



RAINIER SCHOLARS

STRETCHING MINDS
LAUNCHING FUTURES



“Every time a person donates money to Rainier Scholars, it’s like they are saying, “I believe in you.” They have faith I will work hard and make the most of all the opportunities that come my way. I do not plan to disappoint them.”

- Leo Rozal, Cohort I, attending Seattle University



Rainier Scholars is built on a foundation of loyal donors who understand they are investing in the future, providing opportunities to scholars who often lack educational options and creating pathways to college for generations to come.

Each donor has their own story about why Rainier Scholars resonates as an organization to support. Most often there is a meaningful experience that shaped us - a teacher, an educational opportunity, a person who saw something special in us - a transformative experience that nurtured our capabilities. Or we may see the world through the perspective of a parent, wanting all children to have opportunities that will make their lives better and enhance life’s possibilities.



The majority of our donors respond to the social justice focus of the mission and work of Rainier Scholars - a way of creating systemic change. Foundations celebrate

measurable outcomes that pave the way to college graduation and community leadership. Corporate sponsors seek to fill the pipeline of future employees with top caliber individuals from diverse backgrounds. Other contributors identify with the ethic of hard work, perseverance and integrity, relating the experience to their own personal life stories.

No matter the perspective, donors understand Rainier Scholars is comprehensive in nature and long term in approach. Rainier Scholars nurtures courage and confidence. It opens doors of opportunity. Our donors also know with certainty that their contributions to Rainier Scholars change lives.

With sincere appreciation and gratitude,

Gordon McHenry, Jr.
Executive Director



***“Backpacks are heavy,
teachers challenge minds
to stretch.***

Scholars are revealed.”

*Group Haiku Session
Summer 2010
Truth spoken as one.*

Academic Enrichment 6th Grade

Often called an academic “boot camp,” the 14-month academic enrichment (AE) phase marks the beginning of an eleven year journey to college graduation. For each new cohort of 60 scholars it is challenging, it is hard work and it requires struggle, but the rewards speak for themselves - confidence, courage and self-determination. For two summers and an entire school year of Wednesday afternoon and Saturday classes, eleven and twelve year olds are steeped in core academic subjects, refining critical thinking skills and exploring their identity as high-achieving students of color. It is a rigorous, transformative experience which binds them together as a community.

- ✓ Rainier Scholars has achieved 100% placement for all scholars who successfully complete the 14 month academic enrichment phase.
- ✓ In 2009, 40 scholars in Cohort 7 completed the 14 month phase and 41 of Cohort 8 finished in 2010.
- ✓ 98% of all scholars demonstrated improvements in skills linked to academic success.
- ✓ Pre and post testing in Reading and Math documented significant academic growth.
- ✓ Cohort 8 completed the AE phase with a 3.2 GPA average covering academic core classes of Science, Math, History, Global Studies and Literature / Writing.

To talk with scholars Summer Nanpooya and Diallo Wilson of Cohort 8 is to reaffirm hope for the future. Diallo’s long-term plan “is to get into as many AP programs as possible and then go to the college of my choice - like Stanford or Harvard or the UW.” Summer is similarly motivated. Her grandmother reports when the Rainier Scholars bus drops her off after school, she assembles a snack and climbs the stairs with it to start her homework right away. Summer reflects, “The work is a challenge, but you can always say to yourself, if other cohorts have done it, I can do it too - nothing is impossible.”

Summer and Diallo join over 300 students who have successfully completed the AE phase - scholars who now understand their capabilities, having been challenged to exceed expectations. When they finish this program phase it is clear they have the confidence in their abilities to work hard and see results. This year, 100% of scholars earned placement in advanced learning programs in public and private educational settings. Summer summed it up when she told us, “I have something to say: students of color can do the work!”

“They teach you not only about academics, but also to be yourself. For me, that is all about speaking from the heart ... I will take that wherever I go.”
Summer Nanpooya, Cohort VIII



“The first summer was like having training wheels ... the second summer, we’re allowed to fly.”
Diallo Wilson, Cohort VIII

Academic Counseling & Support 7th-9th Grade

- ✓ Of our scholars in 7th - 12th grade, 42% attend public school programs and 58% attend independent, parochial or boarding schools.
- ✓ In 2009-10, over 50% of Rainier Scholars middle school students in public schools attended either Spectrum or APP.
- ✓ The average GPA for scholars is 3.21 with 42% of scholars maintaining a 3.5 or higher in core academic classes.
- ✓ Program retention remains high at 96% for scholars in middle and high school.
- ✓ Scholars received an average of 8 school visits by Academic Counselors in 2009-10.

