
	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	67	68.4
No	19	19.4
Don't know	12	12.2

Ten percent of our respondents identified themselves as having learning or other disabilities (see Table 8). By comparison, a few of the directors that we interviewed said they were not aware of any students in their programs with disabilities. Others suspected that some students had learning disabilities that had not been formally diagnosed. However, the majority had no idea what the prevalence of learning and other disabilities among the students in their programs might be.

Table 8. Learning or Other Disabilities (N = 98)		
	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	10	10.2
No	84	85.7
Missing	4	4.1

Just over half of our respondents reported that they were required to take remedial courses (which don't count toward actual college credit) before they could begin college-level work (see Table 9). This is somewhat lower than we had expected based on the estimates we were given by the program directors, which generally ranged from 50 to 100 percent. Excluding respondents from the University of Seattle, which does not offer remedial courses, had very little effect.[23]

Table 9. Remedial Coursework Required				
	Full sample (N = 98)		Sample excluding respondents from the University of Seattle (N = 93)	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	51	52.0	50	53.8
No	44	44.9	40	43.0
Don't know	3	3.1	3	3.2

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[23] Although the directors of the UC Irvine and UC Santa Cruz programs also told us that their schools did not offer remedial courses, students from those programs did not take part in the survey

Slightly more than half of our respondents learned about their campus support program from a source connected with the child welfare system---that is, their social worker, case worker or independent services provider (see Table 10). Just over 40 percent were contacted by someone from the program, and nearly one-third learned about the program from a current or former participant. Interestingly, high schools did not appear to be major sources of information.

Table 10. How Participants Learned about Program (N = 98)		
	Frequency	Percentage
From college/university admissions material	27	27.6
Contacted by someone from the program	42	42.9
Contacted by someone from financial aid office	10	10.2
Contacted by someone from the admissions office	4	4.1
Social worker/caseworker	33	33.7
Independent living services provider	39	39.8
Private agency	26	26.5
High school teacher, guidance counselor, or principal	17	17.3
Current or former program participant	29	29.6
Note: Respondents could report learning about the program from more than one source.		

Respondents cited several reasons for wanting to participate in the program. Many were in need of the financial aid the program would provide.

> My dream since I was a kid has been to attend college, however I knew I couldn't afford it and would have to rely on scholarships and loans. When I heard about the [campus support] program I applied because it was a scholarship to a very good school where I knew I would receive an excellent education. Also, the scholarship was appealing because it provided me with all the things I needed being an independent student. Plus, it is a full ride scholarship!

> Due to my family situation I couldn't pay for my schooling.…And I knew that this program would help me a lot so I applied. And without this it would be very hard for me to go to school. I'm so thankful for this program.

Others thought the program would help them achieve their educational goals.

> I became a [program participant] because it will assist and guide me throughout my years in college for students such as myself who has come from a background of being in the foster youth system. It also allowed me to have an equal opportunity to achieve my goals just as any other student who is pursuing a college degree.

> As a former foster youth it is challenging to get support to attain higher education. I was determined and motivated and the [campus support] program assured me they could help me pursue my educational goals.

Some respondents were motivated by a need for social support.

> I became a [program participant] because they are a support system for me academically as well as personally.

> I knew that the support of a program that was designed for foster youth would encourage me tremendously in my efforts to pursue a college education and further my career options as an adult.

Respondents also desired to be with students from backgrounds similar to their own.

> I felt that being surrounded by people of the same background would help to motivate me in a way that I would feel I was not the only one. I knew that they would understand my background and help direct me and guide me in the best possible way

> I felt that it would help my transition into the college atmosphere and would allow me to interact with peers that have a similar background as I did.

The overwhelming majority of our respondents were required to submit an application, and most were required to submit proof that they had been in foster care or had been wards of the state or court (Table 11).24 Other common requirements included personal essays, financial aid applications, letters of recommendation, and high school transcripts.

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[24] Although we asked respondents about the application requirements for their campus support programs, at least some may have been thinking about the application requirements for college or university admissions.

Table 11. Campus Support Program Application Requirements (N = 98)		
	Frequency	Percentage
Program application	89	90.8
EOP/TRIO application	58	59.2
Financial aid application	72	73.5
Application for on-campus housing	49	50.0
Proof of foster care or ward of the state/court status	82	83.7
Letters of recommendation	68	69.4
High school transcripts	68	69.4
Personal essay	76	77.6
Standardized test scores	48	49.0
In-person interview with program representative	65	66.3

Half of those who were required to submit an application regarded the process as at least somewhat difficult (see Table 12). Unfortunately, we did not ask them to elaborate on the difficulties they experienced.

Table 12. Difficulty of Application Process (N = 89)		
	Frequency	Percentage
Difficult	14	15.7
Somewhat difficult	30	33.7
Not difficult	44	49.4
Missing	1	1.2

Respondents received a variety of academic services and supports from their campus support programs (see Table 13).[25] They were most likely to have received help choosing courses, followed by tutoring, access to a dedicated computer lab, and study skills training. Just under half of our respondents had taken advantage of priority enrollment, which means that they were able

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25 Although our question specified our interest solely in the academic services and supports that their campus support programs had provided, some respondents may have reported academic services and supports available to all students at their colleges or universities.

to register for courses before other students through an agreement between the program and the Registrar's Office. Nearly as many had participated in Summer Bridge, a rigorous academic "boot camp" that familiarizes new students with the campus and what will be expected of them prior to the start of their freshman year. Their level of Summer Bridge participation is somewhat lower than expected given that all of the California program directors had told us that participation in Summer Bridge was mandatory.

Table 13. Receipt and Perceived Importance of Academic Supports					
	N	Received Support		Important or Very Important (if support was provided)	
		#	%	#	% of recipients
Help choosing courses	96	60	62.5	56	93.3
Help choosing a major	96	35	36.5	32	91.4
Tutoring	96	58	60.4	35	60.3
Study skills training	96	53	55.2	29	54.7
Entry level exam preparation	96	28	29.2	15	53.5
Graduate school exam preparation	96	13	13.5	10	76.9
Graduate school advising	96	27	28.1	19	70.3
Access to dedicated computer lab	96	56	58.3	42	75.0
Assistance related to a disability+	10	5	50.0	5	100.0
Priority enrollment	94	46	48.9	46	47.0
Summer Bridge	94	45	47.9	38	38.8
+Of the 10 respondents who reported a learning or other disability.					

Not all of these academic services and supports were perceived as equally important to succeeding in school by recipients. Help choosing courses and help choosing a major were perceived as important or very important by nearly all. Recipients of disability-related assistance were even more likely to perceive that assistance as important or very important. Perceptions of Summer Bridge were much less positive. Only 39 percent of Summer Bridge participants perceived it as important or very important.

