



WESTERN MICHIGAN
UNIVERSITY



Fostering Success:

Western Michigan University's Seita Scholars

2018 Phi Kappa Phi Excellence in Innovation Award Portfolio

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Fostering Success: Western Michigan University's Seita Scholars

Introduction

They've been called "the last unrecognized minority." The nation's 23,000 young people who age out of foster care each year move on to a future that rarely includes higher education—even though their dreams and desire to attend college mirror the aspirations of the general young adult population

For the past decade, the untapped potential of foster care alumni has been the focus of transformational work at Western Michigan University. The WMU Center for Fostering Success' signature Seita (SEE-tah) Scholars Program is a comprehensive support system that includes a scholarship, an on-campus home for students and a formalized campus coaching program that provides academic and personal support. Since its inception, the program has:

- Dramatically increased both the presence and degree success of former foster care youth on the WMU campus,
- Established best practices that have informed a statewide network responsible for expanding higher education opportunities for foster care alumni in colleges and universities across Michigan, and
- Developed a model for student success that is scalable and adaptable by schools nationwide for former foster youth, with elements that can be used to help any student population make a strong personal connection leading to college success.

With the program celebrating its 10th anniversary this year, the WMU campus has grown from a place where 12 former foster care students were once enrolled and struggling to succeed, to a home for 150 foster care alumni fully integrated into campus life and taking their place in national honor societies, securing internships and engaging in fellowships and study abroad opportunities. The students are also staying on track for successful careers or graduate school.

The campus is also now home to the Center for Fostering Success, established in 2012, which conducts research and has trained campus coaches for foster youth in nine states. The center is also home base for a statewide network—Fostering Success Michigan—that is focused on disseminating best practices and supporting other colleges and universities as they build a home for Michigan students who age out of foster care.

The challenge

While nationally about 23,000 young people age out of state foster care systems each year, some 900 do so in Michigan, alone. Only 2 to 3 percent of such students earn a college degree. Emancipated usually at age 18 and with no resources or support systems, 20 percent become homeless and 50 percent are unemployed at age 21. Without families to help them navigate their way and provide emotional and financial support, their educational dreams are seldom achieved, even though their higher education aspirations are the same as others their age.

The students who “age out” of foster care and seek to “age into” higher education are unique in their demographic make-up, and they are academically less prepared compared to the general undergraduate population. A history of child abuse and neglect, along with the challenges in the foster care system, decrease the odds of both college access and success. Barriers to post-secondary education for these young people stem from deficiencies in such areas as financial support, stable housing, health care, supportive relationships and life skills.

National estimates show that young people from foster care, compared to their peers who have never experienced foster care, have substantially lower college enrollment—20 percent vs. 60 percent. Their degree completion rates are even more dismal—5 percent vs. 20 percent.

Recognizing the need

This silent national crisis came to the attention of three Western Michigan University colleagues in 2007 as they responded to a call for action by the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services. That state agency recognized that young people were leaving foster care only to encounter further hardships leading to negative outcomes, such as homelessness, unemployment, incarceration and early parenting.

The idea for the Seita Scholars program was conceived after WMU's directors of financial aid and admissions, along with a social work professor, attended a statewide meeting and were moved by a talk given by Dr. John Seita, a product of Michigan's foster care system, a three-degree alumnus of WMU and now a leading champion for former foster-care youth. Seita described life as an undergraduate with no home to return to when his campus residence hall closed for the holidays or between semesters. He recounted the financial and emotional struggles of having no family to turn to for support, advice or shelter. He described living in his car during breaks. But he also showed what can happen when young people find a way to persist and succeed

The seeds planted at the meeting and the idea that was born as the trio traveled home to WMU that day gave birth to what has become the nation's largest and most comprehensive collegiate program designed to support foster-care alumni and allow them to thrive.

The trio verified the low rate of college enrollment at WMU, with a search of financial aid records that revealed only 12 students, or less than .01 percent of the undergraduate population, had a history in foster care. This number was well below estimates that 1 to 5 percent of children experience foster care.

The three original team members secured the enthusiastic support of then-President John M. Dunn and worked with the campus community to formulate a campus-based solution to the problem. Stakeholder outreach efforts were guided by a planning group comprised of a mix of administrative and academic employees, as well as a student advisory group made up of seven of the original 12 students from foster care enrolled at the University in the 2007-08 academic year.

Target stakeholder groups included senior University administration, as well as academic and student affairs departments on campus. Off campus, the key stakeholder group was the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services. Buy-in for stakeholder groups was accomplished mainly through presentations and planning meetings, all of which incorporated the voice of students who had transitioned to college from foster care. The basic formula for presentation involved both students sharing testimony about their lived experiences and an academic member of the planning committee organizing, developing and vetting early drafts of program design and protocol with various stakeholders.

