



**Report of the  
First National Convening of  
Postsecondary Education Support Programs  
for Former Foster Youth**

November 7-8, 2005  
Fullerton, California

Hosted by *Orangewood Children's Foundation* 

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INVESTING IN CHILDREN & YOUTH

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>INTRODUCTION.....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>REVIEW OF HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE CONVENING.....</b>	<b>6</b>
Plenary Session: A Graduate’s Perspective and Background Data .....	6
<b>LESSONS LEARNED FROM THE WORKSHOPS .....</b>	<b>7</b>
Assessment of Students for Program Acceptance .....	7
On-Campus Support.....	7
Availability of Mental Health Services.....	8
Availability of Year-Round Housing.....	10
External Support Needs .....	10
Generating Sustainable Funding.....	11
The Perspectives of Foster Youth.....	11
Ideal Financial Aid.....	12
Outcome Measures.....	13
Notes from the National Organization Work Group Sessions.....	13
<b>SECOND DAY PLENARY SUMMARY.....</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>SUMMARY OF PROGRESS AND SUGGESTED NEXT STEPS ON THE FOUR OUTCOMES OF THE NATIONAL CONVENING .....</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>APPENDIX 1: LIST OF CONVENING PARTICIPANTS.....</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>APPENDIX 2: SUMMARY OF PARTICIPANT EVALUATIONS.....</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>APPENDIX 3: RESOURCES .....</b>	<b>31</b>
<b>APPENDIX 4: EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION AND SCHOLARSHIP/SUPPORT PROGRAM PROFILES</b>	

## Executive Summary

This report reviews the results of an unprecedented convening on postsecondary programs that support former foster youth (FFY). The convening was held in Fullerton, California, November 7-8, 2005. With support from the Casey Family Programs, the Lumina Foundation and the Stuart Foundation, a broad cross-section of participants were brought together to review progress and share ideas on how to move forward in increasing the enrollment and success of former foster youth in higher education.

The convening, which was hosted and produced by the Orangewood Children's Foundation, included higher education institutions, national child welfare organizations, funders, and former foster youth themselves. One hundred seventy-seven participants explored the achievements and challenges of their programs, and discussed how to expand and sustain these efforts.

Data was presented from several sources on the need for the program, as demonstrated by the numbers of former foster youth who sought postsecondary opportunities and those actually entering and completing them. Participating youth were eloquent in describing how they were helped by the support programs, and how much more help was needed for them to reach their academic goals.

Major concerns emerging from the convening included:

- The need for an effort to collect stronger data showing the effectiveness of the programs as measured by clearly defined outcomes
- The need for stronger linkages to mental health and other support services needed by FFY
- The benefits of peer support and other connections among FFY in the programs
- Stronger funding plans and efforts to sustain the programs beyond their initial funding
- The challenge of year-round housing on many of the campuses
- Health coverage for enrolled students
- Clearer directions on financial aid and the decisions about debt made by youth
- Models of state legislative support for FFY enrollment
- The lack of timely information for FFY on the full range of available support programs after youth age out of the foster care system

Many participants commented on the value of networking at the convening and meeting their counterparts from other parts of the country, as well as the ability of newer and smaller programs to learn from those that are more well-established. National organizations shared their perspectives on the growing movement in support of postsecondary enrollment of FFY, and suggested a wider group of participants who could enhance the discussions.

Strengths that were identified across programs included:

- The existence of both mature and new programs with great energy
- The extraordinary graduates—people are the programs' most important product and make up the core of the needed sales pitch

- Multiple models exist, and no one model dominates, nor should it at this stage; that underscores the value of continuing and intensifying this national networking among diverse models
- Models of partnerships clearly have been developed that go beyond child welfare and university resources to tap the many other kinds of public and private resources these students need and are entitled to receive

The content of the workshops and discussions framed a set of core elements:

1. On-campus support
2. Funding issues
3. Recruiting and screening students
4. External support
5. Mental health support
6. Housing issues
7. Measurable outcomes

The final conference report also includes a section on profiles of 47 higher education and support programs represented at the convening, with details on their operations and funding.

# First National Convening of Postsecondary Education Support Programs for Former Foster Youth

November 7- 8, 2005

Fullerton, CA

## Introduction to the Report

On November 7-8, 2005, the Casey Family Programs, the Lumina Foundation and the Stuart Foundation brought together a total of 177 participants from higher education institutions, national organizations in the fields of child welfare and higher education, funders in these fields and other interested organizations and individuals for a convening in Fullerton, California to review the accomplishments and future prospects for former foster youth (FFY) in higher education. See Appendix 1 for a list of convening participants. The convening was hosted and produced by the Orangewood Children's Foundation.

During the two days, the participants explored the progress made by their programs, the barriers they had encountered, and goals they shared for the future expansion and sustainability of these programs.

Former foster youth were active participants in the conference, and summarized their responses to the program in a powerful presentation on the final day. Their passionate expression of the value of the postsecondary education support programs for them personally, and their hopes for expansion and improvement were a moving conclusion to the two days of effort.

