



Annual Report

2024-2025 ACADEMIC YEAR

UNIVERSITIES OF WISCONSIN FOSTERING SUCCESS

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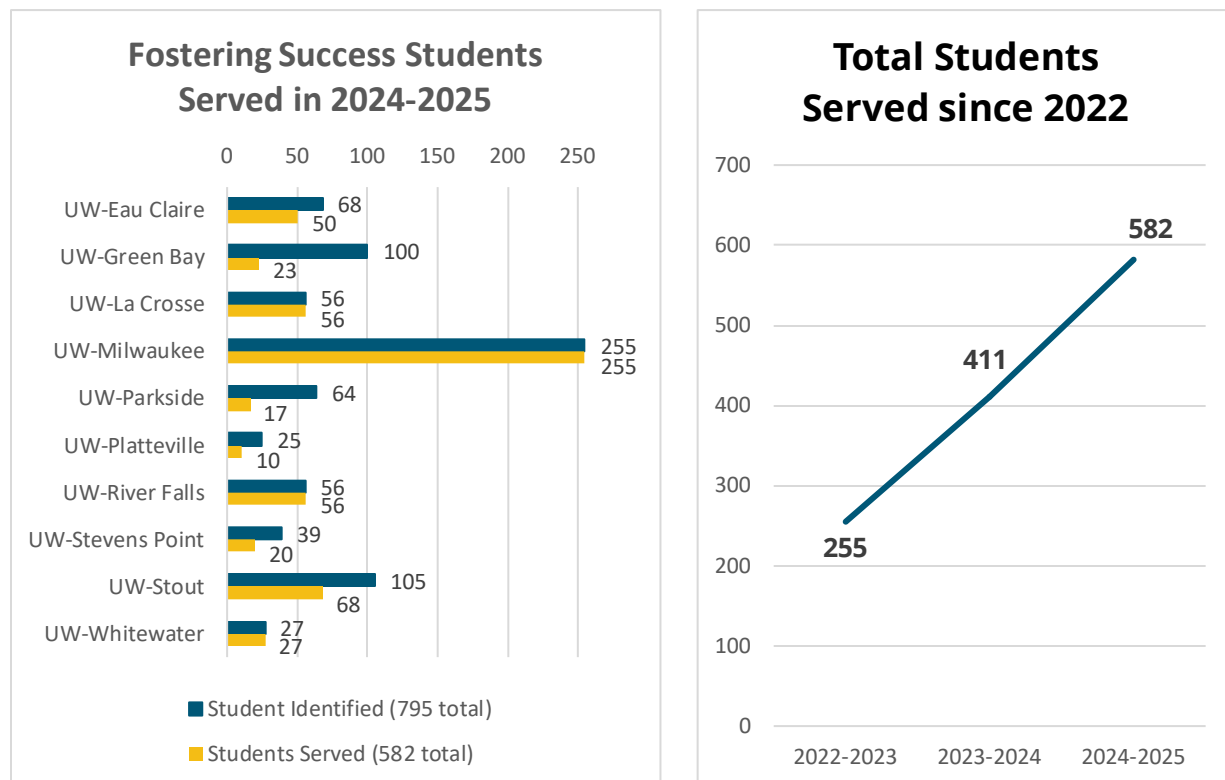
Executive Summary

Program Overview

The Universities of Wisconsin Fostering Success (FS) programs provide individualized support, guidance, and resources for independent students at UW universities who have lived experience in foster care, legal guardianship, or who were orphaned, wards of the court, unaccompanied and homeless, or experienced similar life circumstances.

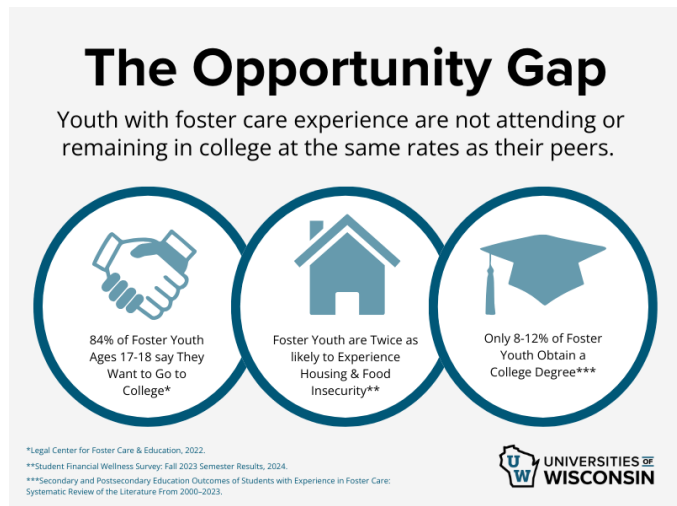
Fostering Success programs have endeavored to cultivate an environment where every independent student feels valued, supported, and equipped to achieve their highest potential. This year, Fostering Success programs across 10 UW universities served 582 students (see Figure 1), compared to 411 last year, a 29% increase. This significant growth highlights enhanced efforts to identify eligible students and engage them in ways that meaningfully contribute to their personal and academic success.