Middle school is a difficult time. Students face a new level of social and educational complexity and can often feel isolated or challenged by socio-economic divisions within their new schools. It becomes all too easy to lose their focus on the coping skills learned in the AE phase. With these pressures in mind, the goal of the Academic Counseling & Support (ACSS) phase is to not just establish a supportive relationship with each student, but to develop a partnership with their families and teachers as well.

A team of five academic counselors take on the role of advocates for the 250 Rainier Scholars in this phase. Counselors like Judy Corpuz and Doug Moon visit scholars at their schools to assess their progress and build a high level of trust. For the most part, their concern becomes less about academics and more about social and cultural issues. As Doug says, “It is all about helping the students figure out what is next for them; getting them to step up on their own, to be accountable.” According to Judy, one reason why they are effective advocates is because “We know the families. We know what their values are and they trust us to know how best to support their children.” The program also offers additional support in the form of monthly field trips, workshops, events and community lunches where students can meet other Rainier



“We focus a little more on getting to know the student as a whole person.”
Doug Moon, Academic Counselor



“The work I do shapes future leaders.”
Judy Corpuz,
Academic Counselor

Scholars in different grades at their schools. As always, the core values of perseverance, integrity and courage are reinforced so that, as Doug says, “the students can remember the big picture: graduating from college and becoming a leader.”

Rainier Scholars is effective because staff like Judy and Doug walk beside students and families on their educational journey. Just as students find support with their counselors and in their cohorts, staff come together in a shared dedication and passion. Judy explains, “It is the work that motivates me to be a part of this program; it’s not about me, it’s about the students.”

Rainier Scholars nurtures and develops the academic talents and leadership potential of its students.

Leadership Development 10th - 12th

Intrinsic to this work is answering the question, "How do you expect people to be leaders if you don't teach them?" It serves as the motivation behind the intellectual and hands-on work done in the Leadership Development (LD) phase. Students participate in five three-day retreats learning, discussing and immersing themselves in leadership exercises. As a complement to the retreats, summer internships provide students a wide variety of work experiences at companies and non-profits throughout the greater Seattle area. Internships as Student Advisors are also available at Rainier Scholars. For most summer interns the work and the workplace environment are new experiences. Not so for Stephanie Barrera-Aguila and Nicolas Andrade of Cohort II who interned as Student Advisors this past summer. As former 14 month "academic boot camp" survivors, they

"When my students are happy with their work, I'm excited because I know they are going places."

Stephanie Barrera-Aguila, Cohort II



"I learned the core skills and transferred them over to work situations."

Nicolas Andrade, Cohort II

were full of experience and advice to share. Stephanie liked that she could tell the kids what to do and "they would believe me because I had done it!" For Nicolas, the ability to empathize with the kids was critical - to share their happiness when a goal was achieved and, just as importantly, on a bad day, "telling them it was not the end of the world." In addition to having worked through the AE and ACSS phases, Stephanie and Nicolas received personalized college counseling from LD staff and both were accepted to multiple colleges. As such, they are powerful role models for the younger students.

For these leadership opportunities, Nicolas and Stephanie are grateful to everyone who has supported them. "I wouldn't have dreamed it possible to be where I am today." (Nicolas) "Thank you for supporting my dreams." (Stephanie) Stephanie will attend Whitman College in Washington State and Nicolas will join the Class of 2014 at Union College in Schenectady, NY.

- ✓ Scholars receive an average of 60 hours of leadership training and development activities each year through retreats, workshops and service learning opportunities.
- ✓ Over 80% of scholars demonstrate enhanced leadership skills and engagement in leadership roles in school and community.
- ✓ In 2009-10 our LD staff provided over 250 hours of personalized college counseling services and an additional 5 hours per family for comprehensive financial aid assistance.
- ✓ In 2010, a new and innovative SAT prep class improved scores by an average of 218 points per student.
- ✓ RS has successfully placed students in over 120 internships during the past four years.
- ✓ More than 95% of interns received high marks of 8 or above on a scale of 1 to 10 by workplace mentors.



"Rainier Scholars is an anchor for me; no matter what happens. It's a constant."

Kim Chi Ngo, Sophomore, Smith College
Sarah Smith Assoc. ED



Tiesa McElroy and Jolenta Coleman at Knox College

There are now 75 Rainier Scholars in 40 colleges and universities in all regions of the United States. Good news for sure, but statistics show that many students of color who matriculate to college do not graduate. The move away from home to independence, from high school academics to the rigors of college curriculum, to being fully responsible for your life choices, is a challenging experience.

In the college support phase of Rainier Scholars, the focus is twofold: first, to support students through four years ensuring scholars graduate and embrace campus leadership opportunities; second, gain internship experiences to help them graduate with a solid plan for the future. The College 101 retreat prepares freshmen for the transition to college life while other workshops focus on building skills in areas as diverse as managing their finances to being aware of study abroad opportunities.