Respondents also received a number of non-academic services and supports as a result of their program participation (see Table 14).[26]

Table 14. Receipt and Perceived Importance of Other Services and Supports					
	Received Support			Important or Very Important (if support was provided)	
	N	#	%	#	% of recipients
Financial aid	96	74	75.5	72	98.6
Housing assistance	95	65	66.3	63	96.9
Leadership development opportunities	95	61	64.2	47	47.9
Mentoring	94	55	58.5	50	51.0

Three-quarters received financial aid from their campus support programs. One reason this figure is less than 100 percent is that not all programs include a scholarship component. Most recipients of this financial aid used it to pay for books, tuition, school supplies, or room and board (see Table 15). More than half used it to address "emergency needs." That this financial aid was not used to pay for the tuition of some recipients probably reflects the fact that campus support programs typically provide "last dollar" scholarships that cover whatever costs remain after all other sources of financial aid have been exhausted.

[26] Although our question specified our interest solely in services and supports that their campus support program had provided, some respondents may have reported services and supports available to all students at their colleges or universities.

Table 15. What Financial Aid Provided by the Program Paid For (N = 73) +		
	Frequency	Percentage
Tuition	54	74.0
Room and board	53	72.6
Books	56	76.7
Laptop/computer	20	27.4
School supplies	53	72.6
Emergency needs	42	57.5
+One recipient of financial aid did not complete the follow-up questions.		

Nearly all of the respondents who received financial aid from their campus support programs perceived it as important or very important to their school success. This was illustrated by several of their comments.

Being able to attend school without the stress of trying to pay for it. Being able to attend college I n the first place, because without the scholarship I wouldn't be furthering my education.

The financial aspect really helps provide what I need to succeed in all my classes and also outside of school, the basic necessities to live.

The [campus support program] helped me…by giving me support for school and by giving me financial aid. I am very thankful because if it wasn't for them I would not be going to school.

Approximately two-thirds of our respondents received housing assistance from their campus support programs. Most of these recipients had received on-campus housing, and two-thirds had received housing when school was not in session (see Table 16).

Table 16. Type of Housing Assistance Received (N = 65)		
	Frequency	Percentage
On-campus housing	58	89.2
Off-campus housing	17	26.2
Housing during holidays and spring break housing	43	66.2
Summer housing	43	66.2

Almost all of the housing assistance recipients perceived it as important or very important to their success in school. This is not surprising given the concerns about housing that many expressed.

> I think that for me feeling secure about where I'm going to live is always in the back of my head… I don't know if I'll have a roof over my head. And that is very scary to think about.

> I was afraid I wouldn't have a place to stay and I wouldn't be able to do as good in college as I did in high school.

Two other services and supports that these programs often provide are mentoring opportunities for leadership development. Nearly two thirds reported that they had been given opportunities for leadership development and well over half reported that they had been assigned a mentor. Recipients of these services and supports were less likely to perceive them as important or very important than recipients of financial aid or housing assistance.

Respondents also seemed to derive a sense of family or community from their participation in the program.

> The students get to build a family within the [campus support program]. We get to support each other and the [campus support program] staff and sponsors are our parents in school so they look after us like a family does for their children.

> I get to meet a bunch of really great people who can understand the things that I have gone through. These people not only become your friends but are like family to you and they all want to see you achieve your goals.

> They gave me a sense of belonging because the [campus support program] is known to be [a] family, by letting all the students [know] that they are not alone.

> They showed me that [campus support program] is about community and showed me that we are just one big family!

In fact, they were more likely to report that the program provided them with a sense of family or community (86 percent) than they were to report that they had received housing assistance (66 percent) or financial aid (76 percent). More than three quarters of those who reported that the program provided them with a sense of family or community regarded it as important or very important to their success in school.

Program directors had told us that making referrals is an important part of what their programs do. This was confirmed by respondents' self-reports. Nearly two-thirds had been referred to student counseling services, just over half had been referred to student health services, and 39 percent had been referred to a community agency (see Table 17).

Table 17. Referrals to Other Services (N=93)		
	Frequency	Percentage
Student counseling services	59	63.4
Student health services	48	51.6
Community mental health agency	19	20.4
Another community agency	29	31.2

Despite the wide array of services and supports that these programs provide, as well as the many referrals that they make, nearly one-third of our respondents identified at least one unmet need for services or supports (see Table 18).

Table 18. Any Unmet Needs for Services or Supports (N = 98)		
	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	30	30.6
No	64	65.3
Missing	4	4.1

Help with housing was among the most frequently cited unmet needs.

> I think particularly if you get accepted into the [campus support program], you should be guaranteed a spot in the dorm rooms.

Another was help with living expenses.

> With the rising cost of living there would be much more financial aid needed.

> A lot more financial assistance to cover housing costs

A few respondents mentioned a need for graduate school advising or career counseling.

> Resources in the university especially when students are interested in pursuing a master's degree. We should have a counselor from the department of our majors to talk to and get guidance.

I have yet to receive any [graduate school advising] and I am graduating in May.

I would have the director meet with all seniors to make sure they have a plan after graduation and if they need any help applying to grad schools.

I would want there to be a service where individually scholars are sat down and evaluated as to what career path they are headed down and the [campus support program] staff would try to match the student with an ideal employer/position and have them shadow the job so that they can feel more empowered and motivated to enter the field and feel like they actually have a chance at succeeding in that particular field.

Just over 40 percent of our respondents reported having in-person contact with program staff at least once a week; a similar percentage reported having in-person contact with program staff several times each academic term (see Table 19). The distribution was much the same when we asked about contact with program staff by email or telephone.

Table 19. Frequency of Contact with Program Staff (N = 98)				
	In Person		By Email or Phone	
	#	%	#	%
Every day	6	6.1	7	7.1
Several times a week	23	23.5	24	24.5
Once a week	11	11.2	11	11.2
Several times a semester, quarter, or trimester	40	40.8	44	44.9
Once a semester, quarter, or trimester	7	7.1	4	4.1
Never	6	6.1	3	3.1
Missing	5	5.1	5	5.1

Respondents seemed to benefit from their contact with program staff. Nearly 90 percent rated program staff as either helpful or very helpful (see Table 20).

Table 20. Frequency of Contact with Program Staff (N = 98)		
	Frequency	Percentage
Very helpful	64	65.3
Helpful	22	22.4
Somewhat helpful	6	6.1
Not very helpful	1	1.0
Missing	5	5.1

This was clearly illustrated by some of their comments.

> I got counseling and [campus support program] staff helped me shape my goals of everyday and challenge of school work. So far, [campus support program] has been helping me with any additional help I need in order to keep on going.

> [They] gave me ideas of how to balance my personal life and school where it does not affect my performance in school. [They] just give me different alternatives to deal with situations….

Almost three-quarters of our respondents reported that their campus support program has a drop-in center, and nearly half of those respondents whose program has a drop-in center reported visiting that center once a week or more (see Table 21). Unfortunately, we did not ask respondents about the purpose of those visits.

Table 21. Existence of a Drop-in Center and Frequency of Visitation	Frequency	Percentage
Dedicated drop-in center		
Yes	72	76.6
No	22	23.4
Total	94	100.0
Frequency of visitation		
Every day	4	5.6
Several times a week	23	31.9
Once a week	8	11.1
Several times a semester, quarter, or trimester	31	43.1
Once a semester, quarter, or trimester	4	5.6
Never	2	2.8
Total	72	100.0

We asked respondents to describe the most significant challenge they had faced during their transition from foster care to college. Some of the challenges they reported are not unlike those that young people who had never been in foster care experience when they go away to school.