Figure 1: Fostering Success Students Identified and Served



In addition to the increase in students served, a new Fostering Success program was added at UW-Green Bay in 2024-25 and UW-Madison is in the process of starting one for 2025-26. These achievements reflect a continued commitment to ensuring that every independent student across the Universities of Wisconsin has access to the resources and community they need to thrive.

This report summarizes the work and accomplishments of Fostering Success programs over the past year, underscoring both measurable achievements and the transformative experiences of students. Through an integrated model that combines success coaching, academic guidance, financial resources, and opportunities for community connection, UW Fostering Success programs address the multifaceted needs of independent students. Research affirms that such comprehensive and holistic support is critical to increasing persistence and graduation rates, particularly for students who might otherwise face overwhelming barriers to college access and degree completion (see graphic, at right).



Strategies for Identifying and Connecting with Eligible Students

One of the most effective strategies Fostering Success programs use for identifying and connecting with students is to request names of eligible students from their university financial aid office. Students are identified through questions on the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) that ask about experiences in foster care and other eligibility criteria. Once names of eligible students are received, program staff can use personalized emails, calls, texts, and Navigate 360 campaigns to reach out to eligible students and invite them to program events. In addition to using FAFSA to identify eligible students, programs also use the following strategies:

- Creation of a pre-orientation survey question that allows students to self-identify as being program-eligible, which prompts follow-up outreach.
- Presence at new student orientation days, registration events, and involvement fairs to start making connections with eligible students and to help answer questions.
- Training sessions, student panels, and open houses with university faculty and student service offices (academic advising, admissions, etc.) to familiarize faculty and staff with the Fostering Success program, resources, and referral process.
- Distribution of a Universities of Wisconsin Fostering Success program brochure that highlights services and resources across all participating campuses.

All of the above options focus on identification of students after they have applied or matriculated to a UW university. Fostering Success professionals have recognized that the earliest possible identification helps to promote a smoother transition by offering students support during the application process and before they arrive on campus. In this spirit, many Fostering Success programs collaborate with local high schools, foster care agencies, and other community programs to identify eligible students prior to enrollment. Some Fostering Success programs also use social media to spread information about the program to students and the community to promote early identification. In addition, beginning in Summer 2025, a new eligibility question was added to the Universities of Wisconsin Admission Application (EApp) to identify eligible students early within the admission cycle, and before FAFSA information is available. This addition is expected to greatly assist programs with early identification and connection with eligible students through collaboration with Admissions teams at each UW university and the Go Wisconsin team at UW Administration.

Program Goals and Services Provided

As UW Fostering Success programs continue to grow and evolve, annual goals have also evolved. Program goals in 2023-2024 focused on increasing student support academically, socially, and financially, as well as increasing student awareness of resources available. While these foundational goals remain important, goals in 2024-2025 focused more on increasing program awareness, identifying eligible students early to get them more involved, and building community and campus partnerships.

The goals and strategies below were commonly seen across Fostering Success programs in 2024-25:

- Raising awareness of Fostering Success programs among students, staff, and faculty through improved marketing strategies, targeted outreach campaigns, and intentional recruitment efforts.
- Identifying eligible students as early as possible—prior to or upon enrollment—by strengthening relationships with high schools, child welfare agencies, and admissions departments.
- Increasing the number of students served by expanding eligibility outreach, refining referral processes, and promoting the visibility of campus-based support services.
- Deepening student engagement in available services, events, and programming through personalized outreach, consistent communication, and responsive event planning.
- Expanding access to basic needs resources, including, but not limited to, emergency grants, housing support, food security resources, and mental health services.
- Developing a more comprehensive academic support structure to promote retention, persistence, and success, including tutoring, advising, and access to learning communities.
- Strengthening partnerships by aligning Fostering Success with other student services offices and building strong relationships with local organizations and agencies.
- Securing sustainable funding through enhanced donor cultivation, campus investment, and external grant opportunities to support scholarships, emergency assistance, and program operations.

To work toward the goals identified above, universities provided many common program strategies and resources to Fostering Success students to support their academic success and to allow them to connect with their peers and create a sense of belonging and community. The list below contains some of these common strategies and resources:

- Welcome baskets
- Individualized academic support (advising, coaching, tutoring, study groups, etc.)
- Financial literacy programming
- Peer support, mentoring, and group meetings
- Social and cultural events
- Group dinners
- Scholarship and mini-grant opportunities
- Emergency funds to help with unexpected expenses
- Emergency supply pantries (food, clothing, toiletries, etc.) to ensure everyday needs are met so students can focus on their studies
- Housing support during semester breaks

Program Outcomes

In 2024-2025, UW Fostering Success programs continued to show impressive outcomes on key student success metrics. To assess academic performance at a basic level, programs reported grade point averages (GPA) for their students, with the aggregate GPA of 2.68 across programs being well-above the 2.00 GPA threshold needed for good academic standing.