Evaluation comments from participants were generally very positive (see Appendix 2), including:

- *Very informative—interesting to learn about the programs and program philosophies*
- *Good opportunity to connect inter-state resources*
- *Great to hear what other programs were doing*
- *Great strategies*
- *Student voices excellent*

The conference participants reviewed the underlying rationale for FFY programs aimed at expanding participation in higher education, including:

- Low graduation rates from high school, as well as limited participation in college preparatory courses
- Low participation rates in higher education, including an estimated range of less than one-third of all FFY who enroll in two or four-year colleges and a much lower rate who graduate—although more than two-thirds of FFY say they want to go on to higher education

Many of the participating institutions filled out a two-page description of their programs, with details on support services, numbers of FFY enrolled, the unit formally responsible for the program, external support agencies in the community, and funding sources. These profiles provide a wealth of useful information and are included in Appendix 4.

The following report includes: 1) a review of highlights from the convening; 2) lessons learned in the six workshops and four additional sessions; 3) a summary of the Second Day Plenary sessions; 4) summary of progress and suggested next steps on the four outcomes of the national convening; and 5) four appendices containing detailed a list of convening participants, evaluations of the conference, a listing of websites and other resources related to the conference goals, and a program directory of educational and scholarship/support programs.

### **Review of Highlights From the Convening**

The conference was structured into several plenary sessions and six workshop themes, including:

- Assessment of Students for Program Acceptance
- On-Campus Support
- Availability of Mental Health Services
- Availability of Year-Round Housing
- External Support Needs
- Generating Sustainable Funding

Four additional sessions were held on:

- The Perspectives of Foster Youth
- Outcome Measures
- Ideal Financial Aid
- National Organization Work Group

#### Plenary session: *A Graduate's Perspective and Background Data*

In the opening plenary session, a moving presentation by Jennifer Rodriguez was well-received by all participants. Comments included “Jennifer was amazing in setting the tone” and “having a former youth speak set the stage.”

Background data was also provided in the opening session on the scope of the challenge of increasing former foster youth enrollment in college. Estimates of college attendance among FFY range from 7-48% in different sites, with an average of 13%. This means a total of approximately 2,820 FFY in the nation annually enroll in higher education of some kind. The total FFY enrollment in 2-year and 4-year institutions at any given time is unknown, given widely differing retention rates among FFY and all students.

Only about 65% of all high school graduates attend college, and about 50% of those who attend college earn a bachelor's degree. Of all high school graduates, 25% graduate from 4-year institutions of higher education. In comparison, 1-5% of FFY earn a bachelor's degree.<sup>1</sup> That represents a range of 217 to 1,085 FFY in the nation graduating from college each year. An estimated two-thirds of former foster youth could attend 2-year, 4-year, or vocationally-oriented institutions of higher education.<sup>2</sup> It should be noted that during the discussion, concerns were expressed that national data sources are so disparate and partial that caution should be taken in using these or any other summaries of data on FFY in higher education.

## Lessons Learned from the Workshops

### **Workshop: Assessment of Students for Program Acceptance**

1. What particular process do you use in screening in and screening out students?

Screening in:

- The application process itself is a screen because it requires persistence
- Outreach and recruiting applicants
- Utilization of current students for outreach
- Importance of strong Guardian Scholars on-campus staff
- Importance of starting work with high school youth
- Bridges to Higher Education-preparing high school youth for college and mentoring

Screening out:

- Lack of time management skills
- Lack of academic potential
- Lack of enthusiasm/commitment
- History of criminal activity and unwillingness to give up delinquent peers

2. What are some evaluation tools that can be used for student assessment?

- Assess the student's support system
- It is helpful to look at the resiliency of student, not just grade point averages and their background
- One-on-one interviews are key, enabling exploration of academics as well as interview skills
- CSUF's Student Assessment Tool

3. Should your program serve those students most at risk, least at risk, or a combination?

- Different perspectives:
  - Bring in students who are most at risk, but also seek those who have a dream/goal
  - Those most at risk may end up on probation, lacking the academics needed
- Programs need to know their limitations and be able to provide what they are promising

4. Should your program serve students already on-campus, incoming freshmen, transfer students, etc?

- This varies by type of institution, and by maturity and expertise of the program
- Define your mission and focus on what your program does best

### **Workshop: On-Campus Support**

1. What's missing?

- Need to clearly identify the office for former foster youth admission and support
  - EOP office needs a list of resources and contacts that is current and accurate
  - Affirm that access to services is solid; tone must be "you will do it"
- Year-round housing
  - Who: Transition age, post age-out

- When: Summer prior to Fall
- Why: Some FFY are essentially homeless; the cost of summer housing is not covered by financial aid for food and other costs
- Health care
  - Off-campus contact for medical services, with college covering costs
- Early outreach-college tours
- Transportation
- Flexible financial aid funding
- Career counseling and mentoring
- Political information and action
- Special needs students require personal contact
- Student identification-do we label them or do they want to self identify?
  - Each school is different