A major gift from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation and other philanthropic organizations fueled momentum and early program growth. Since then, regular communication from the program to stakeholders happens via e-mail, newsletters, and an annual report. Stakeholders are also invited to key annual program events. The program's communication strategy celebrates the value of collaboration and acknowledging that it truly takes a "village" to transform the lives of youth who have suffered through child abuse and endured the trials of growing up as state wards.

The launch

All of those effort led to the launch in fall 2008 of the Seita Scholars Program. The original goal was to have an inaugural cohort of about 15 incoming students; but the need and response was overwhelming, and the first cohort was made up of 51 students. After that, enrollment grew annually until it peaked in fall 2012 with a total of 160 students. Presently, the program is structured to support enrollment for 150 scholars per year. The number of applications, however, has exceeded enrollment capacity every year since 2012.

Over the decade, the WMU community has wholeheartedly invested in researching, learning and serving students from foster care. It quickly identified its tools of success. The program provides a place of belonging for students from foster care on campus, and it prioritizes student input and feedback as a method for designing and refining its services. Students are awarded a \$10,000 to \$14,000 scholarship annually and assigned a "campus coach." That coach is a masters-level professional trained in a life-coach model designed to address needs particular to and

stemming from foster care. Those may include gaps in education, finances, housing, health and caregiver relationships. Additionally, on-campus housing during semester breaks is provided to ensure continuity of safe and stable living arrangements throughout enrollment at the university. The program collaborates with units across campus such as, residence life, financial aid and the counseling center to ensure that intersection of the many campus units for each student results in an optimally supportive experience that helps students get their needs met while learning to navigate the university system. Furthermore, the program has an established partnership with the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services, which supplies two full-time employees to work on campus as assigned staff within the program.

Sustaining the effort

The core program budget grew from \$0 in 2007 to annual University-budgeted support of \$1.65 million in scholarships and more than \$500,000 in operational costs. The program has positively influenced student support practices at WMU as well as other institutions of higher education seeking to offer similar support to students from foster care.

The major initial financial investment in the program was approximately \$500,000 in tuition scholarships, which were allocated from WMU's financial aid budget. A social work professor, along with the University's directors of financial aid and admissions, championed early program efforts by dedicating significant human resource time. As the program grew, the University increased the total scholarship allocation and added a program budget for staff and operational costs. A significant portion of startup costs were secured by gifts from major philanthropic foundations and a one-time allocation of state funding.

Today, the program is staffed by a team consisting of seven full-time employees from WMU and two FTEs from the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services. Student employees round out the staff team, and all work together in a dedicated office setting that is especially welcoming to Seita Scholars. Since 2012, WMU has committed \$1.6 million for scholarships and more than \$500,000 for program operations, annually.

Measuring success

Seita Scholars all meet the criteria of being a state ward on or after their 13th birthday. As a group, Seita Scholars are more likely to be students of color—56 percent vs. 26 percent in the general student population. They are overwhelmingly first time in any colleges, or FTIACs (75 percent) and compared to other FTIAC students at WMU, the Seita Scholars have significantly lower average ACT scores (18.8 vs. 22.1) and lower high school GPAs (3.1 vs. 3.3). These academic achievement gaps persist into college where freshmen from foster care also average lower first-semester grade point averages compared to their FTIAC peers (3.08 vs. 3.29, on a 4.0 scale).

The retention/graduation outcomes selected for improvement have focused on four areas.

- First, we monitor “enrollment metrics” since young people from foster care are grossly underrepresented in college student populations.
- Second, we monitor “retention metrics” (i.e., second-year year retention rates) since the first year is a major transition that involves aging out of foster care to “independent status” as a young adult.
- Third, we monitor “engagement metrics” (e.g., course withdrawals and first semester GPA) to inform program decisions about how to best match services to student need.
- Fourth and finally, we monitor graduation metrics, specifically four- and six-year degree completion rates, since the main goal of the program is to increase graduation rates among youth who were placed in Michigan’s foster care system.

Since the program came into existence in 2008, the outcomes have been assessed using comparison groups. Specifically, the access metrics compare WMU to other four-year public universities in Michigan that participate in a higher education consortium that has the purpose of improving college access and success among Michigan’s foster-youth population.

The remaining metrics—engagement, retention and graduation—are primarily assessed by comparing outcomes between Seita Scholars and their peers who have never experienced foster care. All comparisons are made within the FTIAC population at WMU, since the majority of Seita Scholars are also FTIACs. The statistics for the general FTIAC population at WMU set the

benchmark targets for the program's outcomes. In other words, the program aims to improve achievement levels for Seita Scholars to, at least, the level of other FTIAC students.

Innovation results

WMU's investment in the Seita Scholars program is showing promising results with respect to improving college access and graduation rates among Michigan's population of foster youth. Results of the program are highlighted according to the four outcome areas previously mentioned—access, retention, engagement and graduation.