Student retention and graduation rates are perhaps the most critical success measures to monitor when evaluating student success. Now that most programs have been in existence for three or more academic years, they were able to report fall-to-fall retention data for Fostering Success students. As can be seen in Figure 2, between 64% and 94% of students who were engaged with these programs in fall 2023 either graduated or returned in fall 2024. The aggregate retention average of 80% was nearly 3 percentage points higher than the 77.3% first-year to second-year retention rate at the same universities—first-year to second-year student retention is a common metric of comparison that is tracked across all UW universities and nationally (Universities of Wisconsin Dashboard, wisconsin.edu/accountability/progress-and-completion/). Over the course of three years since legislative funding became available to support these programs, 109 students have graduated.

These are impressive accomplishments given what is known about the overall success rates of students with a foster care or similar history. This report will continue to track retention and graduation data over longer periods of time in future years.



582
Students Served
Last Year



2.68
Average
GPA

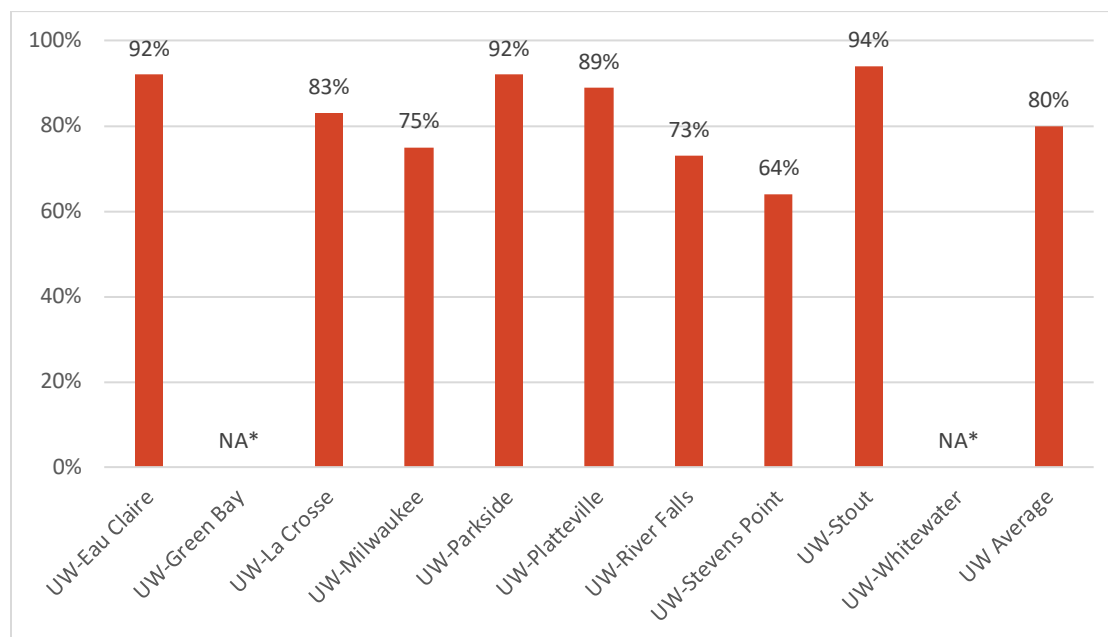


80%
Student
Retention



109
Graduates
Since 2022

Figure 2: Percentage of Fostering Success Students Retained/Graduated—Fall 2023 to Fall 2024



**NOTE: UW-Green Bay began identifying and engaging with students in earnest during spring 2024 and therefore could not submit retention/graduation data for this report. UW-Whitewater was also unable to provide accurate data this year due to unreliable records after staff turnover. These two universities are not reflected in the "Total" calculation.*

Student Success Stories and Testimonials

To give a more personal voice to student outcomes, programs submitted quotes and stories from students that spoke to their individual experiences. The quote and story below both highlight the profound impact Fostering Success programs can have on student success.



"I am graduating from UW-Eau Claire this spring with my bachelor's degree in social work. Fostering Success has given me everything and more that I have needed to succeed and get to this point in my college career. From the monthly meaningful meals to the scholarship assistance that allowed me to focus on my academics and ease some of my financial stress. From the endless support I have received from those I met through the program, to the knowledge and community gained from hearing everyone's unique story. I absolutely adore this program and will forever advocate for it to continue in higher education institutions. Thank you, FS!"

— UW-Eau Claire student

For the first time, a Fostering Success student has completed the three-year undergraduate portion of a five-year accelerated Business program that leads to both undergraduate and graduate degrees. In the fall, he will officially be a graduate student. As an undergraduate, he was a Lawton Scholar since 2023, balancing academics and internships with leadership and campus involvement, including mentoring fellow scholars. His overall accomplishments led to recognition as one of the "Lubar 25," a College of Business program that recognizes undergraduates who stand out for their accomplishments in academics, entrepreneurship, leadership, or campus/community service.