> Beginning classes at a new school, in a new town. Adjusting to college life and the difficulty of classes.

> Just knowing how to adjust to the difference; the work load was different and the college environment was totally different from my high school environment.

Other challenges, such as balancing the demands of work and school while struggling to support oneself, would probably be familiar to many low-income students who had never been in foster care.

> Managing going to school full time as well as working as much as possible to be able to support myself and pay for my bills.

> Working full time to pay rent and going to school full time was the most challenging because when school closed, I have no place to go to.

> The most difficult challenge that I faced during my transition to college was finding financial support to help me scholastically and with everyday expenses.

> I believe the most significant challenge for me has been being independent. Since I moved out I have to work harder at school and more at work because I now I have to pay bills. This is why my first semester of my freshman year I did really bad[ly] in school. This is why I am very thankful for all the financial aid that I'm getting to be able to go to school.

Nevertheless, some of the challenges respondents reported probably reflect their unique status as former foster youth. One such challenge was having a place to live.

> Making sure I had a place to live especially during the times where there was no school.

Another was a profound sense of being alone.

> Feeling emotionally ready to be an adult and live on my own. There is an incredible feeling of aloneness during this transition.

> Not knowing what to do and knowing that I was going to be alone.

> Not having anybody to help or someplace to be in the transition. Feeling alone.

Just over 70 percent of our respondents who described a significant challenge reported that their campus support program helped them cope with or overcome it (see Table 22).

Table 22. Coped with or Overcame the Most Significant Challenge with Help from Program (N= 78)

	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	55	70.5
No	23	29.5

In some cases, the program did this by providing concrete assistance, such as housing or financial aid. In other cases, the program provided something much less tangible, like emotional support.

> They provided a…nurturing environment on campus. I felt emotionally safe and felt that someone cared. The emotional support was very important, and having talks with the program directors on-campus really helped.

By supporting me and believing in me as well as always feeling like I could see a familiar face and ask for help when I needed it.

Interestingly, several of the respondents whose campus support program had not helped them cope with or overcome their most significant challenge note that they had not informed program staff about their situation.

Well they didn't really know about it but if I had told them I needed help moving in maybe they could have had some people help me.

Sometimes this stemmed from a belief that these were problems they should deal with on their own.

It was my fault because I didn't ask anybody in the office about my situation; however, I want to take the challenge and do everything I can on my own.

I'm not too sure that they could have done anything about it. Personal problems have to be dealt with on one's own.

We also asked respondents to describe what it was about the program that they liked the most. For some, what mattered most was always having someone there to help or to turn to for support.

Knowing that at anytime if I have a problem there is someone who is concerned and will be there to help me.

The best part is knowing that they will not judge you if you get a bad grade or if you are going through some tough times but instead they reassure you that everything will work out fine and it isn't the end of the world. And they offer as much help as they can give.

[Campus support program] gives me great advice every time I approach with issues that I need assistance with. Just by continuing to be a support for me, they are such great people and I find it really great to know I have them as not only support but friends

For others it was feeling understood.

Having adults and other students who understand what you're going through and feel like.

I get a sense of belonging by being with others that can equally relate to my own experiences.

It was also having someone who believed in them.

> A group of people who…believe that you can be somebody even though all your life somebody may have told you that you couldn't.

The overwhelming majority of survey respondents reported that they would change nothing about their programs (see Table 23).

Table 23. Recommended Any Changes to Improve Program (N=98)		
	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	12	12.2
No	81	82.7
Missing	5	5.1

Some, however, did have recommendations for improvement. One common recommendation was for the program to provide more financial aid or to provide financial aid for a longer period of time.

> Perhaps being able to offer more funding for students, because while my scholarship is enough for tuition it doesn't help much with living expenses.

> That you could use the scholarship for as long as it takes to get my major. Some students only need to go to school for two years others need to go for six. So after four years I still need help paying for college.

Another was to provide more opportunities for program participants to "get together" with one another.

> I would love more reunions with students of the program, since they are my support and community.

> Monthly gathering for [program participants] and staff would be helpful so that [program participants] could voice their concern and share experiences.

Respondents also had ideas for changing how the program was run.

> I would mainly change the way the program is managed. I think there needs to be more one-on-one and case management and a stronger academic component.

> More one on one support from the staff!

> More student involvement with big decisions.

Finally, although we did not ask how satisfied respondents are with their campus support program, 88 percent reported that they are likely or very likely to recommend the program to other foster youth (see Table 24).

Table 24. Likelihood of Recommending Program to Other Foster Youth (N=98)		
	Frequency	Percentage
Very likely	81	82.7
Likely	5	5.1
Somewhat likely	7	7.1
Not very likely	0	0
Missing	5	5.1

Discussion

One of the recommendations to emerge from the 2007 California Foster Youth Education Summit was to expand campus support programs like the ones we examined to all California State University, University of California, and community college campuses in the state (California Foster Youth Education Summit, 2007a; 2007b)[27] Others have also advocated for the replication of campus support programs on a much broader scale and with government funding. Implicit in these calls for expansion is the assumption that campus support programs lead to higher college retention and graduation rates. However, a more comprehensive and methodologically sound impact evaluation is crucial if a compelling case is to be made that campus support programs lead to better educational outcomes, and hence represent a good investment of public funds.

An impact evaluation of campus support programs would serve a number of purposes in addition to providing empirical support for their expansion. First, program directors would have data they could use to implement program changes that are evidence-based. Second, an impact evaluation would be able to examine whether campus support programs have different effects on different groups of former foster youth or work differently in different settings (e.g., urban vs. suburban vs. rural campuses; small colleges vs. large universities; two-year vs. four-year school), and hence, suggest how programs might best be tailored to meet specific needs. And third, an impact evaluation could help identify those program components that are essential if former foster youth are to succeed academically. This is critical because some programs at four-year schools, and most programs at two-year schools may not be able to provide the full range of financial, academic, and emotional supports that a "model" program might provide.

Evaluating the impact of campus support programs presents a number of challenges. First, it must be possible not only to identify former foster youth at colleges and universities with campus

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[27]Policy briefs from the Summit, cohosted by the Child and Family Policy Institute of California (CFPIV), the Foster Youth Education Task Force, and Casey Family Programs, can be found at http://www.cfpic.org/children/children_002.htm.

support programs, but also to distinguish between former foster youth who participate in those programs and those who do not. The latter would serve as a comparison group against which the outcomes of the program participants can be assessed. Second, because former foster youth who choose to participate in campus support programs do not comprise a random sample of all college students who are former foster youth, any systematic differences between participants and non-participants could explain observed differences in retention or graduation rates. Third, because campus support programs are both multi-faceted and continuing to evolve, disentangling the effects of individual components would be difficult to do. In fact, it is nearly impossible if the services and supports that students receive are not being tracked.