## 2. Answers and Practices

- Role of mentor to affirm it is okay to ask for help with life's challenges and to let down students' guard to overcome "survival mode"
- Identify someone who can provide personal or peer advising
- Educate university administration for support and top down help needed by FFY
- TRIO (Student Support Services)-tap in for money, holistic approach
- EOP, and Linkages via university commitment
- Faculty need to support FFY students
- UC Santa Cruz-Smith Society Students
  - Mentoring component-volunteer mentors (learn to trust)
  - Increasing priority and success is critical

## **Workshop: Availability of Mental Health Services**

Students get a double message: these services are necessary but they must also overcome their fear and isolation challenges

- Demystifying fear by workshops, opening door to services
- Students need to meet clinical staff in non-critical settings
- Changing labels (i.e., mental health vs. "here is what is available to help you")
- No mandating—voluntary services allow for student empowerment

## 1. What is available on campus?

- Counseling center liaison for mental health issues
- Some have access to off-site mental health site with co-pay via university insurance
- Location of services is crucial
- Free services except medications
- Resident Advisors must be trained to make referrals
- Models:
  - San Francisco State Counseling Center-no medications, 6 sessions only; 1 staff (intern) for over 300 students
  - Boise State Center on-campus-medications at Health Center

- University of Alaska Mental Health Center-all professionals, free
  - Washington State-many off-campus clinics for medications, crisis counseling, Wellness Center, counselors with advanced degrees
  - Sacramento State-Health Center with three walk in opportunities then appointments (poor location)
  - CSUF-center, free, universityblues.org (can check symptoms) CSUF-unlimited, money to use off-campus providers
  - Connecticut University-service from Yale
  - American River College-health, academic counseling, some crisis, most referred out
  - UC Santa Cruz-university insurance=urgent care, health and mental health, 10 session per quarter, \$10 co-pay for off-campus
  - Indiana/Purdue-CAPS program, \$15 application, billed to grant for foster youth (ESP=Educational Success)
  - Arizona State University-three times free, five per semester (crisis), co-pay determined by means test
  - Indiana/Purdue-very flexible with needs
  - CSUSB-6 times per year only
  - San Jose State University-12 per year, no outside resources
  - Arizona State University-state funds through Medicaid can go beyond age 21 if there is a proven need
- Overcoming funding issues:
    - California State schools do not get more money for mental health as enrollment increases-they use creative ways
    - Students can access national funding for ongoing treatment or medications
    - Sliding scale not available
    - Buy extra insurance through Associated Students
    - Private non-profits; free clinics
    - Connecticut-insurance continued after 21 if in school and doing well
    - MSI-medical insurance for indigents in some states (California)
    - MFT and MSW trainees are resources

2. What are some of the most pressing issues?

- Students may not know about the services available; this foster care population often needs aftercare. Instability in life continues from leaving the system
- Drugs and alcohol such as crystal methamphetamine/heroin
- Rape, STD's, AIDS/HIV
- Depression and PTSD; eating disorders
- Lack of money, housing, transportation can cause these issues, increase stress
- Grief, loss issues
- Coping skills, stress management
- Gender identity issues
- Pregnancy and teenage mothers
- Stress of getting into college and graduate school, finding a job after graduation

**Workshop: Availability of Year-Round Housing**

The problems reviewed in this session included:

- Dorms are shut down during vacation and summer
- Housing is not covered by some financial aid
- Housing is non-existent for community colleges

Solutions and recommendations:

- Use of single-room occupancy housing for students
- Host homes
- Roommate and mentor housing arrangements, in which roommates are selected and given support for their mentoring roles for FFY students
- Local housing authority units, with Section 8 units; Florida housing authority units are open to FFY
- Local FFY invite FFY students who live farther away to stay with them during holidays (Massachusetts)

Participants in this session also discussed year-round housing models, including some that used TRIO program support and others that structured tuition and other support so that it would be available year-round. The Rising Tide program at Orangewood Children's Foundation was discussed; with 30 youth served by having specific units set aside for subsidized rents on a sliding scale from rent-free up to \$350. Related to Orange Coast College, a private funder has guaranteed first and last month's rent for private rentals by FFY.

### **Workshop: External Support Needs**

This session discussed more than two dozen different site-specific models of partnerships in support of FFY, including public child welfare agencies, private donors, mentor programs, outreach agencies, and organizations sponsored by colleges and universities.

Groups that work with campus programs described their support roles, which included:

- Fund-raising
- Identifying and working closely with campus personnel in admission, financial aid, EOP/EOPS, academic counselors, housing faculty, and outreach
- Providing scholarship support
- Outreach to recruit students

Resources also include:

- Providing bus passes
- Summer Bridge programs
- Links to Americorps volunteers
- Outreach to faculty for better buy-in
- Providing paid staff and peer mentors to serve as advocates on-campus.

## **Workshop: Generating Sustainable Funding**

This session reviewed options for funding and fund-raising strategies, including special event fund-raising such as the Governor's Golf Tournament in Washington State (which raised \$400,000 in 2005); alumni support; support from other stakeholders, including faculty and community support; and corporation and foundation support.