Access. The creation of the Seita Scholars program in 2008 has positively influenced enrollment in college among Michigan's foster youth. Specifically, the program has increased representation of students from foster care on the WMU campus from less than .01 percent of the undergraduate population in 2007 to .08 percent in the past several years. This enrollment increase is a substantial one, given that 1 to 5 percent of children in the general population are estimated to have experienced foster care.

Notably, the addition of the Seita Scholars program has improved overall access to a four-year college for youth in Michigan's foster-care system. Self-report data supplied by other four-year public colleges in Michigan show that Seita Scholars account for the majority of students from foster care enrolled in four-year public colleges in the state. Correspondingly, data supplied by the Michigan DHHS indicate that nearly half of all state vouchers (known as Educational Training Vouchers) issued to students attending four-year colleges in Michigan are received by Seita Scholars enrolled at WMU.

Retention. The Seita Scholars program shows promising trends at stabilizing second-year retention. In the first year of the program only 46 percent of Seita Scholars returned to WMU in the fall of their second year, which was significantly less than the 72 percent retention rate of other FTIAC students who were not Seita Scholars. Informed by lessons of the first year, the program was formalized in the second year by establishing a staff ratio of one coach to 25 students, assigning program office space, and allocating a permanent budget for program operations. In subsequent years, retention rates for Seita Scholars leveled out to more closely match rates of the general FTIAC population at WMU.

Engagement. The Seita Scholars program monitors a variety of “engagement metrics” to assess how well students from foster care are making progress toward graduation. Any observed gaps on indicators between Seita Scholars and other students within the FTIAC population are investigated and targeted for improvement. Two examples of positive change engagement metrics are course withdrawals, which is a risk factor that negatively impacts Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) requirements and can adversely affect financial aid; and GPA, which is a qualifier for many other campus opportunities including employment, acceptance to a major, or special programs such as study abroad.

Outcome data for course withdrawals show that Seita Scholars dropped courses almost twice as often as their FTIAC peers in the first four years of the program. However, course withdrawals among Seita Scholars improved to more closely match levels by other FTIAC students, after approval mechanisms and targeted coaching were put in place. Similarly, program efforts show general progress toward closing the GPA achievement gap as average first-semester GPAs for Seita Scholars are approaching those of their FTIAC peers, even though incoming admission metrics remain constant.

Graduation. WMU alone is graduating more students from foster care than all other four-year public universities participating in Michigan’s Higher Education Consortium combined. Within WMU, the Seita Scholars program is showing promising progress toward degree completion benchmarks. Specifically, the six-year graduation gap (29 percent vs. 50 percent) between Seita Scholar and other FTIAC degree completion rates is narrower than the four-year gap (8 percent vs. 22 percent) suggesting that Seita Scholars take longer to complete their degrees. Comparatively, a 29 percent graduation rate for students from foster care far exceeds the national estimate that fewer than 5 percent of young people from foster care earn a baccalaureate degree in six years.

The Seita program saw its 126th graduate at the end of 2017. By the time it closes its 10th year in existence in mid-2018, the program is expected to have 145 alumni and an expanding pipeline of soon-to-be graduates, many of whom are preparing to enter service-oriented

Seita Scholars program. They are:

- Fostering Success Michigan—FSM—which was launched in 2012 with a \$1 million grant from the Kresge Foundation, and is a statewide outreach program that aims to build networks among people and cross-sector organizations that are working to improve educational and career outcomes for Michigan’s youth and young adults from foster care.
- FSM was created in response to the high volume of inquiries interested in learning about the lessons and success of the Seita Scholars program. In 2015, the Kresge Foundation awarded an additional \$700,000 to continue this outreach work. FSM has been directly involved in growing the number of campus-based initiatives to support students from foster care. Since FSM began, it has nurtured the growth of college-based programs for students from foster care from five participating institutions in 2012 to 18 in 2017.
- Second, Fostering Success Coach Training was launched in 2013, and it prepares professionals to effectively support college students who have experienced foster care or have lived through other adverse childhood experiences. Developed in the Seita Scholars program, the coaching training is a revenue-generating unit and has been offered at universities in California, Ohio, Michigan, Texas and Washington. Since 2013, 250 professionals from 11 states have been trained in the coaching model. Trainees include the majority of staff working in campus-based programs at other Michigan colleges and universities.

The Seita Scholars program is currently in a formative stage of evaluation, with a plan to establish more rigorous research investigations. The program is currently participating in a project with Chapin Hall Center for Children at the University of Chicago and funded by the U.S. Administration for Children and Families to prepare the program for more rigorous future evaluation efforts. Other efforts are underway to share program components and lessons learned with other institutions. Some examples of sharing and dissemination efforts include webinars, consultation, presentations and shared data tracking practices.