Finally, campus support programs must significantly increase their collection of data, not only data that can be used to measure academic progress (e.g., GPA, credits earned), but perhaps more importantly, data that can be used to measure the provision of services and supports. Moreover, if different campus support programs are to be compared, it is essential that the same measures are being used.

Interviews conducted with the managers of several campus support programs as part of an effort to develop a management information system (MIS) that could track not only the academic outcomes of former foster youth but also the services and supports that they receive were also quite revealing in two respects (Price, 2008). First, most program managers had developed customized databases to track the receipt of academic and social services by students in their programs, but had not used those data for the purpose of evaluation. And second, although program managers were interested in how the data they were collecting could be used to improve the services and supports provided to their students, creating a centralized database for campus support programs to be used for evaluation and policymaking was not perceived as a priority.

In this context, it is worth noting that Price (2008) conducted interviews with the directors of several campus support programs as part of an effort to develop a management information system (MIS) that could be used to track not only the academic outcomes of former foster youth but also the services and supports that they receive. Those interviews revealed that most program directors had developed a customized database to track the receipt of academic and social services by students in their program, and were interested in how those data could be used to improve the services and supports that they provide. However, program directors had not used the

data they collect to evaluate their programs. Nor was the creation of a centralized database that could be used for evaluation and policymaking perceived as a priority.

Moving Forward

We have several recommendations for moving forward with a methodologically sound impact evaluation of campus support programs. This evaluation would do more than examine whether these programs lead to better educational outcomes, as measured by higher college retention and graduation rates. It would also look at how the relationship between program participation and educational outcomes varies depending on the characteristics of the former foster youth, the types of services and supports that students receive, and the institutional setting (e.g., urban vs. suburban vs. rural campuses; small colleges vs. large universities; two-year vs. four-year schools).

One option currently under consideration would be to leverage the resources of the California Partnership for Achieving Student Success (Cal-PASS), an initiative that links student-level educational records across K-12 schools, community colleges and four-year colleges and universities. Approximately 4,500 educational institutions have joined Cal-PASS since its inception in 1998. Altogether, they have uploaded more than 240 million student records to this centralized database.

Using the Cal-PASS database to evaluate the impact of campus support programs on the postsecondary educational outcomes of former foster youth presents a number of challenges. First, outcome data would only be available for former foster youth at Cal-PASS member institutions. Although this is a problem, the number of former foster youth for whom data are missing may be fairly small given that the list of Cal-PASS members currently includes all but 1 of the state's 109 community colleges, 18 of the 23 California State University campuses, and all but 1 of the 10 University of California campuses.

Second, the Cal-PASS core data do not indicate which students are former foster youth. Nor do they distinguish between former foster youth who participated in campus support programs and those who did not. However, this problem is not insurmountable. Colleges and universities can customize the data they submit. In this case, they could use the optional field to add at least two

flags—one to identify former foster youth and another to identify program participants. Of course, this type of customization would require extra work.

Third, the core data do not include any information about the receipt of services and supports. Again, this problem can be solved through the use of optional fields. Data on the provision of services and supports can be included in the data submissions of schools with campus support programs. However, for those data to be useful, the elements must be agreed upon in advance and remain consistent across schools, which, according to the program directors we interviewed, is not presently the case. In fact, as already noted, most programs do not systematically track the receipt of services and supports.

The final and perhaps most significant challenge concerns access to individual-level student data. Access to Cal-PASS data is typically at the aggregate level, in the form of standard reports generated on a regular basis and customized reports produced in response to special requests. Aggregate-level data would suffice if the only question of interest was how former foster youth who participate in campus support programs are faring as a group. However, if the evaluation is also to examine whether the effects of campus support programs vary depending on the characteristics of the former foster youth who participate in them or on the services and supports that those participants receive, then individual-student-level data are needed. This will require working with Cal-PASS to obtain access to those data without violating the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).[28]

With those limitations in mind, we recommend the following next steps:

- Identify campus support programs to participate in the evaluation. Programs must have been in existence for at least four years by the time that college graduation is measured.

- Elicit cooperation from both the directors of those programs and the colleges or universities with which they are affiliated.

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[28] Under FERPA, federal legislation that protects the privacy of student educational records, schools cannot release information from educational records without written consent from parents or from students if they are at least 18 years old or are pursuing postsecondary education. However, under some conditions, including certain types of research, schools can release that information without consent. Additional information about those conditions can be found at http://www.ed.gov/policy/gen/reg/ferpa/rights_pg19.html#17.

- Work with campus support programs to develop a database that tracks the provision of services and supports to individual students as well as academic outcomes. The database should be as uniform as possible across programs.

- Work with Cal-PASS to obtain access to the individual student records of former foster youth regardless of their campus support program participation.

- Work with Cal-PASS to develop a way for member institutions to (1) flag both students who are former foster youth and former foster youth who participate in campus support programs, and (2) upload data related to the provision of services and supports by campus support programs.

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Appendix

Program Director Interview Protocol

Introduction
Hello, I am a research assistant from Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago. I want to thank you for taking the time to talk with me about (NAME OF INSTITUTIONS'S) campus support program. Chapin Hall is working with the W. S. Johnson Foundation and the Stuart Foundation to assess the feasibility of measuring the impact of the program on college enrollment and graduation. As part of this process, we are talking with program directors from the 10 campus support programs in California and Washington State that were fully implemented as of the 2006–2007 academic year. The interview will last approximately one hour.

Before we begin, I want to inform you that your participation is voluntary and you may decline to answer any of the questions. Although I will take comprehensive notes, the interviews will be recorded to preserve an accurate record of what is said. The tapes will be stored in a secure database to which only authorized project staff have access. Chapin Hall will produce a report based on the information we obtain from the interviews. However, we will not identify you, any of your colleagues or your respective institutions by name. If direct quotes from you or your colleagues are used, they will be attributed to "one of the program directors."

DO I HAVE YOUR PERMISSION TO RECORD THIS INTERVIEW?
DO YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS FOR ME BEFORE WE START?

Program Goals and Target Population
The first few questions are about your program's mission and target population?

1. What is the mission of NAME OF INSTITUTION'S campus support program?

2. Who is eligible to participate in NAME OF INSTITUTION'S campus support program?

Program Participants
Next I would like to ask you about the young people who participate in NAME OF INSTITUTION'S campus support program. If you would prefer to send me any of this information after checking your records that is fine.

3. How many young people
    A. Are currently participating in your program?
    B. Participated in your program last year?
    C. Have participated in your program since its inception?

4. What can you tell me about the demographic characteristics (e.g., gender, race/ethnicity, age) of the program participants who are currently participating in your program?

5. How many of your program participants
    A. Began during their freshman year?
    B. Began after their freshman year?
    C. Were transfer students from other educational institutions?
6. How many of your Guardian/Renaissance Scholars have a diagnosed learning disability?

7. How many of your Guardian/Renaissance Scholars need to take remedial courses before they are able to begin college-level work?

Referral and Recruitment
The next few questions deal with referral and recruitment.

8. How do young people learn about your program?

9. What steps, if any, are you taking to increase awareness of your program
    A. Among potential participants?
    B. Among potential referral sources?

