

WESTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY

CENTER FOR FOSTERING SUCCESS

SEITA SCHOLARS PROGRAM

ANNUAL REPORT 2012-13



SEITA SCHOLAR DEMOGRAPHICS

Since fall 2008, the Seita Scholars program has enrolled 254 students from foster care at Western Michigan University. The Seita Scholar student group is a diverse group of individuals who have a wide range of college and career interests. Demographic characteristics of the total incoming student group (since 2008) are shown below.

- **HOME COUNTIES:** 40 counties in Michigan
- **GENDER:** 60% female, 40% male
- **RACE:** 48% Black or African-American, 41% White Non-Hispanic, 11% Other
- **AGE:** 17–25 years old
- **MAJORS:** Over 39 different majors in science, arts, aviation, education and professional degrees
- **STATUS:** 75% Freshman, 25% Transfer
- **ACHIEVEMENTS:** 15+ Students on the Dean's Honor List each fall and Spring Semester; State Foster Care Advisory Board; Kalamazoo foster Care Advisory Board; Residence Hall Assistants; Professional Internships; 4 Students selected for Study Abroad program; Student Selected as Presidential Scholar; Leadership positions in student organizations.



2008-09 INCOMING SEITA SCHOLARS (N=51)



2009-10 INCOMING SEITA SCHOLARS (N=47)



2010-11 INCOMING SEITA SCHOLARS (N=54)



2011-12 INCOMING SEITA SCHOLARS (N=57)



2012-13 INCOMING SEITA SCHOLARS (N=47)

WMU MILESTONES FOR THE SEITA SCHOLARS PROGRAM FOR THE 2012-2013 ACADEMIC YEAR

- JUN 2012:** State Budget Director John Nixon visits Seita Scholars Program.
- JUL 2012:** Held second annual Seita Early Transition (SET) Week for incoming Seita Scholars.
- JUL 2012:** Hosted 1st ever Career Mentor Speed Networking Dinner to match potential mentors and scholars.
- JUL 2012:** Participated in the Congressional Caucus National Listening Tour.
- AUG 2012:** Welcomed 113 returning and 47 new Seita Scholars. Total of 160 students.
- AUG 2012:** State Representative Bruce Caswell and Senator Tonya Schuitmaker visit Seita Scholars Program.
- SEP 2012:** Instituted 5-year graduation plan development to scholars
- SEP 2012:** Added a volunteer CPA to help students develop personal budgets
- OCT 2012:** Fostering Success Michigan hosts Higher Education Regional Network Meeting at WMU.
- OCT 2012:** Seita Scholars Program receives a \$750,000 state grant to use towards enhancing the program.
- DEC 2012:** 3 Seita Scholars graduate from WMU, bringing the total number of graduates to 18.
- DEC 2013:** Center for Fostering Success approved, which houses the Seita Scholars Program
- JAN 2013:** Launched the Training and Certification Coordinator role focusing on the Coaching Model
- MAR 2013:** Hired 3 new Campus Coaches & Manager for Program Development
- MAR 2013:** Student selected as a Presidential Scholar
- APR 2013:** 7 Seita Scholars graduate from WMU, bringing the total number of graduates to 25.

GOAL OF THE SEITA SCHOLARS PROGRAM

WMU's overall goal is to increase opportunities for foster youth to pursue higher education and to provide supports that promote success and well-being throughout their undergraduate experience at WMU. The primary objectives of the Seita Scholars program is to promote academic success toward college graduation that leads to professional employment upon graduation, while maintaining personal well-being, developing career aspirations, and building leadership capabilities. The program has four main components:

1. Create **transitions** that lead to success in college and career for WMU students from foster care ages 18–25.
2. Develop **community** of scholars among WMU students who have aged out of foster care (Create safe community to deconstruct and reconstruct identity).
3. **Educate** WMU students from foster care and their support network to enhance professional skill set.
4. **Transform** WMU Students from foster care by integrating experiences of one's past to build opportunities for the future.

THE WMU SEITA SCHOLARSHIP

- Full-tuition for WMU undergraduate degree.
- Students reside on campus and participate in the Seita Scholars Program.
- An ETV-eligible student who maintains good academic standing, budgets wisely, and meets deadlines may graduate with a Bachelor's degree with no or low student loans.

