

**Project Title** Fostering student success to foster youth students at GCC  
**Principal Applicant** Marlene Barrera, Administrative Specialist Sr.,  
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**Name, title, college/district office of each team member who created the innovation.**

GCC Foster Youth Champions Committee, Glendale CC, and Tri-chair:

- Dr. Genesis Toole, Interim Dean of Student Life,
- Ingrid Austin, Student Services Specialist, and
- Marlene Barrera, Administrative Specialist Sr.

Virtual Session Subcommittee: Tina Franklin, Elena Beltran, Ingrid Austin, and Marlene Barrera  
Sam Garman, Bridging Success Coordinator, District Office

**Winning innovations should fall into one of the following categories. Select the category most strongly aligned to the project (maximum of one)**

Student Services and Activities

**Winning innovations should meet one or more of the following criteria. When submitting your college's winner, please select the criteria that best apply to the innovation (select all that apply).**

Creativity.

The innovation should be original or the adaptation creative. The program description or letters from experts are examples of evidence.

**Project Summary (maximum of 1,000 characters)**

The Foster Youth Champions is a committee of GCC staff who are from different areas from Students Affairs and Academic Affairs. According to the most recent research, less than 10 percent of foster youth graduate from college (Foster Care to Success.2020). Over the course of the 2020 year, we have started campaigns where the committee takes on a number of students each semester to mentor via phone calls and emails. Offering mentorship has given the opportunity to build a relationship with the students and be the point of contact for them. We have incorporated mentoring this past year due to COVID and the college-going remote at the time. As a group we wanted to ensure students were doing well during this big adjustment we all had to make. We know there are some challenges aging out from the foster care system, and we want to make it easiest as possible. That is our ultimate goal. The committee also works collaboratively with Sam Garman, Bridging Success Project Coordinator.

**Project Description (maximum of 1,000 words)**

The challenges and barriers foster youth may face, to name a few, are getting to be on their own after aging out of the foster youth system. For example, it could be as simple as getting a driver's license or a copy of their birth certificate to begin with. As a foster youth committee being led by the Interim Dean of Student Life, we created partnerships on campus and worked

with outside organizations to make foster youth enroll in college as simple as possible. Such as the program managers from Foster Care to Success, career development specialists from Arizona friends of Foster Children Foundation and the YMCA.

In creating these partnerships, we hosted events such as Foster Youth CTE Showcase to learn about career opportunities in Administrative Justice, Automotive Technology, Behavioral Health Sciences, Business, Computer Information Systems, EMT, Fire Science, Nursing, and Personal Training. This was a collaborative effort with various departments on campus and staff. The planning team involved Interim Dean of Student Life, Izelle Silva, Director of Career Services, Michelle Alcantar, Development Director, and Susan Campbell, Interim Dean of Academic Affairs Career & Technical Education, and Marlene Barrera, Admin Specialist Sr.

We were able to achieve students to admission themselves to the college, obtain a college tour based on their interests, and a workshop to help explore career options.

We have also been a part of the Exploring Possibilities Conference that took place in Spring 2019, where all high schools were invited and we had a table where we promoted the Bridging Success Initiative with Sam Garman. We are able to give GCC Foster Youth information to students who were interested.

Recently, GCC Foster Youth Champions has added a collaborative effort on creating and hosting virtual sessions geared towards fostering youth students. The virtual sessions are to support new and current students who have experienced Foster Youth. Our goal is to increase college attendance and completion rates among students aging out of the foster care system. GCC seeks to increase our service to foster care youth through community engagement, student services, and support and alignment of existing programs and resources supporting college access and success.

This is a collaborative effort with other student services areas such as Testing & Tutoring, Admissions, Records, & Registrar, Financial Aid, Academic Advisement, Career Services, Counseling, Student Leadership, and the EXCEL program. In addition to working with Recruitment to invite high school seniors who are in foster care, and GCC foster youth champions who will be outreaching to current Foster Youth students from GCC.

The goals and vision of this project are to increase college attendance, and offer resources and services to foster youth students. Each session will provide;  
an ENGAGING presentation to educate students about various resources in place  
Connect students to the experts in different departments  
Support students in any processes that departments require for admission, engagement, and/or student success.