



Campus Support for Students Experiencing Homelessness



• **Unconquered Scholars Program** •
Center for Academic Retention and Enhancement



Unconquered Scholars



- Foster Care
- Homelessness
- Relative Care
- Ward of the State



Our Mission

Provide qualified Florida State University students guidance, continual mentor-ship, advocacy, security, **and a voice** to further ensure their personal academic success and long-term independence.



Why have an USP?

To provide an array of support services promoting overall personal success to Unconquered students who have experienced significant hardships early in life that create barriers to obtaining a college degree.

Since educational achievement is strongly associated with long-term stability and independence, Florida State University is committed to meeting the unique needs of these students to make the dream of earning a degree a reality.

FSU's Statewide Initiative



Increase academic and personal success among the cohorts of students most at-risk for attrition through multi-faceted programs and support.

This may include establishing partnerships with state and local agencies that support foster youth to build a strong pipeline to the Unconquered Scholars Program.



FLORIDA STATE
UNIVERSITY

Overview

Statistics

Challenges and Supports

The Scholars Speak

Outcomes



A Few Statistics

- An estimated 1,263,323 K-12 homeless students in the United States in 2014-15
- An increase of 3½ percent of enrolled homeless students K-12 between 2012-15
- Florida ranks fourth nationally with over 73,000 homeless K-12 homeless students

Challenges and Supports



Admission • Funding •
Academics • Engagement •
Housing • Food • Health



Challenges

Admission

- Lack of hope
- Academic preparation
 - High School GPA
 - ACT/SAT
- Application process
 - Requirements
 - Deadlines



Supports

Admission

- Admissions application amended to identify Unconquered Scholars Program eligible students
- Alternate admission – Center for Academic Retention and Enhancement (CARE)
 - Reduced admission requirements
 - CARE essay
- Guidance throughout process
 - Assist with application
 - Monitor application status



Application approved!

Now what?





Challenges

ESTIMATED COST of ATTENDANCE

{Fall + Spring, 15 hours per semester}

Total In-State

\$18,134

Estimate*

Total Out-of-State

\$33,301

Estimate*

Tuition & Fees

In-State

\$6,516



Out-of-State

\$21,683



Housing

\$6,620



\$1,000



BOOKS &
SUPPLIES

Most Popular
Meal Plan

\$3,998



* The above totals do not include the cost of health insurance. Students who do not show proof of existing comparable coverage may enroll in the school-sponsored plan at a cost of \$2,344/year.



Funding

Not included:

- Summer
- Health Insurance
- Transportation
- Clothing
- Extra-curricular activities



Supports

Funding

Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)

	Unaccompanied Homeless Youth	Undetermined Requests for Homelessness Consideration
2015-2016	31,948	27,243

(nche.ed.gov)

Data on unaccompanied homeless youth collected on the FAFSA should not be construed to be representative of the entire population of homeless applicants



Supports

Funding

- FAFSA and Financial Aid Department
 - CARE grant funding
- Florida Homeless Tuition and Fee Exemption
 - Exemption application
 - Supporting documentation
 - McKinney-Vento qualified
 - Semesterly verification



Challenges

Academics

- Underestimation of academic rigor
- Autonomy
- No academic micromanagement
- Lack of time management



Supports

Academics

- Summer Bridge Program
 - 7 Week comprehensive transition program from high school to college
 - Academic assessment and class placement
- Tutoring/Computer Lab
 - Mandatory lab hours
- Workshops/PAC



Challenges

Housing/Food/Health

- University housing
 - Residence hall closures
- Food insecurity
- Overall health
 - Insurance/Medicaid
 - Mental health



Supports

Housing

- Early identification of students needing year-round campus housing
 - Campus housing is not considered “...*fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence.*”
 - Tuition Exemption still applicable
- Bridge housing gaps
 - Off-campus Unconquered Allies
 - Private donors
 - Federal Student Support Services Programs
- Living Learning Community



Supports

Food

- Scholars Snack Shelf
 - Chuck It for Charity
 - Private donations
 - *Campus family* Food Pantry
- Campus meal plans



Supports

Health

- Health
 - Medical Insurance/Medicaid
 - Dental
- Mental Wellness
 - University Counseling Center
 - Statewide agency



Challenges

Engagement

- *Imposter* perspective
- Feeling “alone” and “different”
- Withdrawal and isolating behaviors
- Distrust of others
- Resistance to asking for help



Supports

Engagement

- Strengths-based Perspective
 - Overcome *Imposter* view
 - Focus on past successes
 - Re-authoring
- Dedicated staff
 - One-on-one meetings
 - Cohort groups
- Cohesion building activities



Supports

Engagement

- **Student Advisory Board**
 - Comprised of Scholars
 - Informs programming
 - Represents needs of all Scholars
 - Collaborates with administration
 - Serve as ambassadors for the Program
 - Opportunity for leadership role



Scholars Inform Programming

- Unconquered Scholars Study Suite
 - *Family room*
 - Scholars only
 - Safe space around Scholars who “get it”
- Grocery runs
- Suits for Scholars
- Scholars Snack Shelf



Scholars Inform Programming

- Parents' Weekend
 - Scholars reported academic, emotional and social decline
- *Spearmans' Scholars Weekend*
 - Strengthen *campus family* bonds
 - Have fun
 - Reflect on college life





Scholars Inform Programming

- *A Day in the Life of a Scholar*
 - Host visiting high school homeless/foster youth
 - Instill hope
- Scholar to Youth Mentoring
 - Pilot launches in Nov. 2017
 - Grant funded

In Their Own Words...





2016 Graduating Class

94% Retention Rate • 90% Graduation Rate • 3.01 Cumulative GPA



Proposed Legislation

The Higher Education Access and Success for Homeless and Foster Youth Act (S. 1795/H.R. 3740)

- Streamline the application and verification process for financial aid for foster and homeless unaccompanied youth;
- Clarify eligibility for “independent” student status for homeless and foster youth;
- Have colleges and universities designate single points of contact to assist homeless and foster youth to access and complete higher education and connect them with resources;
- Have colleges and universities develop a plan to assist homeless and foster youth to access housing resources during and between academic terms;
- Include homeless and foster youth in the data collected by college access programs and identify ways they can further support these students; and
- Ensure college access programs collaborate with child welfare agencies, homeless service providers, and school district homeless liaisons to identify, conduct outreach to, and recruit homeless and foster youth.



Proposed Legislation

The Fostering Success in Higher Education Act of 2017 (S.1792/H.R.3742)

The **Fostering Success in Higher Education Act of 2017** (FSHEA) would improve college access, retention, and completion rates for foster and homeless youth by substantially improving state capacity to support students by:

- Creating a new grant program in the Higher Education Act administered by the US Department of Education to provide \$150 million a year in formula grants to states, tribes, and territories to establish or expand statewide initiatives that assist foster and homeless youth in enrolling and graduating higher education; and
- Establishing formula grants to states based on a state's share of foster youth and homeless youth among all 50 states and the District of Columbia, with a \$500,000 minimum grant; and
- Develop "institutions of excellence" committed to serving foster and homeless youth from entrance to completion via robust support services and by covering the remaining cost of attendance beyond federal and state grants; and
- Establish intensive, statewide transition initiatives to increase the understanding, preparation, and application of foster and homeless youth to higher education.

UNCONQUERED