— UW-Milwaukee program



Program Funding and Structure

Beginning in 2022-2023, the Wisconsin biennial budget has included an annual appropriation of \$500,000 to support foster youth programming across the Universities of Wisconsin. Ten programs currently receive an annual appropriation of \$50,000 to support program staff and activities.

In the first two years of program funding, nine UW universities were funded, based on meeting the qualifications of a request for proposal (RFP) process. With the ability to fund one additional program at current funding levels, a call for proposals was sent in spring 2024 to the remaining UW universities without a Fostering Success program. After reviewing applications, UW-Green Bay was added as the 10th program during 2024-2025. In the 2025-2026 academic year UW-Madison will be self-funding its own Fostering Success program, increasing the total number of programs to 11 across the Universities of Wisconsin.

With savings from funding a smaller number of programs in the first two years, a portion of the state appropriation has been used to fund a quarter-time technical consultant from one of the Fostering Success programs that pre-dates the state appropriation. This individual provides guidance, support, and subject-matter expertise to program coordinators at each campus, which has been invaluable for getting new programs off the ground and onboarding new Fostering Success coordinators when there is turnover. The technical consultant also regularly convenes the program coordinators in a community of practice to provide a forum for sharing best-practices, training, and troubleshooting.

While the state's Fostering Success program funding is a primary source of financial support, six of the 10 programs received additional university funding and staffing support to further the mission of their Fostering Success programs.

Non-University Commitment or Additional Support

In addition to the state appropriation and additional university funding noted above, most programs also seek supplemental funding and support from outside their university to provide enhanced services and opportunities to their students. In 2024-25, six of nine Fostering Success programs reported receiving a total of over \$98,000 in non-university funding from the following sources to support their programs:

- Donations from local businesses, community organizations, and university faculty and staff
- Community grants
- Support from nonprofit organizations
- In-kind contributions
- Amazon wish list donations
- Donation drives
- University foundations

An increasingly common way universities secured supplemental funding was by collaborating with their foundation offices. Foundation staff have helped to coordinate campaigns for renewable scholarships, donation commitments, and matching donation opportunities through existing donor networks and through outreach and marketing to potential new donors. Foundations also assisted in collecting private donations and endowments, and in some cases included Fostering Success as an option for annual day of giving campaigns. Universities that reported funding secured through their foundation offices included UW-Eau Claire, UW-La Crosse, UW-Milwaukee, UW-Stout, and UW-Whitewater.

Staffing

To support the work of Fostering Success programs, each university has a program coordinator who dedicates a portion of their time to the initiative. Since all but two coordinators serve in part-time roles with Fostering Success, they must balance their time with other job responsibilities. In addition to the coordinator role, many Fostering Success programs also have some form of student staff through interns, graduate assistants, and/or peer mentors. Programs that do not have student staff often rely on additional professional staff who dedicate a portion of their time to the program.

While some Fostering Success program coordinators indicated that their staffing levels have been sufficient, many noted that a continued rise in participants has put a strain on the ability of programs to sustain desired service levels. All participating universities have indicated that dedicating at least one full-time equivalent (FTE) staff person to their Fostering Success program would allow them to commit more time toward increasing engagement with eligible participants and expanding program offerings. In an attempt to secure additional staff support, a request was submitted in the 2025-27 Universities of Wisconsin biennial state budget request, but was not funded.

Challenges

The following challenges have been identified by Fostering Success program professionals:

- *Staffing Limitations*
As noted above, Fostering Success programs increasingly struggle with insufficient staffing, which directly impacts the ability to deliver consistent, high-quality programming. Without staffing depth, prolonged absences or turnover in the coordinator role can leave critical gaps in support services. Interns are sometimes used to fill these gaps, but the oversight they require sometimes outweighs the benefits they provide, further straining limited personnel resources.
- *Funding Constraints*
A lack of sufficient funding continues to be one of the most significant barriers to program stability and growth. While emergency funds were successfully raised by some programs, efforts to secure long-term, renewable scholarships fell short. Limited funding also affected the ability to hire full-time staff and to meet essential student needs.
- *Student Engagement Difficulties*
Student engagement remains a persistent challenge in operating Fostering Success programs. Staff noted that traditional outreach methods, such as emails, are often not effective in fostering meaningful connections with students, particularly those with complex life circumstances. The challenge is amplified during staff transitions, resulting in missed opportunities for early intervention and relationship-building.
- *Program Execution and Infrastructure*
Without sufficient staff time dedicated to programs at some UW universities, planning and execution of meaningful programming remains difficult. In many cases, Fostering Success responsibilities are split across multiple roles, diluting focus and limiting effectiveness. Additionally, staff reductions in admissions and digital communications areas on some campuses created delays in outreach and webpage updates, limiting visibility and access to services for prospective students.

- *Barriers to Student Access*

Many students face challenges related to understanding and accessing financial support, particularly those coming from out-of-state who are not eligible for in-state tuition. The inclusion of students qualifying for dependency overrides broadened programs' reach but also introduced additional complexity and increased demands on already limited staff capacity.