## **The Perspectives of Foster Youth**

1. What are ideal program elements from the perspective of foster youth?
  - Support until graduation from college
  - Consistent program opportunities nationwide
  - College and the foster community communicating with each other and working together with the youth
  - Medicaid past age of 21
  - Support funds after emancipation for basic needs (not financial aid)
    - Better information about resources available after emancipation
    - Allowance fund in foster care and aftercare support services
  - Support system for foster youth-connecting with each other at every university and city college
  - Foster youth prioritized first in support programs
  - Support for going to college-college tours, talking to Dean, etc.
    - Social workers and foster parents support college
    - Middle school college prep
    - High school motivation counselor
    - Having child welfare agencies tell high school students about services available at the college level
  - Support for those FY with families of their own
  - Probation youth need to be encouraged to go to college
  - Housing between emancipation and college start
    - Foster youth should have priority housing, automatic acceptance
    - Year-round housing is needed, during breaks and summer
  - Need better communication with financial aid
    - Need financial aid coordinator dedicated to serving former foster youth
    - Advocate for increased financial aid budget
    - Help with federal aid, food stamps, welfare, outside scholarships
    - Having Financial Aid Office aware of all benefits financially available to foster youth (i.e., Medicaid)
2. What is working now to help FFY?
  - Independent Living programs in some counties and states (Alameda, San Jose; ILP in San Francisco extends until age 21)
  - Having an individual to contact on campus
  - Tutoring, field trips, summer living
  - Outside programs coming in to talk to and mentor youth

- Tuition waivers and SNAPS-offer financial skills
- TRIO programs-college information, support services (i.e., aid, activities, tuition, etc)
- Alaska-top 10% get scholarships

### 3. What is not working?

- Not enough communication between colleges and foster care providers
  - Lack of information on college financial aid scholarships, tests, etc.
  - Counselors not providing information on college tests, low expectancies
  - Need help with prerequisites, not getting accurate information
  - Students do not take the SAT or know requirements for college
  - No funding for tests in Washington
- Kicked out at 18, no support for 21 and older
  - No information on aftercare support services, no aftercare support
  - Living expenses and scholarships inadequate
- No transition funds after emancipation
- Different services in different counties (in California)
- Money is partly taxable
- No money during breaks
- Not enough emotional support/help
- No connection among foster youth
- No encouragement to go to college
- Tuition fees very high
- No jobs in foster care
- No information on food stamps, federal help for those who qualify
- Need housing stipend
- Foster youth at schools are singled out
  - Treated like a foster child in high school-special education, etc.
- Teachers' and counselors' attitude that foster youth cannot succeed
- Renewing proof of dependency ward (in CA, TX)
- No liaisons at schools in WA
- Scholarships are inadequate or hard to get
  - Education to Training Vouchers (ETVs)/Chafee grants not enough
  - Fight to get Education to Training Vouchers
  - Little help with outside scholarships

### **Ideal Financial Aid**

This session reviewed different models of financial aid, from independent fund-raising entities to college-based financial aid offices. Concerns were expressed about:

- A lack of financial cooperation
- Housing/financial aid bureaucracy
- Inadequate housing/financial aid
- Financial aid disbursement problems

Recommendations made by the participants included:

- Tuition waiver for state, private, and vocation institutions
- Separate financial aid student budget for those who check the Ward of the Court indicator on the FAFSA forms used nationwide
- Calculating necessary higher costs that may be required at more expensive institutions
- Better communication between Student Aid Commission and the Office of Financial Aid at schools
- Website (nationwide separated by state) for financial aid resources for independents
  - Where to go, who to talk to, what steps to take
- Well trained contact in Financial Aid who has the appropriate knowledge regarding former foster youth
- Special information on graduate school
- Communication between ILSP-Aftercare-Students
- Basing financial aid on a 12-month calendar rather than a 9-month calendar

### **Outcome Measures**

In a session on how to measure progress and success of FFY programs, participants suggested fifteen different measures:

1. Graduation rates
2. Retention
3. Persistence
4. Grade point average
5. Involvement in university programs
6. Career goals
7. Job placement
8. Increased maturity
9. Graduate school
10. Community involvement
11. Campus connection
12. Alumni support
13. Mentorship
14. External funding
15. Sustainability funding

The participants in the discussion pointed out that some of these measures are routinely collected for all students by the colleges, with detailed data that can be broken out specifically on FFY, while other indicators would require new surveys of the FFY participants on a regular basis, so that baselines and trend lines could be established.

### **Notes from the National Organization Work Group Sessions**

A set of discussions among national organizations raised the following issues:

What are the advocacy areas where national organizations can play key roles in advancing the work/agenda of promoting postsecondary access and success for students from foster care?

