

PEPPERDINE UNIVERSITY

OFFICE OF THE VICE CHANCELLOR

THE GUARDIAN SCHOLARS PROGRAM AT PEPPERDINE UNIVERSITY'S SEAVER COLLEGE

Pepperdine University's Seaver College has established a Guardian Scholars Program (GSP) to provide a premier college education to emancipated foster youth. This program, which is an expression of the University's faith commitment to care for the disadvantaged and those without families, will help ensure the academic success of former foster children by providing them with the advantages and benefits of Seaver's highly personalized and nurturing academic environment. The presence of Guardian Scholars also will enrich the educational and extra-curricular experience for all students by increasing the diversity of the college's student body.

I. NEED FOR A GUARDIAN SCHOLARS PROGRAM

According to a report published by the Casey Family Programs, the nation's largest operating foundation entirely focused on foster care, 70% of high school foster youth desire to attend college, but only 10% actually enroll. Further, only 2-3% of emancipated foster children proceed to earn a bachelor's degree.

More than twice as many emancipated foster youth (22%) become homeless as attend college. The unemployment rate of foster youth at age 21 is nearly 50%, and disproportionate numbers of emancipated foster youth end up incarcerated. Clearly, the failure to properly care for young people who lack parental support has devastating effects upon these individuals as well as society.

Remarkably, schools such as California State University, Fullerton, which have established a high-quality Guardian Scholars Program, have found that the foster youth who join the program graduate from college at higher rates than the student body at large. This is the promise of Guardian Scholars.

The test of a civilized society and, according to the Bible, the mark of true religion, is the care that a community provides to the poor, the widow, and the orphan. Although many resources exist to help provide tuition support for emancipated foster children, additional resources are needed to provide supplemental tuition, assist with living costs beyond tuition, and provide the level of faculty and staff support that will assure that qualified students enroll and succeed, both academically and socially, in their undergraduate careers.



ADVANTAGES OF SEAVER COLLEGE FOR FOSTER YOUTH

Pepperdine is a Christian university committed to the highest standards of academic excellence and Christian values, where students are strengthened for lives of purpose, service, and leadership. Seaver College, the University's primary undergraduate school, is located 30 miles from Los Angeles on an 830-acre campus in Malibu, California.

With approximately 3,000 undergraduates, Seaver offers an unusually low student-to-faculty ratio of 13:1, providing a distinctively personalized educational environment. An extensive array of co-curricular and extra-curricular activities and programs are designed to create an intimate faculty/student community, nurturing students' character, aspirations, and values.

While Pepperdine welcomes students of all religious backgrounds (as well as students of no religious background), many foster youth have found that either their faith or the faith of those who have surrounded them has sustained them spiritually. Similarly, many foster youth have not been raised in environments where personal character and positive family values were modeled effectively, and they believe they would benefit from the faith-based environment that Pepperdine, as a Christian community, provides.

In addition, Seaver College has a rich array of study abroad programs located in Buenos Aires, Argentina; Florence, Italy; Heidelberg, Germany; Lausanne, Switzerland; London, England; and Shanghai, China, where students are able to spend up to a year of study in a community living environment under the supervision and leadership of Pepperdine faculty. The additional charge for participation in one of these extraordinary programs is covered by Guardian Scholars.

For students interested in government and public policy, Seaver owns and operates a campus in Washington, D.C. at 2011 Pennsylvania Avenue where students study, live in community, and find internships in government offices. Again, the additional cost of participation is covered by Guardian Scholars.

II. GUARDIAN SCHOLARS PROGRAM AT SEAVER

Pepperdine University has developed its Guardian Scholars program through research and interviews with the following sources:

- Seaver College alumni who have been foster children
- Pepperdine faculty and staff who have been foster parents
- Leaders of nonprofit organizations that serve the needs of foster children
- Guardian Scholars programs at other universities
- Faculty and staff involved with Seaver College's partnership with the Posse Foundation (an organization that provides scholarships and other forms of support to cohorts of 10 minority youth who demonstrate academic potential and leadership abilities in their home communities and commit to progressing through Pepperdine together)

Pepperdine's Guardian Scholars program is designed to support the unique needs of foster youth in ways described on the following page.