Seita enrollment data

Enrollment (at Fall census)

	Baseline	Intervention								
	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Total UG Enrollment	19,718	19,854	19,547	19,966	20,054	19,478	19,198	18,889	18,567	18,313
% Seita	.01%	0.3%	0.4%	0.6%	0.7%	0.8%	0.8%	0.8%	0.8%	0.8%

Average ACT

Start		2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
FTIAC - not Seita		21.95	22.04	22.07	21.94	21.89	22.32	22.29	22.36	22.17
FTIAC - Seita		18.57	18.87	18.98	18.82	18.76	18.32	18.58	19.52	18.17

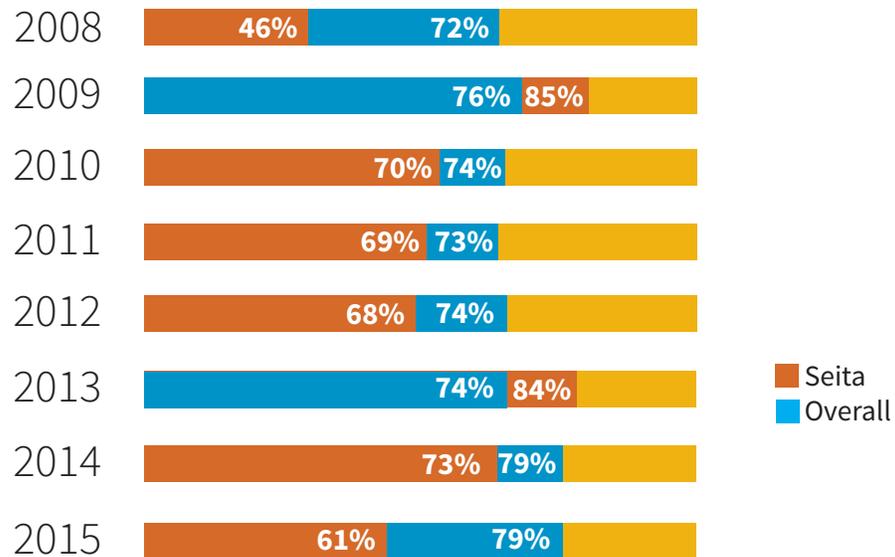
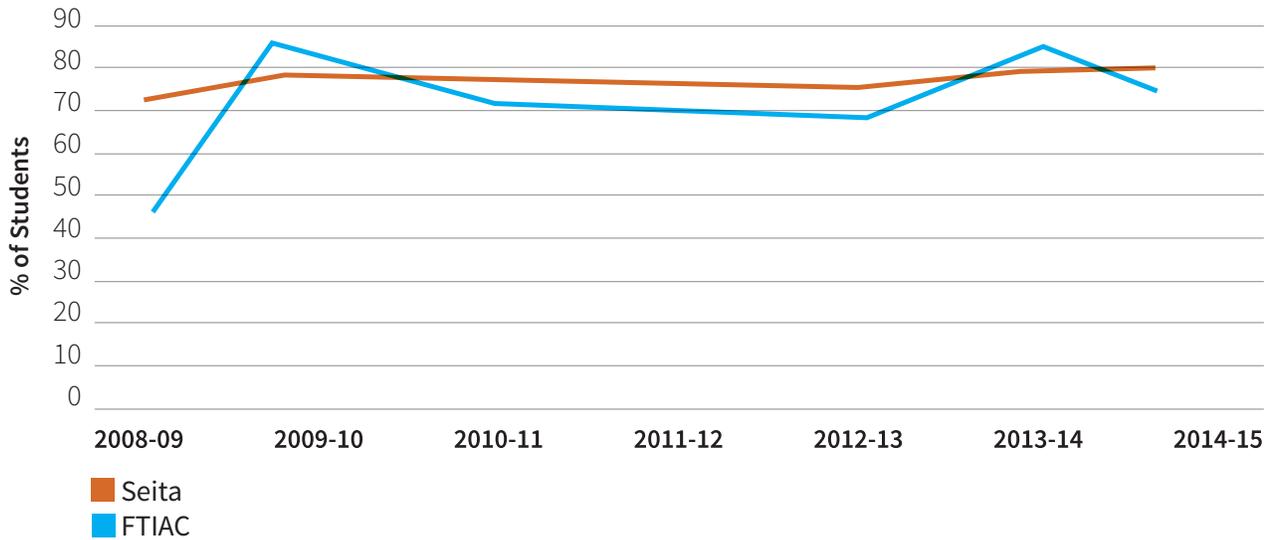
Average High School GPA

Start		2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
FTIAC - not Seita		3.23	3.27	3.28	3.27	3.28	3.32	3.35	3.35	3.33
FTIAC - Seita		2.98	3.16	3.08	3.03	3.09	3.15	3.08	3.06	3.03

*Data are supplied by WMU's Office of Institutional Research unless otherwise noted.