- Increasing **awareness** of the issue with their constituents and spheres of influence. This requires the agreement of a common message and voice by all organizations that can be customized to meet their needs and effectively advance awareness advocacy.
- Establish effective **communication** vehicles and strategies both internally and externally. These should include a variety of communication methods to advance advocacy, to spread awareness of effective support models, provide program profiles, address national policy related to postsecondary/higher education, and provide opportunities for listserve communications.
- **Practice** advocacy by national organizations needs to include knowing about effective or emerging models that are in place, informing members, looking for opportunities to replicate models, and helping identify opportunities to improve or expand models within their scope of influence.
- **Policy** advocacy at all levels will be a key function for national organizations. This needs to include national policy work, state, institutional and organizational policy advocacy. This will be an important role for national organizations and can provide us with policy expertise and advice on advancing policy work.
- There is a great need for **data** advocacy help, especially to establish a reliable data base for national and state numbers related to how many students graduate from high school, go on to college and graduate from postsecondary programs. This is related to policy advocacy as we need help in promoting that states and feds collect and report this information.
- **Funding** advocacy is needed to increase postsecondary financial aid opportunities for students as well as funding strategies for support programs. National organizations can provide both direct financial support and consulting advice to programs on stabilizing their programs financially. This can be related to policy advocacy.

Note: it was agreed that all these areas overlap and greatly influence each other. Key national organizations need to be identified and approached in the areas of higher education, professional organizations, foundations, and scholarship/service providers.

*Key national organizations* identified (need to expand in all areas to identify national organizations that can advance the work):

- American Association of Community Colleges (AACC)
- Council for Opportunity in Education (COE)/TRIO
- National College Access Network (NCAN)
- American Council on Education (ACE)
- Orphan Foundation of America (OFA)
- Child Welfare League of America (CWLA)
- National Scholarship Providers Association (NSPA)
- National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA)
- National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators (NASFAA)
- Casey Family Programs, Annie E. Casey and Jim Casey Youth Opportunities
- Lumina Foundation
- Stuart Foundation
- Foster Care Alumni Association (FCAA)

- Those targeting students of color:
  - American Indian Graduate Center (AIGC)
  - American Indian College Fund (AICF)
  - United Negro College Fund (UNCF)
  - Hispanic Scholarship Fund (HSF)

Opportunities identified (in no particular order):

- Communications work with member organizations and agencies to assist them in working with targeted higher education institutions and programs
- Identifying a continuum of private funding opportunities for members
- The need for a cost-benefit analysis for this work to show the clear economic advantages of funding supports
- The need for a national assessment tool to collect and report on outcomes data for our students at the postsecondary level
- The need to capture our successful alumni as role models and ambassadors for this work
- The National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NSPA) sees this as an opportunity to act as hub for bringing providers and scholarship funders together, and wishes to discuss planning for this to be presented at their 2006 national meeting in Atlanta
- Focus on increasing state tuition waivers nationally – collect outcome information on waivers
- Promote and expand on what’s working now – do not have to start from scratch; improve and advance pilot models
- We need to communicate this and related issues with a common message and voice. Have the network provide a common message about the work
- Prioritize community college partnerships and national advocacy work as most students start out at community colleges; involve the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC)
- Identify models for emergency funds at all levels to provide a safety net for students in time of need since things like unplanned flat tires, dental and book expenses can derail college success
- Need to identify a continuum of postsecondary options and support models to serve a wide variety of student, institutional and funding needs
- Make sure we know about and take advantage of federal legislation that relates to our cause; we need to look for policy and advocacy opportunities here
- Having a presence at national and state conferences related to postsecondary education and training is important; need to use national organizations to identify best way to present this information at workshops, convenings and conferences; and need to seek invitations to present continually and use a variety of organizations and stakeholders
- Students want to find postsecondary information more easily through a single website or multiple local, state and national information sources
- TRIO may want to identify a number of targeted programs to address this issue in high impact areas, especially with the Talent Search, and Upward Bound programs; and also need to integrate in all TRIO programs options

- Consider how to “sell” this issue in a non-categorical manner to increase the likelihood of acceptance and importance; use underrepresented, socioeconomic, disability approach
- Organizations need an inventory of K-12 services, approaches and programs that are working to increase the educational success of students before college

Challenges to advancing this work that need to be addressed:

- Need to get the word out to the public about the issue; need to adjust the negative perception of “foster care” youth and their lack of college success
- There is a significant barrier and reality because of the state of foster care services and systems (i.e., budget cuts, staff overload and case worker turnover). How will this reality impact the work?
- We don’t know what the national landscape is – need to identify what’s going on nationally and update and communicate this to key stakeholders
- We have no recognized outcome data or information sources that target foster students at the postsecondary level. How do we benchmark the initiative? Need high school graduation, postsecondary prep, enrollment, and college success information for all states and nationally.
- How do we address the pipeline issue? Is K-12 success the role of this new national network? Do we involve national K-12 organizations at all?
- The lack of educational advocates or mentors for students from foster care is a huge issue
- Need to address the lack of funding coordination from federal, state, public and private levels
- Budget cuts at the state levels make education success not a priority. Is there an advocacy issue here for us to address?
- Students need basic financial literacy skills to better manage their postsecondary financial aid. What national organizations can assist with this area?
- Redefine “merit” based scholarships to include students with lower GPAs and SAT/ACT scores but who are doing well considering what they have overcome.
- More need-based aid for students who are older and want to come back for postsecondary education or training opportunities
- How can we use WIA funds to support youth educationally? Should WIA be directly involved in this work and priority?