STUDENT NEED	REASON FOR NEED	PLANNED SERVICES
Navigating the Financial Aid Office and Its Processes	Emancipated foster students are often not able to fulfill the requirements of standard financial aid systems because they typically cannot provide documents such as parental tax returns as well as other required family financial information.	Seaver's financial aid office will designate a specific staff person to serve as a resource and liaison to emancipated foster students to help troubleshoot and navigate the financial aid system.
Psycho-Social and Life Skills Support	<p>Many emancipated foster students lack social confidence and feel out of place due to past transiency in group and foster homes as well as socio-economic disparities with other college students.</p> <p>In addition, many emancipated foster students have not had the opportunity to learn how to manage their own money or to see how families managed their finances.</p>	<p>Encourage students to enroll in classes offered by the Pepperdine Counseling Center including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transitioning to Pepperdine • Managing stress and anxiety • Time management and study skills <p>Offer a life skills course to include money management.</p> <p>Identify students as "Student of Concern" in the student affairs office for attention and early intervention.</p> <p>Offer mentors to students who do not already have established mentors.</p> <p>Offer students convocation credit for participating in spiritual mentorship.</p>
Academic Support	Emancipated foster students would benefit from having an established liaison to address academic situations proactively.	<p>Students meet regularly as a group for information sharing and mutual support.</p> <p>Students meet individually with a faculty mentor every other week to discuss their academic progress and other issues.</p>
Program Coordinator	A member of the Seaver College staff must oversee the Guardian Scholars program to ensure that all parts of the program function as intended to help insure student success.	A part-time program coordinator will monitor the program and talk regularly with staff and students to identify and resolve problems and design improved services.

III. STEERING COMMITTEE

Seaver's Guardian Scholars Program is managed by a campus steering committee consisting of faculty and staff who provide academic and administrative leadership and support to the program. Many of these individuals are Seaver College alumni and have themselves been foster children, adoptees, foster parents, or volunteers with foster care organizations. They include:

Co-Chairs

- Laura Kalinkewicz (BA, Seaver), Director of Admission, Seaver College
- Hung Le (BA, Seaver), Associate Vice President and University Registrar, Pepperdine University

Members

- Deborah Armstrong, Assistant Director, Financial Assistance, Seaver College
- Jeff Banks, Visiting Professor of Humanities and Teacher Education, Seaver College
- Tom Caldwell (JD, School of Law), Planned Giving Officer and Legal Counsel, Center for Estate and Gift Planning, Pepperdine University
- Steve Hewgley (BA, Seaver), Assistant Provost, Pepperdine University
- John Miller, Vice Chancellor, Pepperdine University

IV. PEPPERDINE'S PARTNERS

Seaver College cannot address the many needs of foster youth alone. To this end, a host of community partners has been recruited to help identify and support foster youth of promise. These include:

Children's Defense Fund. The Children's Defense Fund (CDF) is a non-profit child advocacy organization that works to ensure a level playing field for all children. CDF champions policies and programs that lift children out of poverty; protect them from abuse and neglect; and ensure their access to health care, quality education and a moral and spiritual foundation. With respect to Pepperdine, CDF is a referral source of promising students.

Echoes of Hope. Founded by professional hockey great Luc Robitaille and his wife Stacia, Echoes of Hope strives to awaken the spirit of hope in the lives of emancipated foster youth by providing the resources, knowledge, skills, love, and support they need to reach their full potential. Resources include textbooks, food, housing, educational guidance, wellness and health services, transportation assistance, advocacy, development of individualized plans, and life coaching by a responsible, caring adult.

Fulfillment Fund. Fulfillment Fund is a Los Angeles-based nonprofit college access organization, which provides first-generation, low-income students with the support necessary to graduate from high school and go on to college. With members of the Pepperdine family on staff, Fulfillment Fund is a referral source for high-achieving students and offers ongoing mentoring and financial support to its students.

