

# City College of San Francisco Guardian Scholars 2018-2019 Program Summary

## Program Summary

The City College of San Francisco Guardian Scholars Program (GSP) is part of the Student Affairs Division: Student Completion & Retention Programs. GSP is designed to support current and former foster youth students to complete their educational goals in the following areas: obtaining an Associate's Degree, transferring to a four year institution, and earning certificates through comprehensive support services. Now in its 11<sup>th</sup> year of operation, it provides direct services, such as matriculation guidance, enrichment activities, campus referrals, textbook assistance, transportation passes, and when available, school supplies. In addition, the program offers services designed to address the complex needs of foster youth college students, including a clothing closet, financial aid/scholarship assistance and referrals to community-based resources. There are significant barriers to educational attainment for this population of students, who often face housing and food security issues. The fundamental elements that enable other students to persist in college, such as family support, self-management, relationship-building, and study skills, may be nonexistent. The connections forged through GSP can offer constancy and growth to these students. The program staff are deeply committed to encouraging students to become self-sufficient, responsible adults who shall use their academic achievements as a stepping stone to become productive working professionals.

### Objectives:

- Ensure successful matriculation, retention, and completion of academic goals through the provision of individualized support services.
- Deliver a safe and trusting community space for GSP students.
- Promote self-advocacy and life skills necessary to be successful in higher education.

### Services:

- Individual program orientations where eligibility requirements, campus services, explanation of steps needed to secure potential financial aid resources are discussed.
- Transportation and textbook assistance, provided throughout the fall and spring semesters.
- Free usage of computers, scanner, fax, and printing in its resource center.
- Referrals to academic counseling that can include educational planning, review of necessary transfer steps/S.A.P., and general navigation of CCSF Catalog: Courses and Programs.
- Priority registration and notifications of relative registration deadlines.
- Campus partnerships: Guardian Scholars has designated campus contacts in the Financial Aid Department, Student Health Services, Mental Health Counseling, EOPS, Career Center, CalWorks, Family Resource Center, Homeless At-Risk Transitional Students Program, Disabled Students Programs and Services, and the Multicultural Retention Services Department.
- Information and application guidance for scholarships, transitional housing programs, foster youth resources, and other similar community programs.
- Open office hours when San Francisco Independent Living Skills Program, Larkin Street Academy staff members, and CCSF Financial Aid Specialist are present.
- Various enrichment activities providing opportunities of self-growth.
- A clothing closet.
- An end-of -year celebration to honor scholarship recipients and the graduating class.
- Summer enrichment activities

## **The Need**

Guardian Scholars is a program that facilitates access to higher education for an underrepresented group of college students: current and former foster youth. Although resilient, these students have suffered from experiences far outside the normality of a typical childhood. Circumstances linked to poor academics for foster youth include abuse or neglect which results in removal from the home, trauma due to family separation, unstable school settings due to frequent placement changes, learning disabilities, psychological disorders, and developmental disabilities. Frequent changing of schools can result in an inability to form relationships with teachers, peers and school counselors, all of which may hinder a student's college success.

Each semester there are typically three to five GSP students who experience homelessness or housing insecurity. Many struggle with the lack of affordable housing in San Francisco and feel unprepared for college compared to students who attended high school in higher performing school districts and/or did not experience multiple school changes. These challenges adversely affect long-term prospects and threaten academic perseverance by forcing the student to focus on immediate survival needs. The addition of case management services to the Program would provide preventive measures to address basic needs and advance term to term persistence rates leading to degree completion.