Future Goals and Conclusion

The 2024–2025 year was productive and transformative for the Universities of Wisconsin Fostering Success programs. With expansion from nine to 10 universities and increasing success in identifying and engaging with eligible students, programs served more students than ever, and depth of engagement grew. Even with this progress, many opportunities remain for continued growth as programs focus on recruiting, retaining, and supporting students through deeper community connections. The addition of the Universities of Wisconsin Admission Application (EApp) question for the next recruitment year, intentional outreach by the Go Wisconsin team and program expansion to UW-Madison, will undoubtedly lead to serving more students in 2025-26.

Looking ahead, Fostering Success programs will concentrate on strengthening their foundation while broadening reach and impact across Wisconsin. While the request to secure dedicated, full-time staff positions for Fostering Success programs was not funded in the 2025-27 biennial budget, this remains an important long-term goal in order to ensure consistent, high-quality programming and meaningful engagement with students. Equally important is pursuing long-term, renewable funding through state investment, donor support, and grant opportunities. Programs will continue to build strong pipelines by partnering with high schools, child welfare agencies, and admissions offices to identify students earlier and connect them to resources prior to enrollment.

More locally, Fostering Success programs will continue focus on developing innovative outreach and communication strategies that go beyond traditional approaches to create stronger student relationships and inclusive communities of belonging. Expanding access to academic support, while ensuring reliable resources for student basic needs will remain central to the mission. Collaboration with university departments, local agencies, and nonprofit partners will continue to deepen, creating a more holistic network of care and opportunity for students. Programs will continue to demonstrate impact through tracking academic progress and outcome data, as well as highlighting alumni stories of perseverance and success.

As Fostering Success programs expand to 11 universities with the addition of UW-Madison in 2025–26, the overall vision remains steadfast: that every independent student, regardless of background or circumstance, has access to the support, resources, and community they need to achieve their educational and personal goals. When independent youth are equipped to thrive in higher education, they are more likely to graduate, enter the workforce, and contribute meaningfully to the state's economic vitality. Graduates of the Fostering Success program are positioned to break cycles of poverty and instability, ultimately reducing reliance on social services and enriching their communities. In this context, continued support of Fostering Success programs is not just a commitment to student success – it is a strategic investment in the future of Wisconsin.

UW-EAU CLAIRE

FOSTERING SUCCESS

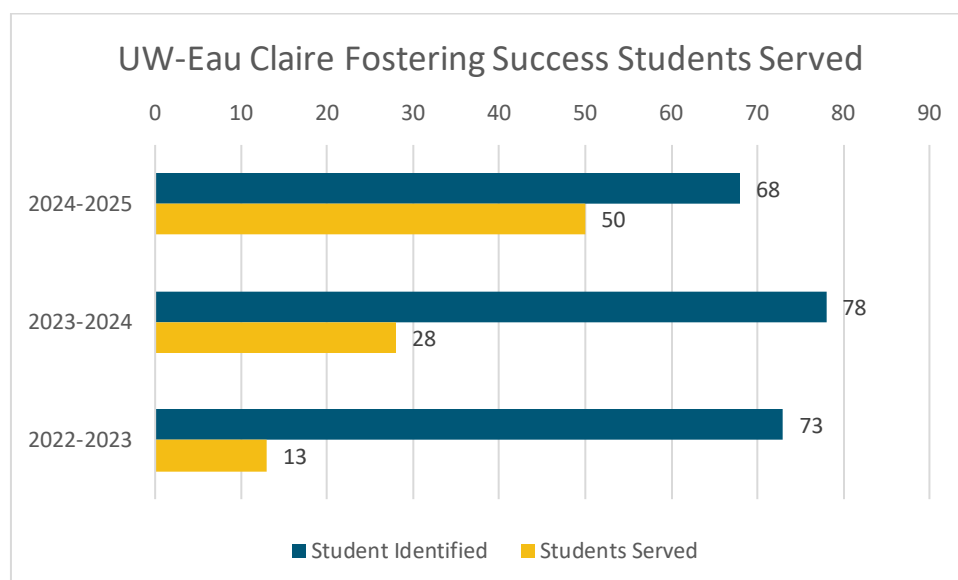


Program Location: Division of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (future: Division of Student Affairs)

Program Coordinator: Jodi Thesing-Ritter (thesinjm@uwec.edu, 715-836-3651)

Website: <https://www.uwec.edu/offices-services/fostering-success>

Fostering Success Students Identified and Served



Strategies for Connecting with Eligible Students

UW-Eau Claire engaged in a year-long process of increasing awareness of the resources the Fostering Success office can provide. These efforts resulted in growing the number of participating students from 13 (2022-2023) to 28 (2023-2024) to 50 (2024-2025) using the following strategies:

- Provided an office tour, lunch, and training with all academic advisors and all summer orientation staff to familiarize them with the Fostering Success program.
- Held multiple meetings with financial aid staff to showcase resource offerings, as well as intentional collaborations to identify potential students through FAFSA data.
- Developed pre-orientation survey questions so students can self-identify.
- Collaborated with orientation staff to get weekly lists of students coming to orientation who self-identified needs on a survey. Those students then received an email, text, and call inviting them to meet with Fostering Success staff during their orientation day.
- Tabled daily at the Student Services Fair during lunch on orientation days. (Student interns staff the table to increase connection with potential students.)
- Participated in student panel and resource panel for faculty and staff through the Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning to assist faculty and staff in understanding how to identify and refer students.