### **Second Day Plenary Summary**

With the wide variety of participants, we should be careful in making generalizations across so diverse a group—including these summary points.

But there were four strengths, abundantly clear at this conference:

- Both mature and new programs exist, with great energy
- Our graduates—people are our most important product and sales pitch
- There are multiple models, no one model dominates, nor should it at this stage; that underscores the value of continuing and intensifying this national networking among diverse models

- Models of partnerships clearly have been developed that go beyond child welfare and university resources to tap the many other kinds of public and private resources these students need and are entitled to receive

We also know what the core program is, as underscored by the content of our workshops and discussions:

8. On-campus support
9. Funding issues
10. Recruiting and screening students
11. External support
12. Mental health support
13. Housing issues
14. Measurable outcomes

Whether we are ready to describe standards in each of these is less clear. And so the call for stronger national networks and continuing horizontal exchange of information—always the first stage of a good collaborative—is appropriate.

It was also clear in the discussions that the resources issues, which came up over and over, are really partnership issues. It is unlikely that campus programs will ever have all the resources they need to carry out all the essential ingredients. So, the challenge is exercising the entitlements and recognizing the needs of the students, in a way that is truly student needs-driven, so that external partners can help with the resources tasks. The resources issue, in short, is the partnerships issue.

Areas where we need to work harder and smarter:

1. The costs for a good program were not spelled out in much detail; some materials at the conference referred to \$8,000 programs, other placed true costs at \$28,000. We need to get more precise about this, so that the call for “coordination of care” is for a known package that can be costed out, not just listed as an idealized checklist.
2. We need to continue to work on the outcomes. There was some consensus on core outcomes—enrollment, retention, and graduation. But the workshop listed 15 different options for outcomes, and we need to become clearer about what these are and how they may be measured and defined differently throughout the systems and institutions.
3. We may need to struggle more with mission clarity—which of the 20,000 FFY that leave the system annually are we focused on, and why? We seem to have multiple answers for that, which is appropriate at the program level but may make the national effort less than coherent.

As Jennifer began our discussions calling for us to recognize how important it is that FFY believe in themselves, we also need to believe in them, and to believe in the future of the institutions, programs, and systems that serve them.

## Summary of Progress and Suggested Next Steps on the Four Outcomes of the National Convening

In the planning for the convening, four desired outcomes were set forth. This section of the report reviews progress made and suggests next steps for each of these outcomes.

1. Establish a national communication and information sharing network for postsecondary programs supporting former foster youth

Progress: The conference continued the process of linking several dozen programs around the nation which focus on higher education opportunities for former foster youth. A list of conference attendees will be disseminated to all participants.

Next Steps: Orangewood Children's Foundation has developed the listserv capacity on its network. It will be emailing all participants to offer them the opportunity to participate in this program during the month of March. Once individuals/organizations have "opted in" the listserv will begin to exchange information on topics of interest. Orangewood Children's Foundation will continue to monitor and manage the process.

2. Produce and disseminate a national directory of programs

Progress: A total of 25 higher education and 22 scholarship/support program profiles were compiled prior to the conference, which include 2-3-page summaries of basic information and responses to sixteen questions about program content.

Next Steps: Refine and expand the 47-program directory and place it on the website, with a template enabling new programs to submit their information and have it added to the directory annually. A hard copy version is attached in Appendix 4.

3. Identify and disseminate a set of program standards and outcome measures

Progress: Discussion at the conference enabled a draft set of outcomes to be compiled, which will be included with the conference report. Core elements of programs that were presented and discussed at the Fullerton sessions will make up a segment of the draft standards document. In addition, the national program standards developed in 2004 by the voluntary coalition, the National Alliance on Secondary Education and Transition, offers a useful base for developing a set of standards that are more specifically focused on the needs and strengths of FFY. (These are available at <http://www.nasetalliance.org/about/standards.htm>)

Next Steps: Draft an outcomes and standards document during 2006 and circulate it for reaction prior to and during the 2006 convening.

4. Develop a multi-year plan for the alliance that would provide member support

Progress: A discussion was held at the conference that explored the need for a wider constituency in support of the goals of the convening. Agreement was reached on approaching a number of national organizations—several of which were in attendance at Fullerton—about their interest in further convenings and efforts to create and sustain the network. Emphasis was placed by funders and institutions alike on the need for a clearer compilation of outcomes to measure the progress of FFY programs, building on the outcomes workshop at the 2005 conference.

Next Steps: A three-year plan for the alliance will be drafted and discussions held with national organizations, based on a prioritized list developed in consultation with key funders. This plan will be based on their interest in supporting alliance activities, including convenings, in ongoing

support for the national network, and about the optimum leadership roles for national organizations, balancing the child welfare focus on the FFY and the higher education focus of other organizations. A special workshop on outcomes at the 2006 conference should review a consensus draft of outcomes now used and others that could potentially be used to measure programs' progress and success.