## **GSP Program Overview – 2018-2019 Academic Year**

### **Outreach, Enrollment, and Partnerships**

During the 2018-2019 academic year the Guardian Scholars Program staffing included one full-time Program Coordinator, a Financial Aid Specialist assigned to the office one morning a week and a part time Clerk. The Guardian Scholars office is open four days a week and applications are accepted year round. New applicants can obtain an application via the CCSF website or at the GSP office. Once an application is submitted, staff discusses necessary steps for enrollment. Prior to GSP enrollment, students must complete the five-step matriculation enrollment process. If students have questions about the matriculation steps or Financial Aid, basic questions are answered at the Guardian Scholars office. California law AB 705 represents a significant new change in the way students are placed in Math and English. Students may be eligible to enroll in transfer-level Math or English classes, or transfer-level courses with additional support. Staff members ease new students into the new change.

Partnerships, both on- and off-campus, provide a fundamental network of services. It assists with student retention and encourages participants to become independent adults. GSP staff understands that the needs of each student are distinct and students may require a collection of resources. The variety of CCSF programs and community partners assists staff in making suitable referrals.

Guardian Scholars outreach efforts included referrals from partner agencies or programs, participation in CCSF campus events, referrals from financial aid/campus resource centers, Chafee grant participants, and the distribution of GSP marketing materials. During the school year, the Coordinator participated in City College outreach events, including: Welcome Day, Financial Aid Awareness Day, Unity Day, Foster Care Kinship Training, Frisco Day, San Francisco I.L.S.P. Open House and SFUSD Foster Youth Services Executive Advisory Council meetings.

### **Fall 2018**

Services for the Fall of 2018 included academic counseling, program orientations, drop in financial aid specialist hours, GSP computer lab/study area, distribution of monthly transportation passes, access to textbook assistance, snack/school supply distribution, access to the clothing closet, transfer guidance, scholarships, various enrichment activities, and targeted outreach efforts by the Coordinator.

**Academic Counseling:** During the semester’s initial weeks, it was beneficial that the Coordinator could schedule Academic Counseling appointments through the Continuing Student Counseling Department. Student use of this service is in high demand at the beginning of the semester and once mid-term grades are posted.

**Resource Center:** 77% of students who utilized the GSP computer and study area have a higher term to term persistence rate than their peers who didn’t access the computer and study area. The GS resource center continues to provide students a place of consistency where they can study and feel comfortable inquiring about resources.



**Student Activities Clothing Swap:** The Guardian Scholars clothing closet has been a basic needs resource for GSP students who are experiencing homelessness and/or are on a tight college student budget. In the Fall semester, GSP decided to co-host a Student Activities Clothing Swap. It was a college community event where students got to swap/receive gently used clothing and learn about resource centers supported by Student Activities funds (Guardian Scholars, Family Resource Center, Queer Resource Center and Homeless At-Risk Transitional Students Program).

**Fall enrichment activities:**

On October 17, 2018 there was a mini-pumpkin decorating enrichment activity at the Guardian Scholars office. Guardian Scholars provided a light lunch, pumpkins/craft supplies so students could have a chance to re-group from any mid-term stress dynamics. Attendees were asked if they felt “crafting” was a form of stress relief. GSP staff are mindful when discussing traditional holidays since it may trigger memories of neglect for some foster youth. By understanding the impact of trauma, staff effectively minimize its effects without causing additional trauma.

In November, a lunch time enrichment event took place. The Gratitude lunch included food and facilitated dialogue on cultivating an “attitude of gratitude.” The Coordinator’s goal was that students feel better about academic efforts and increase feelings of positive self-worth.

In December, one of our GS students received a standing ovation. GSP student speaker, Nikki Hatfield outlined her life/future goals before CCSF supporters. She worked hard to overcome extraordinary hardships growing up in the San Francisco’s Lakeview neighborhood, Nikki emphasized the importance of her support system, CCSF resources, finding coping practices and her teachers in helping guide her toward her objectives.

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*Nikki Hatfield speaking about CCSF Guardian Scholars at the Annual Basic Skills Luncheon*

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**Spring 2019**

Services in the Spring of 2019 included academic counseling, program orientations, drop in financial aid specialist hours, use of the computer lab/study area, access to transportation passes and textbook assistance, scholarship application guidance, writing letters of recommendations, various enrichment activities, Financial Aid Awareness Day, outreach activities, and closing celebrations.