10. What recruitment problems, if any, has your program encountered?

11. What steps, if any, is your program taking to address these problems?

12. Is there a way for you to identify students at the NAME OF INSTITUTION who would be eligible for the campus support program but did not apply? How?

13. How many of those students
    A. Were there last year?
    B. Are there this year?

14. How many students can your program currently accommodate?

Application Process
Now I would like to talk about the application process.

15. What are applicants required to do? For example, what materials must they submit?

16. Who decides which applicants become program participants?

17. On what basis is that decision made?

18. How many young people applied to the program last year?

19. How many of those applicants were accepted?

CAN YOU PROVIDE ME WITH A COPY OF THE APPLICATION?

Services and Supports
The next few questions are about the services and supports that are available to program participants at NAME OF INSTITUTION.

20. Does your campus support program provide…..?
    If so, what specifically does your program provide in the way of….?
    a. Academic support
    b. Financial aid
    c. Housing
    d. Academic advising
    e. Career counseling
    f. Medical/dental care
    g. Mental health services
    h. Mentoring
    i. Leadership development
    j. On-campus drop-in center
    k. Priority enrollment in college courses

21. Are there services or supports other than the ones I have already mentioned that your program provides? What are those services or supports?

22. In addition to providing those services and supports, are there other steps you take to help the young people in your program make a successful transition to college? What are those steps?

Program Participation
Now I would like to ask you some questions about program participation. Once again, if you would prefer to send me any of this information after checking your records that is fine.

23. What are young people required to do to remain eligible for the program once they become participants? For example, is there a minimum grade point average they are required to maintain? Are they required to earn a minimum number of credits by the end of each academic year?

24. For how long do young people remain eligible for the program once they become participants?

25. How many program participants
    A. Graduated last year?
    B. Have graduated since the program began?

26. How many program participants have dropped out of the program?

27. What are some of the reasons young people drop out?

28. How often do program participants meet with program staff?

29. What opportunities do Guardian/Renaissance Scholars have to interact with one another? For example, are there regularly scheduled meetings or organized events?

Program Implementation and Funding
The next set of questions is related to how your program is implemented and paid for.

30. In what year did the NAME OF INSTITUTION'S <u>campus support program</u> begin?

31. Have any major changes in the program taken place since it was first implemented? What were those changes?

32. Do you anticipate any major changes in the program during the next few years? What are those changes likely to be?

33. What are your primary sources of funding? Do you receive funding from
    a. NAME OF INSTITUTION?
    b. Private foundations or other philanthropic organizations?
    c. Individual donors?
    d. State or local child welfare system?
    e. Other sources?

   CAN YOU PROVIDE ME WITH A COPY OF YOUR PROGRAM'S BUDGET FOR LAST YEAR AND/OR THIS YEAR?

Program Staff
Now I'd like to ask you about the staff of NAME OF INSTITUTION <u>campus support program</u>.

34. How many people are currently on your staff?

35. What experience do they have
    a. Working with this population?
    b. Working in higher education?

36. What training or professional development do staff receive?

37. How much staff turnover has your program experienced during the past year?

Partnerships with Other Stakeholders
The next few questions are about partnerships your program has with other stakeholders.

38. In what academic department or administrative division of NAME OF INSTITUTION is your program located?

39. With which NAME OF INSTITUTION departments or offices do you work the most closely?

40. Do you have a partnership with the state or local child welfare agency?

41. What is the nature of that partnership?

42. In addition to any funding they provide, are there other ways in which private foundations, philanthropic organizations or individual donors contribute to your program? What is the nature of those contributions?

43. Has your program worked with any of the other campus support programs? With which program(s) have you worked the most closely?

44. What has the nature of that collaboration been and how has it helped your program?

Management Information System
Now I would like to tell me about your ability to track service provision and student performance.

45. Do you currently have a computer system that tracks the services and supports you provide to <u>Guardian/Renaissance Scholars</u> in your program?

46. Does your computer system track all of the services and supports your program provides, or only some? Which ones?

47. What information about the provision of those services and supports does your computer system track (e.g., type of service or support, date(s) provided)?

48. What do you use that information for?

49. Do you currently have a computer system that tracks the academic progress of each <u>Guardian/Renaissance Scholar</u> in your program?

50. What information about their academic progress are you tracking? Do you track the
    a. Courses taken
    b. Course grades
    c. GPA for each semester/trimester/quarter
    d. Cumulative GPA
    e. Number of credits earned each semester/trimester/quarter
    f. Total number of credits earned
    g. Major field of study

51. What do you use that information for?

52. What, if any, information do you have about the academic performance of the program participants before they came into your program (high school grades, ACT/SAT scores)?

53. Do you track any other information about the program participants in your program that we have not talked about? What information?

Closing Questions
I have just a couple of final questions.

54. What distinguishes your program from the other program participants?

55. Is there anything else that we should know about your program that we have not already talked about?

You have been very helpful to us and I'd like to thank you for your cooperation. We will be in touch with you soon about the other component of our evaluability assessment, an online survey for program participants.

CAN WE CONTACT YOU IN THE FUTURE IF WE HAVE ANY ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS OR NEED CLARIFICATION ABOUT SOMETHING YOU SAID DURING TODAY'S INTERVIEW?

Web-Based Survey Instrument

Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago is conducting a web-based survey of college students in California and Washington State who are participating in one of several programs designed to help former foster youth succeed in school. This group of programs includes Guardian or Renaissance Scholars, College Success, CME Society, Fostering Scholars, and Governor's Scholarship. Throughout the survey we will use the term "Guardian/Renaissance Scholars" to refer to the entire group.

The purpose of the survey is to learn more about students' experiences with and perceptions of these programs. It is part of a larger project paid for by the W. S. Johnson and Stuart Foundations. The survey will take approximately 20–25 minutes to complete. All of your responses will be kept confidential. You will receive $25 for your participation.

Once all of the data have been collected and analyzed, Chapin Hall will prepare a report for the two foundations. Although the report will be distributed to all of the programs whose students participated in the study, no information that could be used to identify individual students will be included in the report.