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## **Appendix 2**

### **Summary of Participant Evaluations**

#### **Participants and Evaluation Sample**

There were 177 participants attending the First National Convening held on November 7-8, 2005. Of the 177 participants, 60 (33.9%) were from Higher Education institutions, 105 (59.3%) were from Foundations or Educational Organizations, 2 (1.1%) were invited speakers, and 10 (5.6%) were staff members or consultants.

The following institutions were represented: American Career College, American River College, Ball State University, Cal Poly Pomona, California State University at Fullerton, California State University at Sacramento, California State University at San Marcos, Chapman University, Concordia University, California State University at San Bernardino, Cypress College, Fullerton College, Heald College, Hope International University, Indiana University/Purdue University, Loyola Marymount University, Mesa State College, San Francisco State University, San Jose State University, Santa Ana College, Tallier San Jose, Texas A&M University at Kingsville, University of Alaska, University of California at Irvine, University of California at Los Angeles, University of California at Santa Cruz, University of Southern California, and Vanderbilt University.

Participants also represented the following Foundations and Educational Organizations: Alameda County Foster Youth Alliance, American Association of Community Colleges, Arizona Department of Youth and Families, Arizona Community Foundation, Arizona Scholarship Foundation, California Department of Education, California State Senate, California Youth Connection, Casey Family Programs, Child Abuse Prevention Foundation, Child Welfare League of America, Children's Action Alliance, Community College Foundation, Consortium for Student Retention Data Exchange, Daniel's Fund, Educate Tomorrow, Education Coordinating Council, Foster A Dream, Foster Care Ombudsman (State of California), Foundation for California Community Colleges, Fulfillment Fund, Hillsborough Kids Inc., Honoring Emancipated Youth, Independent Living Initiative (Florida), Linkage to Education, Lumina Foundation, National Association of Student Personnel Administrators, Nina Mason Pulliam Charitable Trust, Orphan Foundation of America, Page and Eloise Smith Scholastic Society, Peninsula Community Foundation, Seattle Central Community College Foundation, Shanker Law Firm, SiliconValley Children's Fund, State of California Department of Education, Stuart Foundation, Student Aid Commission, Tree House, TRIO, United Friends of the Children, Washington Education Foundation, Wednesday's Child Benefit Corporation, and the Youth Foundation.

Of the 167 eligible evaluation respondents, there were 93 (55.7%) who turned in a completed evaluation form. This excludes staff and consultants. The ratings were based on a 3-point Likert scale (1=below expectations, 2=meets expectations, and 3=exceeded expectations). The top three rated sessions were: the Plenary Session by Dr. Charlie Appelstein (Mean=2.85), the Support Groups Discussion (Mean=2.43), and the Keynote Address by Dr. Richard Kadison (Mean=2.40). The lowest rated sessions were: Availability of Mental Health Services (Mean=1.73) and the Organization's Response to the Need (Mean=1.87). In addition to

providing the mean score for each evaluation item, the sample size, and rank of the item are presented below. A summary of the narrative comments for each of the items is also presented.

Item	Mean	N	Rank	Comments
<b>1. Advance Registration</b>	2.40	82		
<b>2. On-Site Registration</b>	2.53	53		
<b>3. Facilities</b>	2.46	91		
<b>4. Food</b>	2.34	91		
<b>5. Opening Session</b>	2.33	82	5	The narrative comments presented were all positive regarding the opening speakers. There were multiple positive comments about Jennifer Rodriguez.
<b>6. Issues and Challenges Roundtables</b>	2.00	25	12	No comments presented
<b>7. Promising Practices Workshop A - Access of Students for Program Acceptance</b>	1.96	28	15	This workshop was rated fairly low. Comments regarding this workshop were mostly on the negative side, especially regarding the desire for more structure in the workshop.
<b>8. Promising Practices Workshop B – Availability of Year-Round Housing</b>	2.03	15	10	Comments regarding this workshop were on the negative side. Some participants felt that the workshop was disorganized, while others wanted more solutions to be presented, and applicability to a broader base of institutions (i.e., schools without housing)
<b>9. Promising Practices Workshop C – On-Campus Support</b>	1.95	19	16	This workshop rated fairly low. Some participants commented that the workshop was disorganized and too unstructured.
<b>10. Promising Practices Workshop D – Availability of Mental Health Services</b>	1.73	15	18	This was the lowest rated workshop. Comments here revolved around the structure of the session (i.e., being too basic) and a desire for more resources and strategies in dealing with mental health issues.
<b>11. Promising Practices Workshop E – External Support Needs</b>	2.02	27	11	The comments here were neutral.
<b>12. Promising Practices Workshop F – Generating Sustainable Funding</b>	2.00	15	12	One participant rated the facilitator positively, while others commented on the lack of structure in the session.
<b>13. Developing and Sustaining Session I &amp; II</b>	2.04	39	9	The comments regarding this session were mixed. Some felt the session was very informative while others commented on the lack of structure and desire for more resources on how to replicate the Guardian Scholars program.
<b>14. National Organizational Roundtable</b>	2.00	18	12	The comments regarding this session were all negative. One participant noted that the session “did not move us toward defined action. Framework was not accomplished.”

