Guardian Scholars Program

RETENTION & GRADUATION

In the spring of 2014, Guardian Scholar celebrated and recognized 8 amazing young women who, with the support of many program champions, successfully reached their goal of attaining their bachelor’s degree. Since the program’s inception, Guardian Scholars has graduated over 95 scholars.

FUNDRAISING

During the 2013-2014 academic year, the Guardian Scholars Program raised approximately $695,840 in private donations from individuals and foundations to support student scholarships, programming and operational expenses.

**Funding Highlights:**

- Guardian Scholars received grant funding to embark in a Multi-Campus Network in partnership with Orange Coast and Golden West Colleges to increase each campus’ ability to successfully support foster youth, develop strong bi-directional transfer pathways, and align local efforts to support foster youth scholars.
- Through a new funding initiative, the Guardian Scholars Program received a private donation to provide all incoming scholars with a new laptop for the upcoming year. This initiative was designed to help equip incoming scholars with the necessary technological tools to begin their college career.
- Guardian Scholars received grant funding to hire two graduate assistants to support the program in outreach and programming efforts for the upcoming academic year.

OUTREACH

During the 2013-14 academic year Guardian Scholars collaborated with various school districts, County Offices of Education, Social Service agencies, and community-based organizations to bring awareness of college access and program resources available to current foster youth attending high schools in our local community. These efforts were done through participation in foster youth college and resource fairs, informational presentations and by hosting partners on our campus with the intent of expose foster youth to higher education.

- Guardian Scholars provided admission and program information to approximately 554 foster youth in our surrounding communities.
- Outreach efforts were conducted within the Orange, Los Angeles, San Bernardino, Riverside, Ventura, and San Diego counties.

NEW INITIATIVES

In alignment with the University and Student Affairs Strategic Plans the Guardian Scholars Program implemented new student engagement experiences. These opportunities are intended to enhance the scholars’ Titan experience and aid in increasing the number of scholars who participate in service learning, community engagement, and other innovative out of the classroom experiences. The programs focused on students’ college transition, personal development and career preparation.

**Student Retreat**
Guardian Scholars Program

The 2013 Guardian Scholar student retreat theme was “Who Moved My Cheese”. The purpose of the retreat was to provide an opportunity for students to connect and enhance the GS community through a variety of workshops and activities focused on addressing the recent program transitions.

- There was an 82% student participation in the one day retreat.

At the conclusion of the retreat:
- 85% of scholars indicated a mid-high level on their “sense of community” within the program. Making it an overall increase of 35%.
- 92% of scholars indicated a mid-high interest in participating in community service activities that would allow them the opportunity to give back to the community.

Community Service

Collectively Guardian scholars completed approximately 800 hours of community service in the local community through various collaborations with local organizations.

- **Lestonnac Clinic**: During Fall 2013 scholars volunteered their time to package Thanksgiving meals for needy families in the community in partnership with the Lestonnac Clinic in Santa Ana.
- **Honkers Marathon**: Scholars volunteered their time to cheer on runners, pass out water and hand out medals to marathon finishers.
- **Together We Rise (TWR)**: The program partnered with TWR, a non-profit organization whose vision is to improve the lives of foster children in America, who often find themselves forgotten and neglected by the public. Scholars volunteered to help TRW with their Sweet Cases & Build-A-Bike projects to provide foster kids across the country with bicycles, and suitcases so that children do not have to travel from home to home with their clothing in a trash bag. *Guardian Scholars and President Scholars jointly participated in the Build-A-Bike project in Spring 2014.*
- **Habitat for Humanity of Orange County**: Scholars volunteered to help build re-build homes for veterans in the local Santa Ana community. *Students from both Guardian Scholars and President Scholars jointly participated in two home builds in Spring 2014.*

First Year Workshop Series

The Guardian Scholars First Year Workshop (FYW) series was designed to support the successful transition, retention and personal development of incoming scholars. Through a variety of workshops, FYW’s connected students to important resources on campus, and provided a safe learning environment that challenged students to begin developing a positive sense of self identity in order to become successful students.

- 100% of the 2013-14 incoming cohort of scholars was retained into their next level of education.

Mental Health Services / Life Coaching

The partnership between the Guardian Scholars Program and the Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) has successfully increased the utilization of CAPS services by GS students. Building the student and staff connection was critical in getting students to feel comfortable enough to seek the much needed mental health services in times of crisis.

- 87% of students utilized CAPS services through life coaching, individual therapy or project consultation purposes.
- 57% of students utilized CAPS services for individual therapy sessions.

STUDENT HIGHLIGHTS:

- **Dean’s List**: Fall 2013 semester, 4 students / Spring 2014 semester, 9 students
- Three scholars were selected to participate in the D.C. Scholars Summer Internship Program
- Two scholars were selected to participate in summer Study Abroad experiences in Ireland & Costa Rica through the College of Humanities and Social Sciences.
- One scholar was accepted to complete a summer internship with the U.S. Navy in their Marine Mammal Program.
- Two graduating seniors were selected to complete a summer internship with a long time program supporter, Donahue Schriber Realty Group.