Impacting Hearts. Impacting Hearts is a Los Angeles nonprofit mentoring organization, which works with foster children and youth to bring them a brighter future full of love and hope. A Pepperdine staff attorney serves on the organization's board.

Koinonia Family Services. Koinonia Family Services is a foster and adoption agency with 33 offices in 23 cities throughout California and Nevada. A Pepperdine alumna is Koinonia's district administrator for most of Los Angeles County.

Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services. The Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) works with public, private, and community partners to provide quality child welfare services and support so children grow up safe, healthy, and educated. DCFS will provide referrals of high-achieving students to Seaver and help qualify eligible students for continuing resources.

Orangewood Children's Foundation. Orangewood Children's Foundation supports foster children and youth in Orange County and provides scholarships to foster children from Orange County who choose to attend Pepperdine.

The Posse Foundation. The Posse Foundation (Posse) identifies public high school students with extraordinary academic and leadership potential who may be overlooked by traditional college selection processes. Posse extends to these students, some of whom are former foster children, the opportunity to pursue personal and academic excellence by placing them in supportive, multicultural teams—or "posses"—of 10 students. Posse places 10 students per year at Seaver College, all of whom receive four-year, full-tuition leadership scholarships.

Public Counsel Los Angeles. Founded in 1970, Public Counsel is the public interest law firm of the Los Angeles County and Beverly Hills Bar Associations as well as the Southern California affiliate of the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law. Public Counsel staff attorneys, social workers and social work interns work with *pro bono* attorneys and law students in assisting children in civil legal matters such as guardianship, special education, government benefits, emancipation, teen parents' issues and blocked trust accounts.

Rotary Club of Los Angeles. The Rotary Club of Los Angeles provides financial assistance and mentorship opportunities to foster youth. Two current Pepperdine executives are members.

Tower Energy Group. Tower Energy, which is owned and led by Pepperdine alumni, provides paid internships for Guardian Scholars attending Seaver College.

United Friends of the Children. United Friends of the Children (UFC) is a nonprofit organization dedicated to bettering the lives of foster children and supporting former foster youth in their journey to become successful, independent adults. Among its services, UFC prepares foster youth to graduate from high school and four-year colleges. UFC's partnership with Seaver College provides referrals of high-achieving students to Seaver along with continuing support of those students with scholarships and mentors.

Youth Citizenship Seminar. The Southern California Youth Citizenship Seminar (YCS) at Pepperdine provides 275 high school juniors each year with the opportunity to interact with outstanding leaders within American society, explore current national and world topics, discuss constructive solutions to critical issues, and share memorable interactions with their peers. Attendees are recommended to YCS by high school guidance counselors on the basis of special needs and exceptional promise and frequently include foster children, some of whom successfully graduated from Seaver College.

V. SUPPORT COUNCIL

An outstanding group of alumni, faculty, and staff, some of whom have been foster children, adoptees, foster parents, or professionals serving the needs of foster children, are serving the Guardian Scholars Program as student mentors, program advisors, and financial supporters. Council members include families who open their homes to Guardian Scholars for the celebration of birthdays and holidays and to provide a family experience. These include:

- Helen Berberian, Executive Assistant to the Director, Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services
- Ron Davis, Founder and Retired Chairman, The Perrier Group
- Elizabeth Howland Forrest (BA, Seaver)
- Victor Look, Esq., Attorney (JD, School of Law)
- Veera Mahajan, Publisher, *Malibu Chronicle*
- Charlene Underhill Miller, PhD, Marriage and Family Therapist; Adjunct Faculty, Graduate School of Education and Psychology, Pepperdine University
- Lisa Pahl (BA, Seaver), Lisa Pahl Consulting
- Twanna and John T. "Tim" Rogers (both MBA, Graziadio), Executive Vice President and President, respectively, Tower Energy Group
- Tiffany Sickler, PhD, District Administrator, Koinonia Family Services
- Ian and Janet Teague (MA, GSEP), Janet a former Commissioner, Los Angeles County Department of Child Services
- Shantel Vachani, Esq., MSW, Attorney, Public Counsel Law Center

VI. AVAILABLE FUNDS FOR STUDENTS

The education of Pepperdine's Guardian Scholars and the funding of the academic/administrative support program that supports these students are made possible through a combination of university funds, government support, and generous donations.