<b>15. National Organization's Response to the Need</b>	1.87	15	17	This workshop was rated very poorly. The comments are the same as the one above in which the session "did not move us toward defined action. Framework was not accomplished."
<b>16. Keynote Address – College of the Overwhelmed – Dr. Richard Kadison</b>	2.40	80	3	This was the third highest rated session. There were several positive comments regarding the speaker and the topic being informative. There were several negative comments, however, especially the desire for a wider range of topics and information (especially on foster youth).
<b>17. Reducing the Dangers of Debt – Bob Shireman</b>	2.07	76	8	Comments regarding this session were mixed. Some participants described the session as interesting with good information. Others, however, reported a desire for practical solutions for reducing debt and more information on the foster youth population.
<b>18. New Program Action Planning</b>	2.16	31	7	This session was rated fairly well. Positive comments surrounded the opportunity to network with others and exchange resources. Negative comments mentioned having too many topics and unfocused discussions.
<b>19. Support Groups Discussion</b>	2.43	40	2	This was the second highest rated workshop. There were several positive comments on the networking opportunities and discussion. One participant, however, would have liked to see the workshop have more structure.
<b>20. Established Programs Discussion</b>	2.21	28	6	All of the comments in this session were positive. They revolved around the opportunity to network, the facilitation, and the discussion.
<b>21. Plenary Session - Charlie Appelstein</b>	2.85	82	1	This was the highest rated session. This session was described as wonderful, great, and excellent. One participant stated that "all social workers and foster parents should have this training."
<b>22. Final Plenary Session – Findings from Day One</b>	2.40	49	4	The comments regarding this session were largely positive. Several of the participants especially appreciated the students' voices.

## Appendix 3 Resources

### National Organization Websites:

Casey Foundation: <http://www.casey.org/Home>

Lumina Foundation: <http://www.luminafoundation.org/>

Stuart Foundation: <http://www.stuartfoundation.org/>

Orangewood Children's Foundation: <http://www.orangewoodfoundation.org/>

American Association of Community Colleges (AACC): <http://www.aacc.nche.edu/>

Council for Opportunity in Education (COE/TRIO): [www.trioprogams.org](http://www.trioprogams.org)

Orphan Foundation of America (OFA): [www.orphan.org](http://www.orphan.org)

Child Welfare League of America (CWLA): [www.cwla.org](http://www.cwla.org)

National Scholarship Providers Association (NSPA): [www.scholarshipproviders.org](http://www.scholarshipproviders.org)

Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education (NASPA): [www.naspa.org](http://www.naspa.org)

### Resources

The Casey Alumni Study:

<http://www.casey.org/Resources/Publications/NationalAlumniStudy.htm>

It's My Life: Postsecondary Education and Training Guide:

<http://www.casey.org/Resources/Publications/IMLPostsecondaryEd.htm>

Federal Review of Former Foster Youth Issues:

<http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/publications/afcars/report10.pdf>

Data on Higher Education:

<http://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d04/>

<http://www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ovae/resource/aaccoverview.doc>

Data on Former Foster Youth Attendance:

<http://www.nrcys.ou.edu/nrcyd/publications/monographs/etv.pdf>

[http://www.chapinhall.org/article\\_abstract.aspx?ar=1355&L2=61&L3=130](http://www.chapinhall.org/article_abstract.aspx?ar=1355&L2=61&L3=130)

<http://www.luminafoundation.org/research/fostercare.pdf>

Discussion of Barriers to Retention of Students in Higher Education:

<http://www.ecs.org/ecsmain.asp?page=/html/IssuesPS.asp>

[http://www.ccsr.org/retention\\_journal.htm](http://www.ccsr.org/retention_journal.htm)

A report that Places Foster Youth in the Wider Context of all Disconnected Youth:

[http://www.clasp.org/publications/Disconnected\\_Youth.pdf](http://www.clasp.org/publications/Disconnected_Youth.pdf)

Thomas Mortensen, "A Nation At Risk, Again," *Postsecondary Education Opportunity* Number 131, (May 2003) and Sandra Ruppert, *Closing the College Participation Gap: A National Summary* (Denver: Education Commission of the States, 2003).

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NOTES

<sup>1</sup> The 1-5% estimate is drawn from the Casey Alumni study literature review (p. 29); 9% of Casey graduates had B.A. degrees.

<sup>2</sup> This estimate is based on the findings from the Chapin Hall study (and other surveys of FFY) that

- 47% report being placed in special education classrooms.[other studies documented 34-38%]
- 37% had to repeat a grade.
- 67% received an out-of-school suspension.
- 17% were expelled from school.
- Many of the youth showed reading deficits, 44% read at a high school level or higher.

Other studies of different groups of FFY have documented that

- Of those using supports, about two-thirds incurred expenses for higher education;
- 45% had taken higher education courses;
- 48% had received education beyond high school
- 57% had taken post-secondary courses;
- 34% had completed some college; 5% had graduated.