If you have any questions about the survey or the larger project, please contact either

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TO PARTICIPATE IN THE STUDY, YOU MUST MEET TWO CRITERIA.
1. Were you a foster youth in California or Washington State?
❑ No   ❑ Yes

2. Are you currently participating in a Guardian/Renaissance Scholars program at your college or university? Remember, "Guardian/Renaissance Scholars" also includes College Success, CME Society, Fostering Scholars, and Governor's Scholarship.
❑ No   ❑ Yes

3. What is your gender?
❑ Male   ❑ Female

4. What is your date of birth?
Date of Birth: MM / DD / YYYY

5. How do you identify yourself in terms of race and/or ethnicity?
- ❏ African American
- ❏ Hispanic/Latino
- ❏ Native American/American Indian/Alaskan Native/Hawaiian Native
- ❏ Caucasian/White
- ❏ Asian or Pacific Islander
- ❏ Biracial/Multiracial
- ❏ Other (please specify)

6. At which college or university are you enrolled?
- ❏ Cal Poly Pomona
- ❏ California State University, East Bay
- ❏ California State University, Fullerton
- ❏ Orange Coast Community College
- ❏ San Francisco State University
- ❏ San José State University
- ❏ Seattle University
- ❏ University of California, Irvine
- ❏ University of California, Santa Cruz
- ❏ Other (please specify)

7. What year are you in at this college or university?
- ❏ Freshman/First year
- ❏ Sophomore/Second year
- ❏ Junior/Third year
- ❏ Senior/Fourth year
- ❏ Fifth year
- ❏ Graduate student

8. Were you a Guardian/Renaissance Scholar during your first year at this college or university?

❏ No ❏ Yes ❏ Don't know

9. For how many years have you been a Guardian/Renaissance Scholar?
- ❏ This is the first year I have been a Guardian/Renaissance Scholar.
- ❏ This is the second year I have been a Guardian/Renaissance Scholar.
- ❏ This is the third year I have been a Guardian/Renaissance Scholar.
- ❏ This is the fourth year I have been a Guardian/Renaissance Scholar.
- ❏ This is the fifth year I have been a Guardian/Renaissance Scholar.
- ❏ Don't know

10. The Educational Opportunity Program (EOP), the Extended Opportunity Programs and Services (EOPS) and the TRIO program are educational opportunity outreach programs designed to motivate and support students from disadvantaged backgrounds. **Are you an Educational Opportunity Program (EOP), Extended Opportunity Programs and Services (EOPS) or TRIO student?**

❑ No ❑ Yes ❑ Don't know

11. Do you have a diagnosed learning disability?

❑ No ❑ Yes ❑ Don't know

12. Do you have any other type of disability?

❑ No ❑ Yes ❑ Don't know

13. Were you required to take any remedial courses at this college or university before you were able to begin college-level work?

❑ No ❑ Yes ❑ Don't know

14. From which of the following did you learn about the Guardian/Renaissance Scholars program?

	Yes	No
College/University admissions materials	❑	❑
Contacted by someone from the Guardian/Renaissance Scholars program	❑	❑
Contacted by someone from the financial aid office	❑	❑
Contacted by someone from the admissions office	❑	❑
Social worker/Caseworker	❑	❑
Independent Living Program	❑	❑
Private agency (e.g., Orangewood Foundation, College Success Foundation, Treehouse, Silicon Valley Children's Fund, or College Access Program)	❑	❑
High school teacher, guidance counselor or principal	❑	❑
Guardian/Renaissance Scholar program participant	❑	❑

15. Were you required to submit an application to become a Guardian/Renaissance Scholar?

❑ No ❑ Yes

16. What materials were you required to submit as part of your application to BECOME A GUARDIAN/RENAISSANCE SCHOLAR?

	Yes	No
Guardian/Renaissance Scholar program application	❑	❑
Educational Opportunities Program (EOP) or TRIO program application	❑	❑
Financial aid application	❑	❑
Application for on-campus housing	❑	❑
Proof that you had been in foster care or were a ward of the state/court	❑	❑
Letters of recommendation	❑	❑
High school transcripts	❑	❑
Personal essay	❑	❑
Standardized test scores (e.g., ACT, SAT)	❑	❑

17. Did you have an in-person interview with someone from the Guardian/Renaissance Scholars Program?

❑ No   ❑ Yes

18. How difficult was the application process?

❑ Not difficult
❑ Somewhat difficult
❑ Difficult
❑ Very difficult

19. Why did you become a Guardian/Renaissance Scholar? [Open-Ended Question]

The next set of questions is about specific services or supports you may have received **BECAUSE OF YOUR PARTICIPATION IN THE GUARDIAN/RENAISSANCE SCHOLARS PROGRAM**. We are interested in services or supports that you received **BECAUSE YOU ARE A GUARDIAN/RENAISSANCE SCHOLAR** rather than services or supports that any student at your college or university would have been eligible to receive.

20. Which of the following academic supports have you received from the Guardian/Renaissance Scholars program?

	Yes	No
Help choosing courses	❑	❑
Help choosing a major	❑	❑
Tutoring	❑	❑
Study skills training	❑	❑
Freshman entry level exam preparation	❑	❑
Graduate/professional school exam preparation	❑	❑
Graduate/professional school advising	❑	❑
Assistance related to a learning disability	❑	❑
Assistance related to another disability	❑	❑
Access to a computer lab specifically for Guardian/Renaissance Scholars	❑	❑

21. Thinking about your ability to succeed in school, how important have each of these academic supports been? If you did not receive a particular support, please check Not Applicable (N/A).

	Not at all important	Somewhat important	Important	Important very	Not applicable (N/A)
Help choosing courses	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
Help choosing a major	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
Tutoring	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
Study skills training	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
Freshman entry level exam preparation	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
Graduate/professional school exam preparation	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
Graduate/professional school advising	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
Assistance related to a learning disability	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
Assistance related to another disability	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
Access to a computer lab specifically for Guardian or Renaissance Scholars	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑

22. Have you received financial aid from the Guardian/Renaissance Scholars program?
❑ No　　　　　　　　　　❑ Yes

23. What did the financial aid you received from the Guardian/Renaissance Scholars program help you pay for?
❑ Tuition
❑ Room and board
❑ Books
❑ Laptop/Computer
❑ School supplies
❑ Emergency needs

24. Thinking about your ability to succeed in school, how important is this financial aid?
❑ Not at all important
❑ Somewhat important
❑ Important
❑ Very important

25. Have you received assistance with housing from the Guardian/Renaissance Scholars program?
❑ No　　　　　　　　　　❑ Yes

26. What type of housing assistance have you received from the Guardian/Renaissance Scholars program?
❑ On-campus housing
❑ Off-campus housing
❑ Housing during holidays or spring break
❑ Housing during the summer

27. Thinking about your ability to succeed in school, how important is this housing assistance?
❑ Not at all important
❑ Somewhat important
❑ Important
❑ Very important

28. Has the Guardian/Renaissance Scholars program provided you with opportunities for leadership development?
❑ No   ❑ Yes

29. What type of leadership development opportunities has the Guardian/Renaissance Scholars program provided? [Open-Ended Question]

30. Thinking about your ability to succeed in school, how important are these opportunities for leadership development?
❑ Not at all important
❑ Somewhat important
❑ Important
❑ Very important

31. Has the Guardian/Renaissance Scholars program provided you with a mentor?
❑ No   ❑ Yes

32. Thinking about your ability to succeed in school, how important is this mentoring?
❑ Not at all important
❑ Somewhat important
❑ Important
❑ Very important

33. Priority enrollment gives certain students an opportunity to enroll in classes before the normal registration period begins. **Have you been given priority enrollment because you are a Guardian/Renaissance Scholar?**
❑ No   ❑ Yes

34. Thinking about your ability to succeed in school, how important is priority enrollment?
❑ Not at all important
❑ Somewhat important
❑ Important
❑ Very important