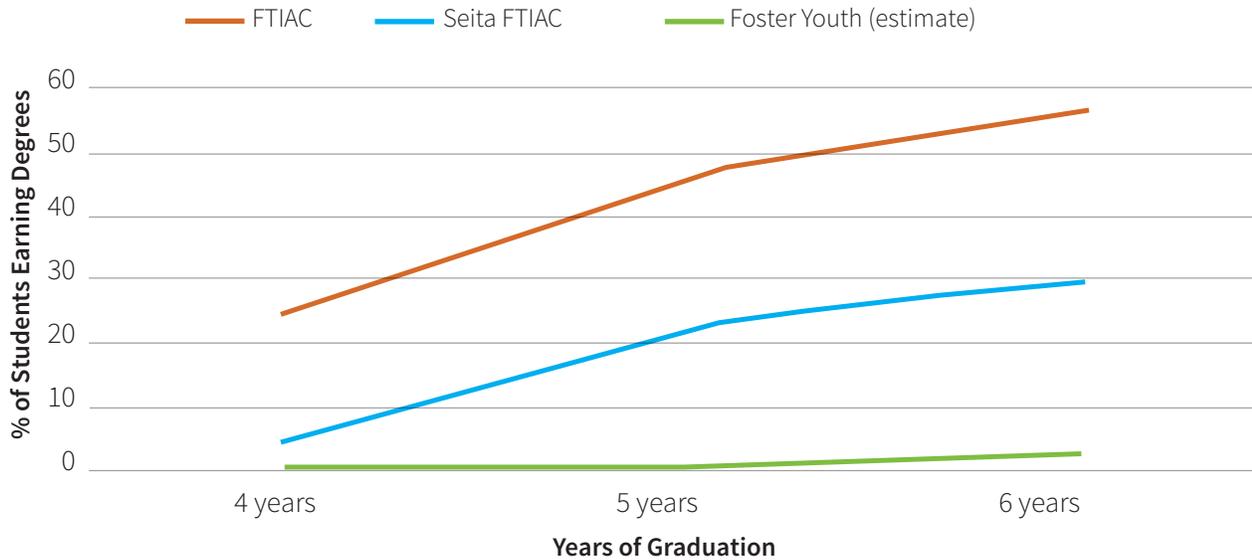
Second-year retention rates

Only 46 percent of the first cohort of Seita Scholars returned to WMU for a second year. That percentage was significantly below the 72 percent of other WMU FTIAC students who returned. Since 2011, the Seita program has maintained second-year retention rates at about the same rates as their FTIAC peers.



Graduation rates— Seita FTIAC vs. overall FTIAC population

Only 46 percent of the first cohort of Seita Scholars returned to WMU for a second year. That percentage was significantly below the 72 percent of other WMU FTIAC students who returned. Since 2011, the Seita program has maintained second-year retention rates at about the same rates as their FTIAC peers.



Seita = Seita Scholars (Students from foster care at WMU who are also FTIAC)

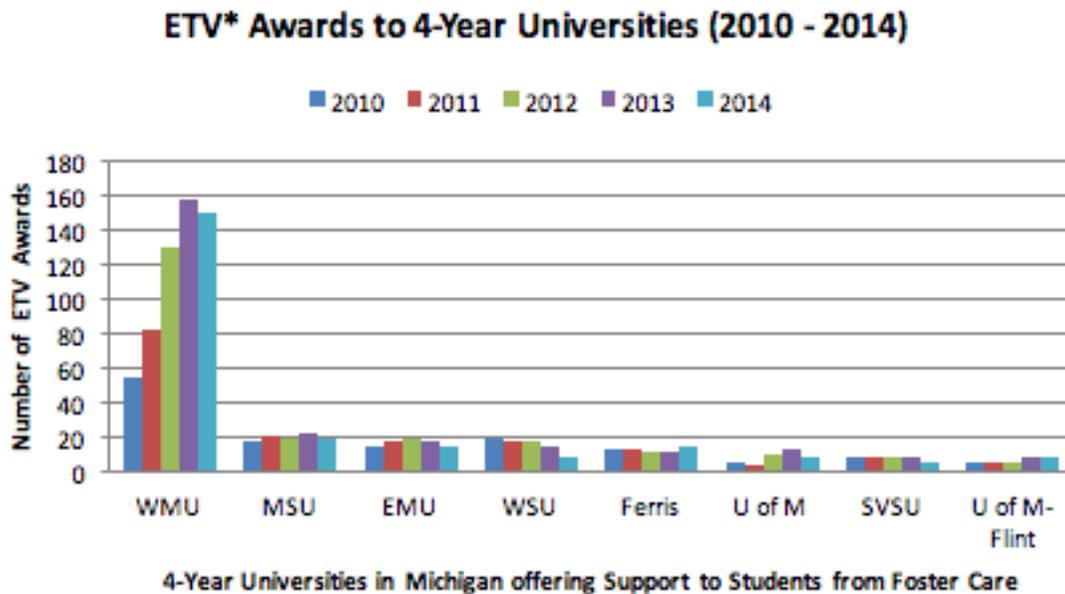
FTIAC = First-time-in-any-college student in the general population at WMU

Foster Youth (estimate) = national graduation rates of young people from foster care

	Cohort	Current	Graduates
2008 =	55	—	22
2009 =	50	—	22
2010 =	55	—	17
2011 =	57	—	24
2012 =	48	—	14
2013 =	42	—	10
2014 =	41	—	
2015 =	48	—	3
2016 =	53	—	

Michigan college access for foster care alumni

The graph below illustrates how WMU's Seita Scholars program increased the number of young people from foster care accessing a four-year public university by accounting for the Michigan foster care-specific awards—ETV Awards assigned annually in the state.



