**DREAMERS Progress report for Fall 2014**

October 24, 2014

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**General Cohort Overview**

***Student Profile:***

Our first incoming class of Dreamers totals 21. Three of those students are in the honors program. Most of the Dreamer scholars are within my direct caseload. Our dreamers come from various states with varying backgrounds. A total of 19 out of the 21 are the first to attend college within their family. There are 7 from DC, 5 from Maryland, 3 from Virginia, and 5 from other states, including: Utah, North Carolina, Georgia and Florida. We have 3 students with previous college experience primarily through a dual enrollment program or community college. Some of them have families to care for, whether as mother, wife or as the primary bi-lingual person for the family.

Across the cohort, they are interested in a variety of majors:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Human Relations | 1 |
| Psychology | 3 |
| Communications | 1 |
| Education | 1 |
| Biology/Biochemistry | 5 |
| Nursing | 4 |
| Criminal Justice | 1 |
| International Aff. | 1 |
| Undecided | 4 |

***Academic Performance:***

As of October 24, 2014, 19 out of 21 of the dreamers are maintaining the required GPA of 3.0 to receive a renewal scholarship. We have 2 students falling just below the 3.0 mark. Each student must maintain a cumulative GPA of a 3.0 or higher to keep their scholarship.

Although we only have 3 Dreamers in the honors program, several of them have expressed an interest in entering the program. Based on the selection criteria for the program, several of the students would qualify. Most of the students expressing a passionate interest into the honors program are science majors. If the students can prove that they can handle a heavier course load, they can be nominated into the honors program by a professor.

It is important to note that our Dreamers are hitting the ground running. The following are just a few examples of what they are doing:

* One student entered with over 60 credits earned through a dual enrollment program while in high school. She is planning to double major and have a minor.
* Two students started the “Dreamers Club” which is open to the entire student population.
* 16 students are on track for earning a 3.5 or higher GPA.
* At total of 19 of the 21 are on track for earning a 3.0 and above.
* 6 students have expressed an interest in the honors program
* A few of the students are active in sports or planning to join a sport.

They are truly invested and excited about being Trinity Sisters!

***Student Challenges/Concerns:***

Currently, we have two dreamers that may fall under the required 3.0 GPA based on midterm grades. The challenges these students have experienced include:

* The perceived fast pace of the courses
* Difficulty with daycare, leading to missed or late arrival to class.
* Time management
* English as a second language (In one case, a student felt she was being examined not only in math, but also her ability to read and comprehend word problems in English quickly.)

In addition to concerns about academic performance, some students are concerned about balance their course schedules with other commitments. This concern has quickly been addressed simply by having the proper amount of academic advising meetings.

Another challenge that has presented itself is the restrictions/cautions within the honors program. As previously stated, several students have expressed interest in the honors program however there has been some hesitation in allowing science majors into the program. The science curriculum is very intense, but I think these students should still try to pursue the program. One student expressed serious concern about having the opportunity to pursue the program. Being a biology major, she was not selected with the original honors cohort. I already explained to her how she can still be considered and she is already speaking to professors to express her interest.

***Advising Contact:***

So far, I have met with 10 students for advising and to prepare for spring registration. The remaining students are scheduled to meet with me before the withdrawal deadline which is November 11th. This will ensure that each student is aware of the policy on withdrawing from a course, and is preparing for a successful spring semester as well.

I am working very closely with the two students with lower GPAs, and developing academic plans to successfully pull their GPA up. My plan includes carefully selecting Spring 2015 classes to offset the overall GPA. If either student has to withdraw, the new challenge will be paying for the repeat courses. The students may need an extra semester to save for the cost of the repeat course. This is already being considered and discussed.

**Planned Programming:**

***Dreamer Club Activities***

This cohort has taken the initiative to begin their own club. I was happy to attend their most recent meetings, with Hareth Andrade, as the speaker and to support their endeavor. They are building a sense of identity and community that I will help nurture.

***Policy and Procedures Meetings***

I realized that all of the students are not aware of the policies and procedures attached to their scholarship. I am planning to email all Dreamers, before the withdrawal deadline, in reference to the policy on withdrawing. At a later date, there will be a formal “policy and procedure” meeting. This meeting will discuss, in detail, all policies and procedures within the program. All of the dreamers are not freshman. Some of the dreamers have transfer credits and other special circumstances. It is extremely important that each student know all policies, procedures and deadlines.

In addition to outlining the scholarship policies and procedures, I plan to make sure each student understands Trinity’s policies and procedures. Being that most of the students are first generation, I want to make sure they understand the basics. For example, I want to make sure they understand the difference between withdrawing and dropping a course. Another example, I want to make sure they know how to properly communicate with their professor. These are just a few of the items to be discussed.

***First Year Experience Meeting (Reflection Journaling)***

All of the students are very passionate and active in the university’s community and beyond. It is important to the overall goal of being a “dreamer” to capture and share important experiences with one another. This is my primary reason to meet with all the dreamers in late Spring to discuss the first year experience. The primary focus and discussion will center on course intensity and getting involved with extracurricular activities. This could be a great opportunity to get general feedback on what courses and activities they would like to see.

During this meeting, I plan to challenge the students to start journaling about their experiences. This scholarship/cohort is making history. I believe they understand this, but I want each of them to consider formally recording their experiences. This is a great way to share their experiences with each other and the entire community.

**Appendix 1: Policies and Procedures (from the Dream.US):**

According to the scholarship liaison, the renewal scholarship application is due in the month of June which allows students a full academic year to maintain/improve their GPA. The scholarship does not pay for failed or withdrawn courses. The student will be required to cover the cost of any withdrawn or failed courses on their own. The following are additional requirements:

* Maintain a cumulative GPA of “B” (3.0/4.0) or better in the program
* Remain continuously enrolled on a full time basis (part-time of at least 6 credits will be allowed in extenuating circumstances)
* Remain current on all college accounts and charges
* Remain DACA eligible, reapply for DACA approval as required, and upon re-application, provide Scholarship America with a copy of the receipt for your DACA application or your DACA approval letter
* Meet other program commitments outlined in the Award Letter.

In addition, students may take up to three years to complete an associate’s degree and up to six years to complete a bachelor’s degree, but this will not increase the amount of the Award. The total Award cannot exceed the cost of tuition and fees (plus any annual stipend) for an associate or bachelor’s degree (and, in no event can it exceed $12,500 for an associate degree and $25,000 for a bachelor degree, plus the stipend).

If student fails to remain enrolled or to complete a degree within the time specified above, Partner College must refund any remaining Award amounts to Scholarship America. Renewal of the scholarship is contingent on THEDREAM.US’ continuation of the scholarship program and the student’s satisfactory academic performance in an undergraduate program.