Just as important, however, is the personal contact provided during the four years of College Support. As Kim Chi Ngo, a sophomore at Smith College, tells it, "Every

month I have a call with Joey (Jolenta Coleman, RS college support counselor) and we spend an hour talking not just about academics, but about social life, extracurricular activities, work ... pretty much everything." These calls resonate with students because they tap into the relationships built over the past seven years with Rainier Scholars. For Kim Chi, "when we talk, it feels the same, like nothing has changed." Kim Chi may feel that way, but the reality is - it is no longer Lakeside where she is learning and excelling but Smith College where, she says, "the work is harder, but getting a good grade is easier!"

Kim Chi has come a long way indeed. "Without Rainier Scholars it would be hard to say if I would even be in college today. Thank you for giving me this program which is like family for me ... and for giving me everything I need to succeed."

College Support Freshman - Senior

- ✓ In 2009 and 2010 all Cohort I and II scholars achieved 100% admissions to 4-year colleges and universities; 95% of scholars had multiple college options.
- ✓ To date, Rainier Scholars have received over 2 million dollars in merit aid.
- ✓ In 2009-10, RS provided over 320 hours of outreach, advocacy and support to 40 scholars in college.
- ✓ 100% of the scholars were visited by a RS staff member on their college campus.
- ✓ The average GPA for freshman year scholars was 3.03.



Corporate Giving and Business Sponsorships

- With the support of over 30 different corporations and businesses, Rainier Scholars continues to build partnerships with our community of business leaders who understand the critical importance of education combined with the power of internship opportunities.

In 2009, the Safeco Insurance Foundation targeted \$40,000 toward the academic enrichment phase. RealNetworks employees toured the summer program and awarded a \$10,000 foundation grant while Google, Inc. selected Rainier Scholars as the recipient of a "buy a nonprofit lunch" event. JP Morgan Chase provided a general operating grant of \$60,000 and we continued to receive loyal corporate support from Bank of America, Qwest and Wells Fargo.

Rainier Scholars was chosen by Sun Life Financial as a Rising Star grant award recipient. This \$50,000 grant award also included a college scholarship for one of our many graduating high school seniors.

Corporate sponsors also form the backbone of our annual signature event. This year we had seven new business sponsorships as well as significant increases from three of our current sponsors. In this turbulent economic time we are deeply grateful for their ongoing support.

2010 Internships

AECOM
Boeing
EPA
Epiphany School
K&L Gates
Karr, Tuttle and Campbell, LLC
Kibble & Prentice
Knowledge Points
League of Education Voters
Microsoft
Miller Nash, LLC
Mountains to Sound Greenway
Polygon Northwest
Powerful Schools
REI
Rios Cruz, LLC
Safeco Insurance
Seattle Children's
Seattle Northwest Securities
Skills, Inc.
Starbucks
Teens in Public Service
UW ADVANCE
University of Notre Dame
Washington State Hospital Association
YMCA of Greater Seattle

The other critical role of our business partnerships are internship placements. To date, Rainier Scholars has successfully placed over 120 scholars in professional workplace settings with internship opportunities. From scholars in high school to college sophomores, the overwhelming feedback can be summed up by one of our new mentors at Miller Nash, LLC, "Our scholar has far surpassed what I would have expected in such a young intern. I appreciate the eagerness and enthusiasm for working and learning. Great communication skills, excellent work ethic." And what employer would not like to describe their newest employee in the following terms, "Strengths appear to be many - helpful, a willingness to learn new things, flexible and a powerful "can do" attitude combined with an ability to organize and prioritize tasks."

As future community leaders and future business leaders, our scholars need and welcome the opportunity to learn and grow and most importantly, contribute to the success of local business, schools and nonprofit organizations.

Foundations

- Rainier Scholars continues to benefit from foundation support. In 2009, the Silver Family Foundation, whose mission is to help children achieve their potential, awarded a three year grant of \$150,000 to the academic enrichment phase. With this partnership Rainier Scholars will continue to be able to serve a new cohort of 60 scholars each year.

Executive Director Sara Merten came on a summer program tour recently to witness firsthand the experiential learning and focused energy of the sixth and seventh graders. Sara was inspired by the classroom discussions, the high level science curriculum using hands-on DNA analysis and the Literature class where the mantra is "what can be presented without evidence can be dismissed without evidence."

Sara asked engaging questions and noted in her visit the power of each child learning their true capabilities - not what others deem possible for them. Thank you to the Silver family for choosing Rainier Scholars and contributing to opportunities that cultivate the academic potential of our students and will shape school placement and college admissions for years to come.



**RAINIER
SCHOLARS**



Come visit the Scholars!

We always welcome visitors to see firsthand what we are doing in the program. If you would like to schedule a tour, please call Diana Robinson at (206) 407-2147 or email drobinson@rainierscholars.org

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