¹ Wolanin, T. (2005). *Opportunities for foster youth: The institute for higher education policy*. Retrieved from <http://www.ihep.org/assets/files/publications/m-r/OpportunitiesFosterYouth.pdf>

² Casey Family Programs. (2010). *Supporting success: Improving higher education outcomes for students from foster care*. Retrieved from <http://www.casey.org/Resources/Publications/pdf/SupportingSuccess.pdf>

KEY PROGRAM SUPPORTS

- Campus Coaches (24 hour on call support, meeting student needs at locations and times that are convenient to the student)
- Student care packages (Welcome Week, Exam Week, Campus Breaks)
- Year-round campus housing
- Financial aid and financial planning assistance
- Work study, employee skill development
- Academic assessment, support and monitoring
- Campus engagement and social connections
- Cultural and personal identity development
- Leadership development
- Career mentoring
- Healthy living; physical and mental health care
- Support with other systems (e.g., courts, human services, Medicaid, public assistance)

KEY CAMPUS PARTNERS

Advising, AFSCME 1668 (service union), Alpha Program, Office of Admissions, Department of Financial Aid, Career and Student Employment Services, Counseling and Testing Center, Dean of Students, Dining Services, Disability Services for Students, Division of Multicultural Affairs, First Year Experience, Office of Student Conduct, WMU Police, Residence Life, Sindecuse Health Center, Center for Academic Success Programs, Exploratory Advising, Steps Toward Exhibiting Mastery (STEM), TRiO FESP.

New: Study Abroad, CELCIS, CAMP, College of Arts & Sciences, Counseling & Psychology

KEY COMMUNITY PARTNERS

Michigan Department of Human Services, Foster Care Youth Boards, Community volunteers, Foster care agencies, Community Mental Health, Kalamazoo Valley Community College (KVCC), Parkwest Foundation, W.K. Kellogg Foundation, Guido A. and Elizabeth H. Binda Foundation, Harold and Grace Upjohn Foundation, Speckhard-Knight Charitable Foundation, Paul and Bonnie MacGrayne.

New: Michigan Education Trust (MET), Michigan State Legislature

STUDENT GROWTH

The number of students enrolled in the Seita Scholars program has increased every year of the program since its inception in fall 2008. Prior to the start of the program, there were 12 students from foster care on campus. The launch of the Seita Scholars program brought 51 students from foster care to WMU's campus. The program served 77 Seita Scholars in fall 2009 and grew to 118 students in fall 2010. The program grew to 141 students in fall 2011, and was the first year that all eligible students were not enrolled in the program due to funding limitations. In fall 2012, the program welcomed 47 new Seita Scholars to WMU bringing the total of scholars on campus to 160 students. The outlook for 2013 is strong. To support Seita Scholars, WMU offers in \$1.6 million dollars in tuition scholarships to students who are alumni of foster care.

THE CAMPUS COACH-TO-STUDENT RATIO

In the original plan, the Seita Scholars Program was expected to grow to 150 students and 6 coaches over five years. The proposed campus coach-to-student ratio in this original plan was 1-to-25. Through the support of this year's \$750,000 state grant we were able to hire 2 additional campus coaches. This, plus partnering with WMU Administration, DHS, and other community groups, we anticipate to start fall of 2013 with a 1-to-23 coach to student ratio. Programming and grant management is supported with graduate assistants who also assist students with accessing donated goods and services, connecting students to career mentors, and much more. Additionally, the DHS Coach along with the Liaison provide essential services involving various systems including foster care, Medicaid, Community Mental Health, and Public Assistance. Funding for the DHS Coach and Liaison is provided by the Department of Human Services.

In addition to the challenges experienced by other students who are first in their family to attend college, students from foster care bring to campus the collective trauma that stems from childhood abuse and neglect, and placement in foster care which can involve separation from siblings and multiple foster care homes.¹

It is important to understand that Seita Scholars also achieve many accomplishments in their time as Broncos. For example, 18 made the Dean's List in spring 2013, Director and Seita Scholars are actively involved in leadership positions in student organizations, serving as Assistants to the Director, participating on club teams, athletics, and representing WMU in speaking about the foster care issues to raise awareness about obstacles to higher education and their solutions.

