

Renaissance Scholars

Project Personnel

Total Award Amount \$100,000

Project Director

Name: Leticia Guzman Scott
Title: Executive Director
College: Student Support and Equity Programs

Project Description

Renaissance Scholars (RS) is a comprehensive program dedicated to supporting current and former foster youth with college access and retention services at Cal Poly Pomona (CPP). Created in January 2002, this innovative program draws on CPP's Educational Opportunity Program (EOP) and the Casey Family Programs' It's My Life framework for transitioning foster youth. RS provides dedicated case management, safe and stable housing support, academic advising, financial assistance, student leadership and personal development activities focused on empowering this population to be successful. The challenge for our community is to provide these students the educational opportunities as well as a safe, stable and nurturing environment year round. In most cases, former foster youth do not have the traditional family support structure available to other adolescents. At the age of 18 they are considered independent adults who must figure out how to navigate life and become self-sufficient, not always having stable housing and food during holiday breaks and summer. The programs affords this disadvantaged and underrepresented (URM is approximately 80%) student population the chance to obtain a bachelor's degree and focus on excelling academically while transitioning socially and emotionally.

The need for financial aid and assistance for this population is tremendous and critical year-round. Even after state and federal grants have been awarded the average Renaissance Scholar has approximately \$12,000 in unmet financial need. Increased funding for scholarships, housing, and emergency funds will make college affordable for former foster youth. Our current program can accommodate 50 students. Providing financial support through the Kellogg legacy funds helps to reduce the unmet financial need for tuition, fees, books, food, safe and stable housing. The majority of these funds are reinvested in our campus.