Additional Michigan public universities with foster care support programs are:

- Michigan State University's FAME program
- Eastern Michigan University's MAGIC Program
- Wayne State University's Tuition Incentive Program
- Ferris State University's Ferris Youth Initiative
- University of Michigan's Blavin Scholarship
- Saginaw Valley State University's F.A.S.T Program

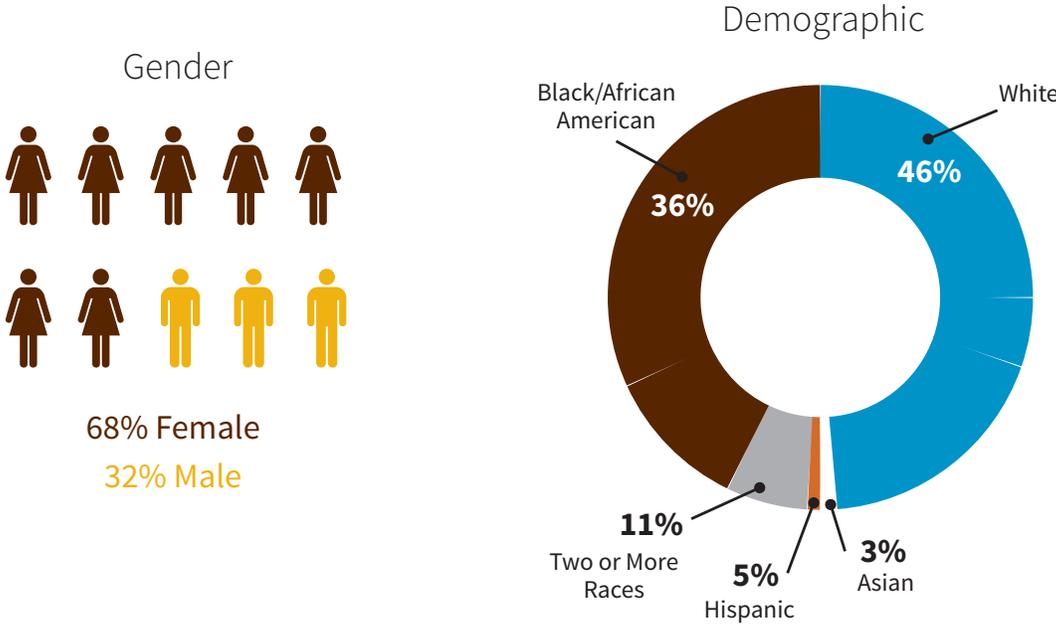
Educational Training Vouchers (ETV) is a federal government program through the Safe and Stable Families Act for eligible foster youth to help fund their post-secondary educational and training endeavors. Funds are available to youth until their 23rd birthday.



Western Michigan University's ninth president, Dr. Edward Montgomery, and his wife, Kari, (standing in the first row, center right) welcomed Seita Scholars to the start of the 2017-18 academic year with a pool party at their home.

Seita Scholar characteristics

As a group, Seita Scholars are more likely to be students of color--56 percent vs. 26 percent in the general student population. They are overwhelmingly (75 percent) FTIAC--first time in any college. The infographics on this page represent the 2016-17 cohort of Seita Scholars, which was more heavily female (68 percent) than is the case in most years, when a closer male-female ratio is the case.



Seita student profiles

Strong, thriving and ready to make a difference

Seita Scholars are fully integrated into the WMU campus. They can be found in every discipline and are recognized for achievement as they make the Dean's List, are accepted into the nation's top honor societies, and take advantage of internship and fellowship opportunities or study around the world. Here are just a few who have distinguished themselves recently.



Alexis Lenderman

- Senior majoring in entrepreneurship and global and international studies
- 2018 finalist to become a Truman Scholar
- 2017 Newman Civic Fellow
- Fall 2017 scholarship from the Leadership and the American Presidency Program at the Reagan Foundation
- 2017 Intern with the Congressional Coalition Adoption Institute
- 2017 Study Abroad in South Korea—her fifth study-abroad experience
- Flint, Michigan, native who is a veteran of 10 foster care placements during childhood
- " The Seita Scholars Program is far more than just a scholarship. This program has encouraged me to pursue big and bold dreams and has helped me map out what that looks like."