**Academic Counseling:** Students on warning status received notifications of the mandatory academic counseling requirement. Students with poor academic standing have a history of missing scheduled appointments. The Coordinator continues to relay the benefits of seeing an Academic Counselor at key times during the semester.

**Spring enrichment activities:**

In February, GS students attended the annual Financial Aid Awareness Day. The campus event featured a photo booth, lunch, activities to learn about basic financial aid tips, campus resources, and City College scholarships.

On March 14<sup>th</sup>, 2019 the Guardian Scholars hosted a Pi Day event. The event included discussion on how students initially learned about the well-known mathematical constant, awareness of various learning styles and use of math tutoring resources.

In March, there were three “FAFSA Frenzy Days” where snacks were provided to encourage students to complete the FAFSA application while our Financial Aid Liaison was present in the office.

In April, a "Calm Amongst Chaos" lunch workshop focused on journaling techniques. Guardian Scholars provided a safe space and journals. The Clerk spoke about how to navigate your nervous system while preparing for finals. She facilitated the workshop and led a journal exercise where one had the chance to write out frustrations for a specific time period and also think about situations they were grateful for. She also discussed the Pomodoro method and how it can be utilized as a studying skill.

GSP also hosted “Snack Shack” mornings during Finals Week; snacks were provided to students as they checked in with the Program Coordinator about their final exams and plans for summer.

At the end of the school year, there were two festivities applauding the hard work of the GSP students. The CCSF Guardian Scholars Closing Celebration was on Wednesday, May 8<sup>th</sup>; it honored GSP students who earned an Associate’s degree, are transferring and/or are scholarship recipients. The 2019 John Burton Advocates for Youth Graduation Celebration was held on May 12<sup>th</sup> at San Francisco State University and honored local foster youth in higher education. It included a lunch, networking, guest speakers and distribution of awards/gifts to honorees.

**Guardian Scholars Summer of Opportunities**

In collaboration with San Francisco Unified School District and the CCSF Child Development Department, potential Guardian Scholars students participated in a Summer Employment Program. It is designed so high school students can transition smoothly into adulthood by learning job retention strategies and earn college credit by taking a college Child Development class.

Foster youth students in the program stated that the changes from high school to college can be overwhelming and confusing, especially are accustomed to mandatory appointments with various service providers. They realized that college is structured differently than high school, follow through is important and that they have to be more independent to achieve their goals.

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*Students were able to enjoy a variety of pie while learning about various Math resources.*

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## 2018-2019 Guardian Scholars Program Outcomes

City College of San Francisco is engaged in college-wide program assessments to improve effectiveness and resource planning. This section utilizes program data for GSP.

- For the 2018-2019 Academic Year, there were 67 GSP students who received direct services in either Fall or Spring semester. Eighty five inactive GSP students receive information about resources each semester. There were 33 new GSP applicants and 15 of them were enrolled.
- Over half of our foster youth population is typically part of an additional student equity population. Recent *Argos* data conveyed the following for foster youth ages 19-29: 100% of the GS students are current/former Foster Youth, Students with Disabilities 21%, Black or African American 30%, Latino 28%, Pacific Islander 1%, and Filipino 6%. The average percentages are for students who studied during the last 4 semesters.
- Course Success in the Fall 2018 for foster youth was 59%. Guardian Scholars makes proactive and purposeful referrals so students can pass core classes. They are aware about on-line tutoring, campus tutoring and academic counseling.
- School year 2018-2019 data illustrates that the most common reasons why Guardian Scholars students access services are: usage of computers and study area, snacks, and general resource inquires. Seventy seven percent of students who utilized the GSP Resource Center have a higher term to term persistence rate than their peers who didn't access the computer and study area.
- There have been a total of documented 275 visits in the Spring 2019, and many more informal visits. Each Guardian Scholars student comes in for different reasons, but the data clearly demonstrates why the Guardian Scholars Program and space is needed. The program and the office itself provides a safe space for foster youth, those who need somewhere to relax and feel at home, somewhere to grab some snacks, do homework, and feel comfortable.