Campus coaches work with Seita Scholars to promote achievement and manage challenges. Current staffing allocations present an average ratio of one coach to 23 students. This ratio allows for Coaches, who are paid a 40-hour week, to spend approximately 4 hours per month per student, which may be truly a bare minimum if coaches are expected to develop quality trusted relationships with their students. The table below shows the amount of time coaches spend in direct communication with their students through texting, telephone, face-to-face and group contact. Coaches spend on average more than one-third of their work day in direct contact with students. In addition to the workload displayed in the table below, coaches also provide on-call service after business hours and on weekends. Cell phone record data show that each coach initiates or receives an average of 35 on-call (after hour) phone interactions related to students per month, and spends an average total of 2 hours per month with on-call (after-hour) phone interactions.

Average Per Coach	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Avg. per month
Avg # hours leaving voice/e-mail messages	1	4.5	1	1.5	2
Avg # hours texting	7	7	10	8	8
Avg # hours phone contact	4.5	6	5.5	3	4.75
Avg # hours face-to-face contact	22	26	39	29	29
Avg # hours of group contact	2	2.5	28.5	34.5	16.9
Avg TOTAL # hours of direct contact	36.5	46	84	76	61
Avg # business hours worked (AL, SL, holidays removed)	128	172	166	172.5	160
Avg % of 40 hour work week in direct contact	28.5%	26.7%	50.6%	44.5%	38.1%
Actual Hours per Student	1.14	1.44	2.63	2.40	1.90
Total Hours Available per Student	4.0	5.4	5.2	5.4	5.0

Note: the Child Welfare League of America's caseload recommendation is 12-15 children per worker for foster care. The rationale for this low caseworker-to-child ratio is: "Child welfare work is labor intensive. Caseworkers must be able to engage families through face-to-face contacts, assess the safety of children at risk of harm, monitor case progress, ensure that essential services and supports are provided, and facilitate the attainment of the desired permanency plan. This cannot be done if workers are unable to spend quality time with children, families, and caregivers." (Source: <http://www.cwla.org/programs/standards/caseloadstandards.htm>)

¹Wolanin, T. (2005). *Opportunities for foster youth: The institute for higher education policy*. Retrieved from <http://www.ihep.org/assets/files/publications/m-r/OpportunitiesFosterYouth.pdf>

STUDENT OUTCOMES

The Seita Scholars program is a student-centered, theory-based, and data-driven program. A sample of fall semester student outcomes for all five cohorts of students is presented below.

Outcome Measures	2008-09 (n=51)	2009-10 (n=47)	2010-11 (n=54)	2011-12 (n=57)	2012-13 (n=47)
... persisted through to end of fall semester	94%	100%	96%	98%	98%
... withdrew from 1+ courses in fall semester	55%	51%	41%	33%	19%
... GPA at 2.0 or higher at end of fall semester	47%	81%	61%	53%	65%
... persisted thru to spring semester	76%	94%	94%	91%	89%
... Returning 3 rd semester (2 nd year)	53%	81%	70%	69%	-

As previously stated, only 2-4% of foster youth earn a college degree in 6 years. Entering spring semester, our first cohort was on a 36% WMU graduation rate, while 25% had received their degree. See below for updates on the remaining cohorts.

Persistence to Graduation Rates

A Seita Scholar Cohort	B Number in Cohort	C Number of WMU Graduates	D % Graduated from WMU	E Number on Track to Graduate	F % on Track to Graduate from WMU*
2008-09	53	13	25%	6	36%
2009-10	50	4	8%	20	48%
2010-11	55	1	2%	34	64%
2011-12	57	-	-	40	70%
2012-13	47	-	-	46	98%

* Number includes WMU graduates (column D) as of the beginning of Spring 2013

Only 2%-4% of Foster Care Alumni graduate from a post-secondary institution nationally.**

**Source: Casey Family Programs. (2010). *Supporting success: Improving higher education outcomes for students from foster care*. Retrieved from <http://www.casey.org/resources/publications/SupportingSuccess.htm>



WESTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY

SEITA SCHOLARS PERFORMANCE COMPARED TO OTHER FTIAC STUDENTS AT WMU

Research has shown that foster youth are not only less likely to enroll in college but they are also less likely to graduate with a college degree in 6 years. Only 2-4 percent of foster youth are expected to graduate college, compared to 24% of their non-foster care peers in the general population. The table below compares Seita Scholars who are First Time in Any College (FTIAC) to other FTIAC freshman at WMU in the same semester. The table shows that Seita Scholars are less prepared academically for college, and this academic achievement gap persists in the first semester of colleges, as evidenced by lower Fall GPAs. Third-semester retention rates show that Seita Scholars are well on the way to exceeding a 2-4 percent graduation rate. The program's retention rate increased considerably over the past 4 years versus the first cohort, and is expected to remain about 70% for fall 2012.

	Fall 2008 (Cohort = 55)				Fall 2009 (Cohort = 50)				Fall 2010 (Cohort = 55)				Fall 2011 (Cohort = 57)				Fall 2012 (Cohort = 47)			
	Seita FTIAC Count	Seita FTIAC	FTIAC Count	FTIAC	Seita FTIAC Count	Seita FTIAC	FTIAC Count	FTIAC	Seita FTIAC Count	Seita FTIAC	FTIAC Count	FTIAC	Seita FTIAC Count	Seita FTIAC	FTIAC Count	FTIAC	Seita FTIAC Count	Seita FTIAC	FTIAC Count	FTIAC
Number of Students	24		3,806		33		3,163		47		3,354		45		3,132		37		2,989	
% Minority	12	50	727	19.1	19	57.58	701	22.16	25	53.19	833	24.84	25	55.56	836	27.00	15	40.54	860	29.08
Average ACT	21	18.57	3,646	21.95	31	18.87	3,063	22.04	44	18.98	3,286	22.07	45	18.82	3,030	21.94	34	18.76	2,880	21.89
High School GPA	20	2.98	3,685	3.23	32	3.16	3,130	3.27	44	3.08	3,333	3.28	45	3.03	3,087	3.27	35	3.09	2,948	3.28
Fall GPA 1st Semester	23	1.44	3,758	2.84	33	2.29	3,125	2.87	46	2.37	3,313	2.86	45	2.30	3,096	2.89	37	2.39	2,957	2.92
Retention Fall 2nd Year	11	46%	2,756	72%	28	85%	2,404	76%	33	70%	2,494	74%	31	69%	2,288	73%				

FUNDING

- In the 2012-13 academic year, Western Michigan University provided almost \$1.6 million in tuition scholarships to students from foster care.
- Nearly \$525,000 were received in funding through gifts and grants, and these funds directly support the operational costs of the Seita Scholars program. Funding sources include: W.K. Kellogg Foundation, Guido A. and Elizabeth H. Binda Foundation, Harold and Grace Upjohn Foundation, Speckhard-Knight Charitable Foundation, Paul and Bonnie MacGrayne, Michigan Education Trust, and the State of Michigan Department of Human Services (DHS).
- In the fall of 2012, the State of Michigan provided the Seita Scholars Program with a \$750,000 state grant. This funding will be used to support two additional campus coaches, develop a statewide campus coach certification program, provide students with professional and personal development opportunities, fund additional academic scholarships for scholars, and support additional program needs.
- Michigan Education Trust (MET) is a new donor to the Seita Scholars program. Funds provided by MET are currently utilized to support scholars no longer eligible for the Education and Training Voucher (ETV).
- Kalamazoo County Department of Human Services continued their support of the Seita Scholars program by assigning an additional caseworker to the program to serve as a campus coach and an additional staff member as a student DHS Liaison. Two additional coaches were hired, utilizing funds from the state grant, which brings the total number of full-time campus coaches to 6. The two personnel assist Seita Scholars with navigating DHS and various other systems. While the DHS personnel spend the majority of their time at the Seita Scholars program, they also serve as the Kalamazoo County Michigan Youth Opportunities Initiative (MYOI) Coordinators, and provides back up service support to the local DHS office as needed.