- Collaborated with area high schools and social workers to identify students planning to attend UW-Eau Claire and to create a seamless handoff of students.
- Implemented an intake process through Navigate 360 for tracking contact with students, as well as referrals and information from faculty, staff, and academic advisors.

The area of implementation that will require additional attention and improvement is collaborating with regional schools, social workers, and programs to make sure that students who would benefit from services get an intentional handoff through an in-person office visit and intake.

Programming and Services Provided

UW-Eau Claire had a strong year of program growth and was able to provide the following resources and services during the 2024-2025 academic year:

- Welcome kits with bedding, towels, laundry baskets, hangers, etc.
- Laptop check-out program
- Refrigerator, futon, microwave check-out program
- Support to participate in high-impact practices (e.g., common course experiences; community-based learning)
- Optional cohort course enrollment
- University store for free toiletries, school supplies, kitchen supplies, cleaning supplies, etc.
- Midterm care packages
- Monthly Meaningful Meals
- Halloween Haunted Corn Maze
- Sewing workshop
- Food Share registration workshop
- FAFSA workshop
- Budgeting & financial literacy workshops
- Monthly lunch with Randee (community mentor who prepared a monthly lunch)
- Emergency Fund for books, car breakdowns, tires, unmet bills due to unforeseen circumstances, etc.
- Study table
- Winter break gift cards
- Community service project
- Résumé writing workshop and Handshake enrollment with Career Services
- Final exam baskets
- Summer community garden project
- Cooking and meal prep workshop
- Winter hat, coat, and mitten drive and distribution
- Fall and Spring open house
- Apple orchard tour
- Game night with community mentors
- Badger Care workshop
- 10-day immersion experience

Program Goals 2024-2025

Goal	Outcome
Increase participation in the Fostering Success program from 28 students to 45 students.	Achieved enrollment of 50 students during the 2024-25 term.
Develop and implement a mentor program at Memorial and North High Schools serving at least 10 foster youth.	Goal not achieved due to limited staff support from the school district. Did enroll three Spring 2025 Eau Claire high school graduates. One moved into university housing over the summer and is employed through the department work program.
Secure three additional four-year renewable scholarships from donors.	Successfully increased donor funding for scholarships.
Collaborate with UW-Eau Claire Foundation to execute a fundraising campaign to raise \$20,000 in program and emergency funds for the Fostering Success program.	Goal achieved.
Secure enough College Coaches (faculty/staff) and Community Mentors (adult members of community) so that each Fostering Success student who wants one or both of these supports can be matched.	Successfully secured mentors for all program students.

Non-University Student Outreach

UW-Eau Claire's Fostering Success staff nurtured several connections this year in support of program goals:

- **Eau Claire County Health and Human Services** – met with assistant director to increase awareness of programming available through Fostering Success. Secured an invitation to service providers for unhoused populations and promoted the work of Fostering Success, developing additional connections to better serve unhoused students regionally.
- **Homeless Youth Coordinators at regional schools** – met multiple times to increase their understanding of resources and participated in their Backpack Giveaway Night.
- **Regional Independent Living Coordinator** – maintained close collaboration to gain program referrals.
- **Tree House** – maintained partnership with this nonprofit group to provide university tours for its students and start a service-learning program where Fostering Success students mentor weekly at Tree House.
- **Western Dairyland** – initiated a relationship to develop referrals to maximize access to resources for Fostering Success students.

Additional Program Highlights

UW-Eau Claire's Fostering Success program experienced growth in both the number of program participants and their engagement in weekly programming. The students built strong connections with each other, and retention numbers and grade point averages (3.0 in Spring 2025) were points of pride from UW-Eau Claire. Three Fostering Success students graduated with honors and have secured employment post-graduation. Staff are working to build their program enrollment for fall 2025 and had already enrolled three new students before the spring semester ended. They also helped one student move from their foster home into the residence halls in May 2025 for summer employment and engagement. Students participated in a summer community garden project,

summer meaningful meals, and targeted professional development opportunities to maximize their summer experience.

Non-University Commitment or Additional Support

UW-Eau Claire engaged in a giving campaign with its foundation and received over \$15,000 in donations. UW-Eau Claire also collaborated with its foundation gifts officers to seek scholarship donation commitments for four-year \$5,000 scholarships. In 2024-2025, two donors committed to making \$20,000 donations to provide renewable scholarships that have been awarded to two incoming first-year students. Additionally, UW-Eau Claire collaborated with Marine Credit Union to provide Financial Literacy Workshops for their students. Marine Credit Union also donated \$800 to stock their basic needs supply store for one month and coordinated an online voting community giving campaign featuring Fostering Success as one of the potential recipients of a \$1500 award. Fostering Success won the online voting and was awarded \$1500 to provide emergency funding for students.