35. Does the Guardian/Renaissance Scholars program provide you with a sense of family/community?
❑ No   ❑ Yes

36. Thinking about your ability to succeed in school, how important is this sense of family/community?
❑ Not at all important
❑ Somewhat important
❑ Important
❑ Very important

37. Summer Bridge is a residential program that provides first-time college students with an opportunity to experience the college environment during the summer prior to the start of their freshman year. **Did you participate in a Summer Bridge program at your college or university?**
❑ No   ❑ Yes

38. Thinking about your ability to succeed in school, how important is the Summer Bridge program?
❑ Not at all important
❑ Somewhat important
❑ Important
❑ Very important

39. Have you received any OTHER services or supports from the Guardian/Renaissance Scholars program that have not already been mentioned?
❑ No   ❑ Yes

40. What OTHER services or supports have you received? [Open-Ended Question]

41. Are there any services or supports that you DID receive but need MORE of?
❑ No   ❑ Yes

42. What services or supports did you receive but need MORE of? [Open-Ended Question]

43. Are there any services or supports that you needed but did NOT receive?
❑ No   ❑ Yes

44. What services or supports did you need but NOT receive? [Open-Ended Question]

45. Is there an on campus drop-in center exclusively for the Guardian/Renaissance Scholars?
❑ No   ❑ Yes

46. How often do you visit/use this on-campus drop-in center?
❑ Everyday
❑ Several times a week
❑ Once a week
❑ Several times a semester/quarter/trimester
❑ Once a semester/quarter/trimester
❑ Never

47. How often do you have in-person contact with Guardian/Renaissance Scholars staff?
❑ Everyday
❑ Several times a week
❑ Once a week
❑ Several times a semester/quarter/trimester
❑ Once a semester/quarter/trimester
❑ Never

48. How often do you have e-mail or telephone contact with Guardian/Renaissance Scholars staff?
❑ Everyday
❑ Several times a week
❑ Once a week
❑ Several times a semester/quarter/trimester
❑ Once a semester/quarter/trimester
❑ Never

49. How helpful have Guardian/Renaissance Scholars staff been when you have needed their assistance?
❑ Not at helpful
❑ Somewhat helpful
❑ Helpful
❑ Very helpful

50. To which of the following resources have Guardian/Renaissance staff referred you for help with a problem?
❑ Student counseling services
❑ Student health services
❑ Community mental health agency
❑ Another community agency

51. What was the most significant challenge you faced during the transition from foster care to college? [Open-Ended Question]

52. Did the Guardian/Renaissance Scholar program help you cope with or overcome this challenge?
❑ No   ❑ Yes

53. How did the Guardian/Renaissance Scholar program help you cope with or overcome this challenge? [Open-Ended Question]

54. How might have the Guardian/Renaissance Scholar program helped you cope with or overcome this challenge? [Open-Ended Question]

55. What is the best part about being a Guardian/Renaissance Scholar? [Open-Ended Question]

56. If you could change one thing about the program, what would it be? [Open-Ended Question]

57. Are there any other changes you would make to improve the Guardian/Renaissance Scholars program?
❑ No   ❑ Yes

58. What other changes would you make to improve the program? [Open-Ended Question]

59. How likely are you to recommend the Guardian/Renaissance Scholar program to other foster youth?
❑ Not at all likely
❑ Somewhat likely
❑ Likely
❑ Very likely

Responses to Survey Questions by Campus Support Program

The following tables show how responses to the Web-based survey varied across the eight campus support program whose students participated in the study. These tables are primarily intended for the program directors who expressed great interest in what their students had to say. The data should be interpreted with caution because the samples are small and not necessarily representative of their respective program populations. For these same reasons, we strongly advise against drawing any conclusions regarding how different programs compare with one another.

Table A1. Remedial coursework, EOP/TRIO status and types of assistance received by school

	Cal Poly Pomona		East Bay		Fullerton		Orange Coast		San Francisco		San José		Seattle U.		College Success	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Required to take remedial courses	16	88.9	7	63.6	8	53.3	1	16.7	10	76.9	4	30.8	1	20.0	4	23.5
EOP or TRIO student	18	100.0	10	90.9	15	100.0	6	100.0	13	100.0	3	23.1	0	0.0	2	11.8
Received any academic supports	17	100.0	11	100.0	15	100.0	5	83.3	13	100.0	10	76.9	3	60.0	9	56.3
Received any financial assistance	13	76.5	10	90.9	15	100.0	6	100.0	12	92.3	3	23.1	5	100.0	10	62.5
Received any housing assistance	16	94.1	7	63.6	14	93.3	2	33.3	9	75.0	7	53.8	5	100.0	5	31.3

Table A2. Ways participants learned about the program by school

	Cal Poly Pomona		East Bay		Fullerton		Orange Coast		San Francisco		San José		Seattle U.		College Success	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
College/university admissions material	5	27.8	3	27.3	3	20.0	3	50.0	8	61.5	4	30.8	0	0.0	1	5.9
Contacted by campus support program	11	61.1	6	54.5	2	13.3	3	50.0	9	69.2	9	69.2	0	0.0	2	11.8
Contacted by financial aid office	0	0.0	3	27.3	0	0.0	1	16.7	2	15.4	3	23.1	0	0.0	1	5.9
Contacted by admissions office	0	0.0	1	9.1	0	0.0	1	16.7	0	0.0	1	7.7	0	0.0	1	5.9
Social worker/caseworker	3	16.7	1	9.1	5	33.3	2	33.3	7	53.8	2	15.4	1	20.0	12	70.6
Independent living program	4	22.2	4	36.4	7	46.7	4	66.7	6	46.2	6	46.2	2	40.0	6	35.3
Private agency	1	5.6	2	18.2	5	33.3	3	50.0	2	15.4	2	15.4	5	100.0	6	35.3
High school teacher/guidance counselor/principal	2	11.1	1	9.1	5	33.3	1	16.7	2	15.4	2	15.4	0	0.0	4	23.5
Current or former program participant	7	38.9	3	27.3	3	20.0	5	83.3	6	46.2	3	23.1	0	0.0	2	11.8

Table A3. Program application requirements by school																	
	Cal Poly Pomona		East Bay		Fullerton		Orange Coast		San Francisco		San José		Seattle U.		College Success	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Program application	18	100.0	10	90.9	15	100.0	6	100.0	13	100.0	7	53.8	5	100.0	12	88.2
EOP/TRIO application	15	83.3	9	90.0	13	86.7	5	83.3	13	100.0	0	0.0	1	20.0	2	14.3
Financial aid application	16	88.9	5	50.0	15	100.0	5	83.3	12	92.3	1	14.3	4	80.0	14	100.0
Application for on-campus housing	15	83.3	3	30.0	14	93.3	0	0.0	9	69.2	1	14.3	3	60.0	4	28.6
Proof of foster care/ward of court status	18	100.0	7	70.0	15	100.0	6	100.0	13	100.0	4	57.1	5	100.0	14	100.0
Letters of recommendation	17	94.4	3	30.0	15	100.0	5	83.3	10	76.9	0	0.0	4	80.0	14	100.0
High school transcripts	17	94.4	2	20.0	13	86.7	6	100.0	11	84.6	2	28.6	3	60.0	14	100.0
Personal essay	18	100.0	4	40.0	15	100.0	6	100.0	13	100.0	1	14.3	5	100.0	14	100.0
Standardized test scores	15	83.3	1	10.0	11	73.3	3	50.0	8	61.5	2	28.6	2	40.0	6	42.9
In-person interview	18	100.0	7	70.0	15	100.0	5	83.3	10	76.9	4	57.1	5	100.0	13	92.9