J. Gabriel Ware

- 2017 Chips Quinn Scholar hosted for summer by Yes! Magazine
- Current graduate assistant in communication
- 2016 summa cum laude journalism graduate of the WMU School of Communication
- Member Phi Kappa Phi. Lambda Pi Eta communication honorary and Tau Sigma transfer honorary
- Named a 2016 Presidential Scholar, WMU's most prestigious undergraduate accolade, and was the third Seita Scholar so recognized
- 2016 Michigan Press Association Foundation Scholarship winner
- "My dream job is to write in-depth feature stories showing how social and environmental issues and policies affect ordinary people."



Lesley Francisco-Domingo

- 2017 WMU graduate who majored in criminal justice and Spanish
- Multiple semesters on dean's list
- Member of Phi Sigma Pi National Honor Fraternity
- Named to 2017 Who's Who Among Students in American Universities and Colleges
- Completed 2017 study abroad semester in Spain
- "The Seita Scholarship Program has changed the perspective of my life...I wouldn't be where I am now without the program. The program is like family to me."



Olivia Williams

- In 2017, she began teaching ninth-grade algebra at a Detroit academy.
- A 2017 graduate, she earned a degree in university studies and concentrations in science, mathematics and health.
- Was the 100th Seita Scholar to earn a WMU degree
- Served as a peer mentor to orient incoming Seita Scholars
- Team taught a First-Year Experience class for Seita Scholars.
- "Without the coaches, Seita students wouldn't be where they are today. Just having that person to talk with whenever you need to makes all the difference."



Realite Peebles

- 2017 graduate with a behavioral science major and social work minor
- Teaches as a paraprofessional at a Kalamazoo elementary school with students on the autism spectrum and emotional disorders
- Plans to earn a doctoral degree in counseling psychology
- Member of Psi Chi International Honor Society in Psychology
- Psychology teaching assistant
- Academy leader for WMU's Martin Luther King Jr. Academy
- "Being in the Seita Scholars Program means having support and encouragement from a team while trying to achieve your goals."

Seita program budget summary

Seita Scholars Operating Budget – University Budgeted Funds

Year	Amount
2008 - 09	\$ 137,861
2009 - 10	\$ 414,311
2010 - 11	\$ 442,285
2011 - 12	\$ 442,285
2012 - 13	\$ 484,573
2013 - 14	\$ 488,938
2014 - 15	\$ 498,797
2015 - 16	\$ 519,842
2016 - 17	\$ 514,145

Seita Scholars Scholarship Budget – WMU Financial Aid

Year	Amount
2008 - 09	\$ 317,031
2009 - 10	\$ 682,161
2010 - 11	\$ 1,106,888
2011 - 12	\$ 1,368,838
2012 - 13	\$ 1,549,987
2013 - 14	\$ 1,687,059
2014 - 15	\$ 1,676,292
2015 - 16	\$ 1,656,494
2016 - 17	\$ 1,656,494

A decade of news

May 27, 2008

Inside Higher Ed

A Lifeline for Students Left Behind

www.insidehighered.com/news/2008/05/27/lifeline-students-left-behind

Feb. 17, 2009

Kalamazoo Gazette

Flying for peace: Former Sudanese 'Lost Boy' dreams of piloting relief plane

www.mlive.com/news/kalamazoo/index.ssf/2009/02/flying_for_peace_former_sudane.html

STUDENTS FIND THEY'RE NOT ALONE

WMU program aims to help ex-foster kids



Anna Dexter-Cheeks, 21, discusses biology at Kalamazoo Valley Community College on Wednesday. Dexter-Cheeks, a former foster child, is helping to set up a support program with other ex-foster kids at Western Michigan University.

Support spans more than money

By ROBIN ERB
FREE PRESS EDUCATION WRITER

From her years in foster care, Anna Dexter-Cheeks settled on a simple life philosophy: "I just make sure I am taking care of myself."

She took that attitude with her to Western Michigan University, but a snow squall and an icy patch led to a crash that totaled her car. Without it, she was cut off from class, child care and work.

And as one of the approximately 500 youths who age out of Michigan's foster care system each year without being adopted, she couldn't

More help for foster youths, 6A

call Mom or Dad for help or advice.

If she returns to WMU in the fall, she could be among the first students to benefit from a new program intended to give former foster youths the kind of help she needed. It is unique in Michigan, and some national experts say there may be only one comparable program in the nation.

It starts with free tuition for students leaving the foster care system without being adopted — but adds support and counseling while requir-

See COLLEGE, 6A



Peter Ruel, 21, is an aviation major at WMU. "The school is a community."

Detroit Free Press

February 21, 2008

FOSTERING SUCCESS

University initiative gives youths tools to excel in college



PATRICK BECK/Detroit Free Press

Irene Burch-Travis, 20, of Detroit at Oakland Community College's Southfield campus. A former foster youth, she is part of the inaugural class of a first-of-its-kind college program. "I feel like I'm going somewhere. ... I won't be wasting it."

