



The need: National data states that about half of the foster youth emancipating earn a high school degree; only 3-4% attends college; and sadly, only 50 to 60% of these students will achieve the goal of obtaining a four year degree. California State University San Marcos has started a program to address this population. There are 3-4,000 children living in foster care in the CSUSM service region. Each year 3-400 foster youth “age out” of the system with little or no opportunity to receive a solid academic foundation. Only 15% take necessary preparatory courses to gain college admission; fewer than 10% who graduate high school go on to college; 8% obtain a 2-year degree; less than 2% obtain a 4-year degree; and less than 1% obtains a graduate degree. These staggering statistics have not improved significantly over the years and this is precisely why CSUSM proactively developed a program to address the unique needs of this underserved population.

The mission: increase the rate of foster youth matriculation into, and graduation from, CSUSM.

The program: provide an opportunity for all foster youth to obtain a four year college degree through individualized services that move the student from a highly dependent state to a self-sustaining confident individual integrated into the college community. ACE targets former foster youth who were placed in the system on or after their 13 birthday and remained in the system for more than two years or was emancipated and under the age of 26. The program goal is to have a 70% retention rate.

ACE Scholars Services program consists of six components:

1. **To encourage and assist foster youth to prepare for college:** thought outreach efforts that increase the number of foster youth that prepare for college and providing a guaranteed admission to Cal State San Marcos if they are prepared.
2. **To facilitate the transition from high school to college:** by guiding foster youth through the admissions and financial aid process, enrolling them in the six-week “Summer Bridge” program and securing year-round housing and freshman that address academics and social issues.
3. **To provide support services needed to ensure college success:** that include monitoring, tutoring, crisis intervention, gap scholarships or short term loans, Working-Scholarship and ongoing support as they navigate college life.
4. **To facilitate the transition from college to workforce:** on-campus job, career counseling and professional mentoring.
5. **To instill a sense of responsibility to help other foster youth:** by talking with foster youth who take campus tours.
6. **To assure stable and consistent services through program self-sufficiency:** thought an Create entrepreneurial endeavors, endowment and providing donors opportunities

Enrollment: There are currently 37 former foster youth enrolled in 2010-2011. We project the numbers to increase to 45 in the fall 2011.

	ACE Scholars Services			
Year	2007	2008	2009	2010
Students	9	18	29	37
Retention Rate	64%	78%	90%	88%
Graduated	0	1	3	3