Table A4. Type of academic supports participants received by school																	
	Cal Poly Pomona		East Bay		Fullerton		Orange Coast		San Francisco		San José		Seattle U.		College Success	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Help choosing courses	14	82.4	4	36.4	10	66.7	5	83.3	12	92.3	8	61.5	1	20.0	6	37.5
Help choosing a major	8	47.1	3	27.3	8	53.3	2	33.3	6	46.2	3	23.1	1	20.0	4	25.0
Tutoring	16	94.1	10	90.9	12	80.0	4	66.7	10	76.9	3	23.1	1	20.0	2	12.5
Study skills training	14	82.4	7	63.6	7	46.7	3	50.0	8	61.5	9	69.2	1	20.0	4	25.0
Entry level exam preparation	7	41.2	2	18.2	5	33.3	2	33.3	5	38.5	4	30.8	0	0.0	3	18.8
Graduate/professional school exam preparation	3	17.6	2	18.2	1	6.7	0	0.0	4	30.4	2	15.4	0	0.0	1	6.3
Graduate school advising	9	52.9	5	45.5	2	13.3	2	33.3	3	23.1	4	30.8	1	20.0	1	6.3
Assistance related to learning disability	3	17.6	4	36.4	2	13.3	1	16.7	2	15.4	1	7.7	0	0.0	0	0.0
Assistance related to another disability	4	23.5	3	27.3	4	26.7	0	0.0	1	7.7	1	7.7	7	20.0	0	0.0
Access to a dedicated computer lab	17	100.0	8	72.7	15	100.0	2	33.3	10	76.9	3	23.1	1	20.0	0	0.0

Table A5. Use of financial aid by school

	Cal Poly Pomona		East Bay		Fullerton		Orange Coast		San Francisco		San José		Seattle U.		College Success	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Tuition	9	69.2	7	70.0	15	100.0	3	50.0	6	54.5	0	0.0	4	80.0	10	100.0
Room and board	9	69.2	5	50.0	14	93.3	2	33.3	7	63.6	1	33.3	5	100.0	10	100.0
Books	5	38.5	7	70.0	15	100.0	6	100.0	9	81.8	0	0.0	5	100.0	9	90.9
Laptop/computer	0	0.0	3	30.0	5	33.3	2	33.3	4	36.4	0	0.0	3	60.0	3	30.0
School supplies	5	38.5	7	70.0	15	100.0	5	83.3	10	90.9	0	0.0	4	80.0	7	70.0
Emergency needs	3	23.1	7	70.0	13	86.7	3	50.0	7	63.6	2	66.7	2	40.0	5	50.0

Table A6. Receipt of housing assistance by school

	Cal Poly Pomona		East Bay		Fullerton		Orange Coast		San Francisco		San José		Seattle U.		College Success	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
On-campus housing	16	100.0	6	85.7	14	100.0	0	0.0	9	100.0	4	57.1	5	100.0	4	80.0
Off-campus housing	2	12.5	1	14.3	7	50.0	2	100.0	3	33.3	0	0.0	0	0.0	2	40.0
Housing during holidays and spring break	10	62.5	4	57.1	12	85.7	0	0.0	8	88.9	2	28.6	5	100.0	2	40.0
Housing during the summer	11	68.8	4	57.1	11	78.6	0	0.0	7	77.8	3	42.9	5	100.0	2	40.0

Table A7. Receipt of other supports by school

	Cal Poly Pomona		East Bay		Fullerton		Orange Coast		San Francisco		San José		Seattle U.		College Success	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Leadership development opportunities	11	64.7	7	63.6	11	73.3	4	66.7	8	66.7	9	69.2	3	60.0	8	50.0
Mentoring services	11	64.7	8	72.7	4	28.6	4	66.7	7	58.3	8	6.5	3	60.0	10	62.5
Priority enrollment	3	17.6	9	81.8	14	100.0	4	66.7	12	100.0	1	7.7	0	0.0	3	18.8
Sense of family/community	17	100.0	10	90.9	14	100.0	5	83.3	11	91.7	11	84.6	4	80.0	9	56.3
Summer Bridge	17	100.0	5	45.5	10	71.4	0	0.0	8	66.7	1	7.7	0	0.0	4	25.0
Dedicated campus drop-in center	16	94.1	8	72.7	14	100.0	6	100.0	8	66.7	11	84.6	3	60.0	6	37.5

Table A8. Referrals to other services by school																
	Cal Poly Pomona		East Bay		Fullerton		Orange Coast		San Francisco		San José		Seattle U.		College Success	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Student counseling services	12	70.6	6	54.5	9	64.3	5	83.3	10	83.3	11	91.7	3	60.0	3	18.3
Student health services	11	64.7	4	36.4	11	78.6	4	66.7	7	58.3	5	41.7	3	60.0	3	18.8
Community mental health agency	7	41.2	2	18.2	2	14.3	1	16.7	2	16.7	3	25.0	1	20.0	1	6.3
Another community agency	7	41.2	1	9.1	6	42.9	2	33.3	5	41.7	6	50.0	1	20.0	1	6.3

Table A9. Contact with and perceptions of program staff by school																
	Cal Poly Pomona		East Bay		Fullerton		Orange Coast		San Francisco		San José		Seattle U		College Success	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
In-person contact																
At least once a week	12	70.6	5	45.5	13	92.9	0	0.0	4	33.3	4	33.3	2	40.0	0	0.0
Several time a semester	4	23.5	5	45.5	1	7.1	6	100.0	8	66.7	7	58.3	2	40.0	7	43.8
Once a semester or never	1	5.9	1	9.1	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	8.3	1	20.0	9	56.3
E-mail or telephone contact																
At least once a week	7	41.2	5	45.5	12	85.7	1	16.7	10	83.3	6	50.0	1	20.0	0	0.0
Several time a semester	9	52.9	6	54.5	2	14.3	5	83.3	2	16.7	6	50.0	4	80.0	10	62.5
Once a semester or never	1	5.9	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	6	37.5
Helpfulness of program staff	16	94.1	11	100.0	14	100.0	5	83.3	12	100.0	11	91.7	5	100.0	12	75.0

Table A10. Other measures of program impact by school																
	Cal Poly Pomona		East Bay		Fullerton		Orange Coast		San Francisco		San José		Seattle U.		College Success	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Helpful in coping with or overcoming challenge	15	88.2	2	33.3	8	88.9	2	66.7	12	100	8	66.7	1	33.3	7	43.8
Would recommend program to other foster youth	14	82.4	11	100	14	100	6	100	12	100	10	83.3	5	100.	14	87.5