University Funds

Seaver College generally provides Guardian Scholars with a \$25,000 grant and a \$1,000 Alumni Scholarship toward their tuition. In addition, the University donates the time of faculty and staff who address many of the special needs of these students.

Government Support

Federal Pell and FSEOG grants generally are available to cover about \$6,550 of a student's expenses. In addition, students are eligible to participate in the Federal Work Study program, which provides the student with both on-campus work experience and additional financial support. For emancipated foster youth from California, AB12 funds in the amount of \$776 per month, or \$9,312 per year, can be applied year-round toward room and board expenses. State Chafee Grants can provide an additional \$5,000 in general college support. In addition, Guardian Scholars generally are eligible for Direct Subsidized Stafford Loans to help finance their education with low repayment rates upon graduation.

Private Donations

Charitable donations given to Pepperdine for the support of our foster youth provide an essential source of support that makes this program possible.

In addition, Pepperdine's financial aid office helps its Guardian Scholars identify additional sources of financial aid for which they may be directly eligible to help cover the balance of their educational costs. These include:

- Benjamin A. Gilman International Scholarship Program, Institute of International Education (IIE)
- California Community Foundation
- Carl H. Unruh Undergraduate Scholarship
- Casey Family Programs
- Change a Life Foundation
- Children's Defense Fund Beat the Odds Scholarships
- Children's Trust Fund Program
- CIEE Scholarships
- Echoes of Hope
- Fulfillment Fund
- Guardian Scholars
- MassMutual Multicultural Scholars Program/Hispanic Culture Fund
- NBC 4 Scholarships (administered through Fulfillment Fund to Fulfillment Fund students)
- OFA/Casey Family Scholars Scholarship
- Orangewood Children's Foundation
- The Orphan Foundation
- Renaissance Scholars
- Share Your Story
- United Friends of the Children
- United Negro College Fund (UNCF) Corporate Scholars Program

VII. TESTIMONIALS OF ALUMNI WHO ATTENDED SEAVER COLLEGE AS EMANCIPATED FOSTER YOUTH

Ms. Lisa Pahl

Seaver Alumna, Special Events Consultant, and Support Council Member

When I was a junior in high school I already had attended five high schools and lived in two foster homes, two group homes, and a shelter. I never really felt part of one place. I had moved so many times in a few years and had to start all over each time making friends and learning to trust new people. I was lacking in many areas of my life—from emotional support to financial support and even self-esteem. I was terrified at the idea of going to a huge state school and becoming a number or a face in the crowd. The thought of having 250 kids in a class scared me to death. I already felt alone in the world and the last thing I wanted was to spend four more years of life feeling isolated and not part of a community.

Once I was a student at Pepperdine's Seaver College I knew I had made the right decision. My classes were small and my teachers knew my name. I immediately felt like I belonged there and that I was an individual, not a number. I had teachers who really seemed to understand my situation and, even though I never asked for any special treatment, they were able to help me through some tough times of adjusting. Pepperdine not only granted me scholarship money, it granted me freedom from a sad and neglected life. I became a strong and confident woman while attending Pepperdine. I graduated with honors and went on to get my Executive MBA and open my own consulting firm.

Mr. Hung Le

Seaver Alumnus, Associate Vice President and University Registrar, and Co-Director, Guardian Scholars Steering Committee

I came to Pepperdine out of foster care expecting to get a strong academic degree from a nationally-ranked and highly prestigious university. I received that and much, much more.

Here, I found a family for which I had been longing for so long. Here, I found people who cared deeply for me and who provided for me emotionally, spiritually, physically, and mentally. Here, I deepened my faith and found my calling in life. Here, people stood with me and helped me with the resources I needed to heed my calling. Here, I met God at my own burning bush, took off my sandals, and stood on holy ground.

I thought I came here for a degree. What I received was a brand new and meaningful life, with so many whom I now have the privilege of calling "family."