Rainier Scholars was founded in 2000 on the belief that students under-represented on college campuses deserve an equal opportunity to excel academically and become thriving leaders within our local and national community. Access to high-quality education lies at the heart of changing a life trajectory for students and their families. Rainier Scholars was created to ensure educational access for those students willing to work hard at a young age and make sacrifices for their long-term dream of earning a college degree. We help low-income students of color defy the odds and be the first in their family to graduate from college.

**A Focus on Program Development**

Over the past year, the Rainier Scholars’ Board, Staff and key constituents participated in a thorough strategic planning process resulting in the enthusiastic reaffirmation of our mission, vision and program, as well as several new initiatives focused on program development and ongoing improvement in all aspects of our work.

While we have been inspired by our success thus far, rigorous data analysis, research, and anecdotal observation identified some clear opportunities to better serve our students, families and the greater Seattle community. These are addressed with program initiatives in our 2015-2020 Strategic Plan.

Rainier Scholars has experienced great success in achieving our mission over the past 15 years, including:

- **98%** of our scholars have earned placement into independent and advanced learning public school college preparatory programs
- **99%** of our scholars have been admitted to four-year colleges and universities, with 95% having multiple college options
- **Over $50 million** cumulatively received in merit and need based scholarships for high school and college
- **Over 90%** of our scholars have earned or are on track to earn a college degree within five years
- **Over 85%** of our scholars demonstrate leadership in school, professional and community settings
A Commitment to Our Mission

While continually honing our high-quality program services over the next five years, Rainier Scholars will strengthen its commitment to mission in an effort to dramatically increase educational access and equity among low-income students of color in the Seattle region. In so doing, we aim to break long-tenured cycles of systemic family poverty while also ensuring that our community reaps the benefits of a greater number of under-represented students graduating from college and emerging as leaders in career and community for generations to come.

Key Strategic Program Initiatives

PROGRAM INITIATIVE NO. 1
Increased focus on recruitment and retention of Multi-Generational African American (MGAA) students.
Through greater community outreach, recruitment teams including parents and older scholars, and professional mentorship programming, we seek to increase the number of MGAA students and families who would benefit from the Rainier Scholars model.

PROGRAM INITIATIVE NO. 2
One-year earlier start to the Rainier Scholars program.
By starting our program the summer before 5th grade, we will align with the 6th grade middle school entry point – increasing our students’ placement opportunities, easing their school transition experiences, and ultimately elevating their academic, social and emotional well-being. This data-supported strategy also allows for earlier interventions which lead to better outcomes. We look forward to embarking on this effort in 2016–17.

PROGRAM INITIATIVE NO. 3
Enhance career preparation.
Rainier Scholars will strengthen our career prep and leadership pathways through earlier exposure and increased internship opportunities in high-growth, high-wage, STEM sectors in which students and leaders of color are often under-represented.

PROGRAM INITIATIVE NO. 4
Expand impact of Rainier Scholars.
With an awareness that the demand for our program surpasses our current capacity, we will explore the growth of cohort size in years four and five of the plan while also continuing our collaboration with Rainier Prep Charter School and the Seattle Public Schools Office of Advanced Learning in an effort to impact and serve more students in our area.