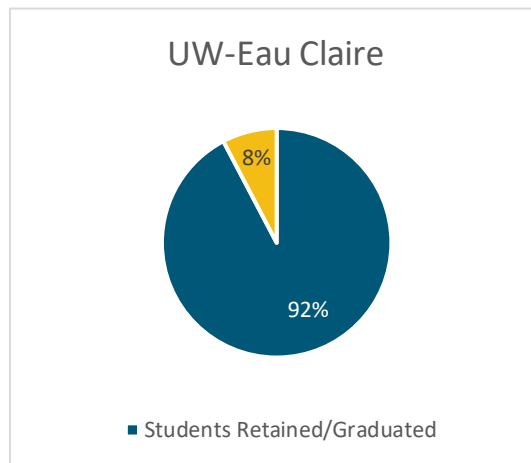
Looking ahead, UW-Eau Claire is collaborating with local credit unions to secure ongoing emergency funding and financial literacy support. These applications are currently being reviewed. Additionally, UW-Eau Claire is partnering with local businesses to secure monthly donations for the Fostering Success store. Finally, the university has secured two \$4,000 donations to use as matches for the November Giving Tuesday Campaign through the UW-Eau Claire Foundation.

Staffing

- Director
- Student Services Coordinator
- 4 Student Interns

Common Program Metrics

The average GPA of UW-Eau Claire Fostering Success students served was 2.90 in the fall and 3.0 in the spring. Out of the 13 students served in fall 2023, 12 students (92%) were either retained for the fall 2024 semester or graduated.



University-Specific Program Metrics

At UW-Eau Claire, the Fostering Success Program continues to focus on building holistic support systems for students. In addition to traditional academic and retention data, the program tracked several qualitative, engagement-based metrics to better understand the student experience and program impact.

Program Engagement:

Throughout the academic year, students participate in one-on-one check-ins, community-building events, and workshops designed to promote belonging and self-advocacy. Engagement is assessed through attendance, student feedback, and ongoing communication between students and the program coordinator. Many participants maintain consistent contact, which allows for early intervention and individualized support planning.

Campus Store & Brighter Star Eligibility:

The Brighter Star program distributes federal Education and Training Voucher (ETV) funding that many former foster youth qualify for. Students eligible for the Brighter Star program are identified early each semester during required one-on-one check ins to ensure access to financial and academic resources, and to connect to the area Brighter Star representative. In addition, during one-on-one check ins students are also shown how to utilize the campus store and are asked what items they are most in need of to ensure they are best serving them.

Department Referrals & Campus Partnerships:

The program frequently collaborates with departments such as Financial Aid, Counseling Services, Career Services, Student Support Services, Multicultural Student Services, Gender Sexuality and Resource Center as well as Housing and Residence Life. These partnerships help students navigate complex systems, connect with campus resources, and develop long-term stability. Referral trends highlight the ongoing need for wraparound support beyond academics.

Lending Program Participation:

Through the lending program, students have access to essential items such as textbooks, laptops, and dorm supplies. Items are tracked to keep tabs on what is checked out at all times.

Immersion Experience Participation:

Students are encouraged to engage in high-impact practices, including immersion experiences, study abroad, and service-learning. While participation varies annually based on financial and personal readiness, students who engage in these opportunities report increased confidence, self-efficacy, and connection to campus.

Emergency Fund Distribution:

The Fostering Success emergency fund remains a critical resource for addressing immediate financial crises that could otherwise derail students' academic progress. Requests typically include assistance with vehicle repair, fuel for commuter students, and food insecurity. These funds play a significant role in promoting student stability and persistence.

Overall, tracking these forms of student engagement collectively reflect our program's commitment to individualized, proactive, and relationship-centered support. We continue to use this information to identify needs, inform programming decisions, and advocate for community and campus support.

Future Recruitment Strategies

In addition to continuing the strategies implemented to date, UW-Eau Claire plans to increase engagement with Eau Claire County Health and Human Services to more effectively collaborate with service providers to identify students early and provide seamless support to access to and through higher education.

Program Goals 2025-2026

- Increase participation in the Fostering Success program from 50 students to 65 students.
- Secure an additional four-year renewable scholarship from donors.
- Collaborate with UW-Eau Claire Foundation to create an endowed fund to support the Fostering Success Store.
- Secure at least three community business partnerships to increase community engagement with programming and students.