## Guardian Scholars Student Successes

Since program inception, an estimated 110 students have graduated or transferred to four year universities. There were six graduates for the 2018-2019 school year. Graduates are transferring to San Francisco State University, UC Santa Cruz and C.S.U. Long Beach. Occasionally, CCSF GS Alumni will come by the resource center and disclose how helpful GSP services are. The program has established self-sufficiency and productive habits in students, which they can demonstrate in aspects of their lives. Graduates who have decided to not pursue a college degree have secured and maintained full time employment in stable industries.

## Scholarship Recipients

### CCSF Mosaic: Basic Skills Scholarship

Mary Edgar	Juan Pozos Garcia
Alyssa Garris	Yasmin Stalls-Malone
Mai Townsend	Dinora Pineda

<b>Osher Initiative</b>	Averell Mabrie
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5 *This year 3 of our Graduates/Transfer students received straight As during the Spring semester!!*

## Program Graduates 2018-2019

Lily Hinh	<i>Biology major</i>	<i>transferring to UC Santa Cruz</i>	<i>Began CCSF Fall 2014</i>
William Gusmanov	<i>Computer Science major</i>	<i>transferring in CSU Long Beach</i>	<i>Began CCSF Fall 2015</i>
Joshua Marcia	<i>Engineering major</i>	<i>transferring to SF State</i>	<i>Began CCSF Fall 2014</i>
Diane Naluz	<i>Psychology major</i>	<i>transferring to SF State</i>	<i>Began CCSF Fall 2016</i>
Edward Santos	<i>Criminal Justice major</i>	<i>transferring to SF State</i>	<i>Began CCSF Fall 2015</i>
John Smith	<i>Math major</i>	<i>transferring to SF State</i>	<i>Began CCSF Fall 2015</i>

*All six students who graduated the GS Program this school year consistently utilized the Resource Center.*

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## Program Improvements for 2019-2020

In order to strengthen retention and graduation rates, the Guardian Scholars program has the following hopeful goals for the 2019-2020 Academic Year:

**Early Intervention:** Data reveals that Guardian Scholars students have a high dropout rate within the first two semesters of college attendance. Counseling referrals shall be encouraged to ensure students do not lose their financial aid eligibility and that they receive both academic and mental health support. An early alert contact shall be made in the middle of the semester to students who have dropped courses, have low mid-semester grades, or not meeting the Financial Aid S.A.P. standard.

**GS Resource Center:** At the end of the Spring semester, the Guardian Scholars Program moved from the Multi Use Building to the bottom floor of the Student Union building. The resource center was resituated so essential new student services such as Admission & Records, Financial Aid, Student Employment, and Outreach Academic Counseling can be in one building. The GS Clerk (newly secured staff who started in January of 2019) and Coordinator shall organize the space so it is ideal for office operations yet comfortable for students to focus on their school work.

**Case Management Services:** The challenges faced by foster youth in college are complex and each situation varies. The addition of case management services to the Program would provide preventive measures to address basic needs and allow for academic achievement.

These students have already demonstrated vigor and resilience by overcoming early life adversity prior to arriving at the college. We continue to honor these remarkable young people through the Guardian Scholars Program and its partners.

## **Funding and Support**

Our program delivers services as needed so each student can have an opportunity to succeed and build important life skills to be competent and independent. With their distinct circumstances, Guardian Scholars provides essential assistance that would not be possible without funding from public and private entities. For the 2018-2019 Academic School Year, the City College of San Francisco Guardian Scholars Program operated through support from:

- CCSF Associated Students
- CCSF Office of Student Equity
- Pottruck Family Foundation
- John Burton Advocates for Youth Foundation