By ROBIN ERB
FREE PRESS EDUCATION WRITER

Western Michigan University did something last fall that no other state school had — hand a free education to 51 former foster youths.

It was a risk. Foster youths come from fractured homes and, often, fragmented schooling.

Too often, there's no one to call when classes get tough or there's no cash for books.

Surveys of former foster youths suggest just one, maybe two, in 20 get a college degree.

But WMU's 51 were determined. So were the campus and the community, which provided

things such as school supplies and handmade blankets, as well as appropriately nosy questions —

How are your classes? How are your grades? — and encouraging words.

Others opened their homes at holidays. WMU's financial aid director trained with several students for a 6K race.

Peter Ruel, 22, who spent his teen years in the Grand Rapids-area foster system, said the WMU support system was "you-would-not-believe. ... It was someone saying 'If you ever need help, you can always come back.'"

It worked. More than half of the students

finished the first year. Several made the dean's list.

WMU provided something else: expectation.

"I felt like I had been teetering on a log in the water, and it was rolling and rolling and I wasn't getting anywhere. One bad move, I'd fall in," said Irene Burch-Travis, 20, a former Detroit foster kid. "I feel like I'm going somewhere now. I'm grateful for that and ... I won't be wasting it."

The experiment is now a permanent program. WMU expects to take another 50 students this fall.

See COLLEGE, 6A

Detroit Free Press

June 10, 2009

Dec. 1, 2011

Kalamazoo Gazette

Kresge Foundation gives \$700,000 to Western Michigan University former foster care student program

www.mlive.com/news/kalamazoo/index.ssf/2011/12/kresge_foundation_gives_700000.html

April 26, 2012

Detroit Free Press

Former foster youth first to graduate from tuition-free college program

www.masu.org/advocacynews/newsfeeds/featuredstoriesaroundhighereducation/mid/436/newsid436/579/

Jan. 8, 2012

Chronicle of Higher Education

For former foster kids, campus is their 'home for the holidays'

www.chronicle.com/article/Colleges-Help-Alumni-of-Foster/130239

WESTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY

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July 30, 2012

Kalamazoo Gazette

WMU's foster care Seita Scholar speaking to Congressional Caucus on Foster Youth

www.mlive.com/news/kalamazoo/index.ssf/2012/07/wmus_foster_care_seita_scholar.html

Jan. 17, 2013

Bridge magazine

Putting college in reach for Michigan Foster children

www.bridgemi.com/success/putting-college-reach-michigan-foster-children

Sept. 14, 2013

Deseret News

New program helps former foster-care students succeed at college

www.deseretnews.com/article/865586408/New-programs-help-former-foster-care-students-succeed-at-college.html

April 26, 2014

Kalamazoo Gazette

After 14 years in foster care, Amanda Shelton graduates Saturday with WMU's highest undergraduate honor

www.mlive.com/news/kalamazoo/index.ssf/2014/04/after_14_years_in_foster_care.html

Jan. 15, 2014

Kalamazoo Gazette

Western Michigan University named one of the best in U.S. at helping foster care youth

www.mlive.com/news/kalamazoo/index.ssf/2014/01/western_michigan_university_on_3.html

Sept. 7, 2016

Higher Education Today

From Foster Care to College to Career, Western Michigan Provides Pipeline of Support

www.higheredtoday.org/2016/09/07/from-foster-care-to-college-to-career-western-michigan-provides-pipeline-of-support/

Dec. 20, 2016

WMU News

WMU celebrates graduation of its 100th Seita Scholar

wmich.edu/news/2016/12/37026

March 21, 2018

Youth Today

Colleges, universities should be pressured to help students in foster care

youthtoday.org/2018/03/colleges-universities-should-be-pressured-to-help-students-in-foster-care/



With the 10th anniversary of the program approaching, some of the principals in launching the effort looked back at lessons learned.

youtu.be/aik2moQUVjw



Videos made over the years have showcased the WMU Seita Scholars Program and featured the views of current and past University and program leaders and students. This video includes comments by Dr. John Seita, former WMU President John M. Dunn, Fostering Success Director Yvonne Unrau and former Seita Scholars Director Christopher Harris, as well as a number of former students.

youtube.com/watch?v=YHfDcZ5K7cg

WESTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY

2018 Phi Kappa Phi Excellence in Innovation Award Portfolio

Seita Scholars



WMU's ninth president, Dr. Edward Montgomery, welcomes Seita Scholars to the ranks of University alumni during December 2017 commencement ceremonies.



Now numbering 126, WMU Seita Scholars graduates are identified at commencement by their distinctive blue stoles.



The program's namesake, Dr. John Seita, far right, and former WMU president, Dr. John M. Dunn, standing beside Seita, welcome a team of Seita Scholars to a 5K campus race at Homecoming.



Seita Scholars receive welcome packs donated by campus employee groups and individual donors at the start of the fall semester.

wmich.edu/fosteringSUCCESS

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