

Seattle Central Community College **College Success Program**



College Success students with Dr. Ollée

Program Background:

The College Success Program at Seattle Central Community College seeks to lessen the barriers to higher education that confront youth who age-out of the foster care system. Given the foster care experience of having all financial support abruptly end at 18 years old, a large percentage of former foster care youth enter the harsh world of adult homelessness, destitute and a societal underclass. Coupled with the effort needed to pursue a college education, many of these forgotten youth simply give up – frequently becoming the intractable homeless, the underemployed or the societal problem. The College Success Program offers former foster youth financial assistance and support services enabling them to attend college, reach their potential and contribute to the strength of our communities.

In Washington State there are approximately 400 youth who exit (“age-out”) foster care at age 18 each year. In 2005 the “Northwest Foster Care Alumni Study” documented that 22.2% of post-foster youth experienced homelessness, 50% had completed high school or obtained their GED, 30% were enrolled in at least one public assistance program, less than 50% were employed with 47% of those making wages at or below the poverty line.

Program Components:

The College Success Program provides assistance to foster youth in the following areas:

- High school to college transition
- Financial resource planning and support
- Academic advising
- Life skills preparation
- Assistance in locating housing and household necessities
- Assistance in obtaining health evaluation and care
- Tutorial services
- Cultural enrichment activities
- Career services
- Transition to university/college
- Transition to work

Current Participants:

Since the program’s beginning in October 2007, 65 students have enrolled in the College Success Program at Seattle Central Community College. Currently there are 45 students enrolled, the maximum number that can receive service under the present funding. Future students will be placed on a waiting list.

The Challenge:

The College Success Program’s funding is not guaranteed beyond 2010. It is the College’s task to obtain the necessary funding to sustain and enhance the program. **Perhaps the most important element in the College Success formula, after financial aid for tuition, is providing permanent housing.** Using various sources the program has been able to provide housing for some students, but the need for housing is still great. A housing award would provide key financial support for an element in the formula needed for program success.

Measuring Success:

A database has been created that will chronicle the progress of each student entering the program and the services rendered. **Evaluation of the student’s goals and objectives will be completed quarterly along with the tracking of academic progress.** A minimum of a 2.0 GPA is required for inclusion in the College Success Program.



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