



2017 Student Advising Program Report

Every year, college costs increase, and financial aid falls woefully short, especially for students and families with the greatest financial need. For low-income and first-generation college students, understanding technical jargon, navigating a maze of applications, and making a decision is fraught with uncertainty, anxiety, and complexity. Without critical information, students can make decisions that will affect them adversely for years to come. It is in response to these needs that the Student Advising Program offers objective, unbiased, timely, and honest guidance and assistance each year to over 4,000 students and families. Using a student-centered approach, building relationships and rapport, advisors assist with navigating the complex process of applying for financial aid and making informed enrollment decisions.

- Student Advisors provided **127 workshops and webinars**, reaching a total of **5,188 individuals**.
- Student Advisors provided individual guidance to **935 students and family members** in two primary formats: **82 site visits to eight partner high schools**, where they met individually with **464 students**; and, appointments with **471 students and family members** at community locations and in Scholarship Foundation offices.
- In total, in workshops and individual advising, **Student Advisors provided information and resources to 6,123¹ people in 2017**.

Workshops

In an effort to ensure students and families have objective, timely, and accurate information with which to make informed decisions, The Scholarship Foundation's Student Advising Program offers workshops and support for outreach and FAFSA completion events. These events and efforts are aimed at helping students and families to successfully navigate the financial aid process.

Workshop Type	Number of Workshops	Participant Numbers
Financial Aid Basics	26	1,523
Decision-Making: Using Award Letters to Assess Affordability	17	253
FAFSA	15	417
Personal Finance presentations	14	356
FAFSA Completion Clinics/Events	13	201
Hybrid Workshops	9	370
BJC Scholars Informational Events	6	123
Miscellaneous	6	217
FAFSA Workshop/Completion Combination Events	5	81
College Fairs	5	441
Specialized Workshops (DACA)	3	70
Financial Aid Basics 2.0	2	143

¹ This number likely includes duplication, since it is possible that individuals both attended a workshop and met with an advisor one-on-one.

Scholarship Foundation Informational Presentations	2	46
Professional Development	2	95
Specialized Webinar: The Dream.US	1	252
Specialized Webinar: IRS Data Retrieval Tool	1	600
		5,188

Scholarship Foundation staff and board volunteers engaged with students, families, and direct-service practitioners through **127** workshops, presentations, clinics, and other outreach efforts. **This is a 39% increase from 2016.** This is not a result of seeking additional opportunities; instead, demand increases each year as more counselors, schools, and community organizations are made aware of the services offered through The Scholarship Foundation. A number of events in 2017 resulted in increased awareness of the need for advising. Although the same opportunities may not be replicated in 2018, early signs indicate Student Advisors may continue to be tapped to engage nationally on opportunities related to financial aid, FAFSA, and the advising of students who are undocumented. Advisors are excited about increasing opportunities to connect with and support more students and families; however, there is little capacity to increase workshops substantially without additional staffing to support such requests².

In total, local workshops reached **4,336** individuals, who received information and resources on financial aid, FAFSA, informed decision-making, as well as the programs and services offered by The Scholarship Foundation. In addition to these local efforts, Felipe Martínez, Immigrant Student Advisor, provided substantial support in delivering a webinar with TheDream.Us. This webinar, which reached **252** students nationally, provided crucial guidance to undocumented students on paying for college. Teresa Steinkamp, Advising Director, designed and delivered a webinar with NCAN in response to the unexpected take down of the IRS Data Retrieval Tool, which reached over **600** direct-service practitioners nationally. The Scholarship Foundation's services and the expertise of the Student Advising Program is more critical than ever and is being recognized far beyond St. Louis.

Site Visits

Each year, The Scholarship Foundation's Student Advisors work regularly with a select group of partner high schools. Advisors make site visits, which occur weekly or every other week, depending on the school's size and student needs. During these visits, advisors seek to build relationships and rapport with students through both one-on-one and small group work. This work focuses on completing tasks that are integral to navigating the financial aid process. Advisors work with students on completing and correcting FAFSAs; filling out verification and requesting the necessary supporting documentation; navigating the dependency override process; and, comparing financial aid award offers and engaging in conversations about affordability. This work most directly addresses **access to college**.

In 2017, Student Advisors conducted **82** site visits at eight sites. Over the course of those visits, Student Advisors met with **464** individual students a total of **645** times. This is a decrease from 2016. Efforts to expand advising services in the Metro East required more time for relationship building, which meant later than anticipated starts in new buildings. Additionally, advisors continue to focus on quality of advising as a top priority, which can mean lengthier appointments, resulting in fewer students.

Partner High School	Number of Site Visits
Collinsville High School	10
Grandview High School	11
Hillsboro High School	11
Madison Senior High School	2
North Technical High School	11
Northwest High School	19
SIUE Charter School of East St. Louis	3

² The Scholarship Foundation will be hiring a part-time advisor in 2018, who will work exclusively with five partner programs. Additionally, funding is being requested to strengthen ongoing work in Jefferson County; with two part-time advisors, capacity should stabilize for the short-term.

Persistence and Community Advising

Separate from the advising work completed in site visits, Student Advisors advise students individually. Students are either Scholarship Foundation students or, members of the community who make their way to The Scholarship Foundation through a web search, referral, or media (social or traditional). This work occurs separately from site visits with partner high schools. In 2017, Student Advisors held **710** individual advising appointments. Many students receive ongoing support from an advisor, meeting with an advisor multiple times. In 2017, **471**³ unique students received support, guidance, and resources. Student Advisors meet with students who are loan and/or grant recipients, as well as those who are not. However, the bulk of this advising work is focused on supporting the **persistence** of The Scholarship Foundation's students. Appointments cover many different topics⁴:

- 214 appointments addressed concerns of **affordability**, which includes comparing award letters and discussing debt.
- 352 appointments assisted students with some aspect of navigating a **Scholarship Foundation process**. This includes applying for funding, renewing awards, meeting for a debt or academic progress conversation, or completing repayment-related paperwork.
- 146 appointments provided support for **financial aid-related concerns or challenges** (e.g., appeal, back balance, verification paperwork, dependency override).
- 121 appointments supported some aspect of **FAFSA** submission or completion, including corrections and assistance with the Federal Student Aid (FSA) IDs.
- 172 appointments covered **academic** concerns.
- 58 appointments provided resources and referrals for students in addressing a **basic need** (e.g., housing, hunger, child care, etc.) and/or offered support with **psycho/social/emotional challenges**.

³ This is a 65% increase over last year. Although some of this increase is attributed to increased demand for services, some is likely due to improved efficiency of data collection.

⁴ Many appointments cover multiple topics. For example, a student may need help with FAFSA completion and renewing Scholarship Foundation funds.