UW-GREEN BAY

FOSTERING SUCCESS

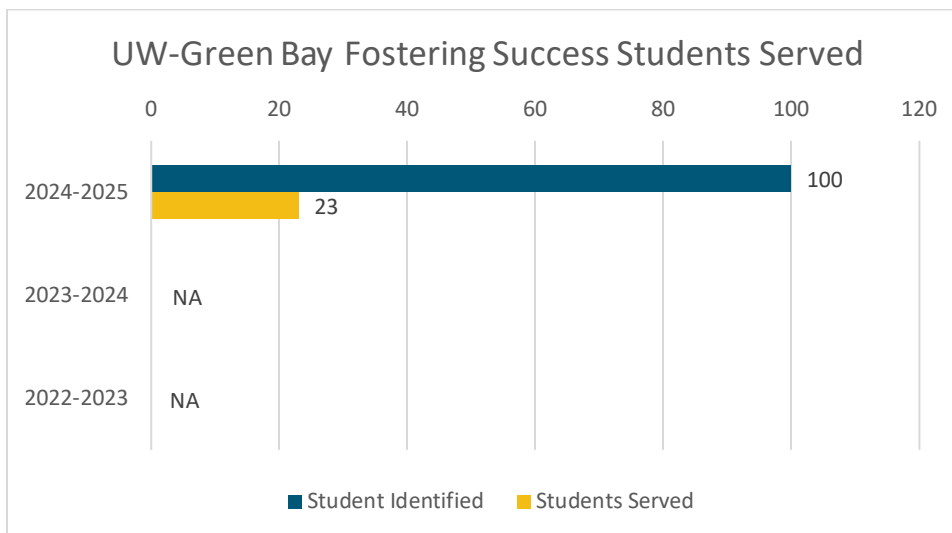


Program Location: Dean of Students Office

Program Coordinator: Erin VanDaalwyk

Website: <https://www.uwgb.edu/phoenix-cares/fostering-success/>

Fostering Success Students Identified and Served



Note: UW-Green Bay began their Fostering Success program in Fall 2024 and does not have data for prior years.

Strategies for Connecting with Eligible Students

UW-Green Bay obtained information regarding eligible students from the Financial Aid department and the FAFSA. Once the staff narrowed down students who qualified based on pre-determined criteria, a Qualtrics survey was sent inviting students to "opt in" to receive further communication regarding upcoming programming and information about Fostering Success for the year. Once students opted-in, the staff used email and texting through Navigate360 to communicate with students.

Programming and Services Provided

- Meaningful Meals (October, November, December, January, February, March, April)
- Fleece Tie Blankets (November)
- Cookie Decorting
- Financial Aid & Scholarship Information
- Mid-Term Goodie Bags
- Self-Care Kits
- Ongoing Student Coaching/Non-clinical Case Management

Program Goals 2024-2025

Goal	Outcome
Engage at least 10% of eligible Fostering Success students.	Exceeded this goal by engaging 23% of eligible students.
Create a baseline for persistence, retention and graduation rates and then develop goals for year-two.	Accomplished.
Assess satisfaction of students who engaged with the program.	A survey was sent to all students, with no response. However, individual follow up with a few students produced anecdotal feedback including this quote: "The Fostering Success Program has made a huge difference in my college experience. Having a dedicated support system helped me feel seen and supported both academically and personally. The staff are genuinely caring, always checking in and connecting me with resources I didn't even know existed. I enjoyed the events that we held each month, and it was nice to know I wasn't alone with my experience through the foster care system. I feel more confident about reaching my goals and know I have people who want to see me succeed."

Non-University Student Outreach

To promote the Fostering Success program starting up in fall 2024, UW-Green Bay met with a group of stakeholders that make up Transitions to Success. This group included members from Brown County Workforce Development, Brown County Health and Human Services, Jazz House, and Foundations of Wellness. Staff wanted to be sure that those who work closest with these populations of students were aware of the Fostering Success program coming to UW-Green Bay. Many had heard of these programs at other UW universities and were enthusiastic to hear that a program had started in Green Bay.

Additional Program Highlights

UW-Green Bay has a unique opportunity to provide the Rising Phoenix program to high school, degree-seeking students enrolled in college courses, allowing participants to graduate with an associate degree while still in high school. While the number of students that Fostering Success serves is small, we strive to ensure Rising Phoenix students are aware this program exists with the hope of serving additional students. UW-Green Bay believes that this program may be a determining factor for them in choosing to continue with UW-Green Bay to complete their bachelor's degree.

Non-University Commitment or Additional Support

UW-Green Bay does not receive any non-university support at this time.

Staffing

- 1 Dean of Students (Program Coordinator)
- 1 Assistant Dean of Students
- 2 Graduate Student Interns

Common Program Metrics

The average grade point average of UW-Green Bay Fostering Success students served was 2.57 in the fall and 2.49 in the spring. There was no retention and graduation data to report in the first year of the program.

Future Recruitment Strategies

In addition to the above goals, UW-Green Bay plans to add a question on the campus pre-orientation survey that indicates student interest in the Fostering Success program. These data will be used to cross reference with the data received from the Universities of Wisconsin Application for Admission.

Program Goals 2025-2026

- Increase participation rate by 20%.
- Form partnerships with existing student success groups on campus that overlap with the students that are served by Fostering Success.
- Provide monthly events to promote both academic and social engagement on campus.

UW-LA CROSSE

FOSTERING SUCCESS FOR INDEPENDENT SCHOLARS

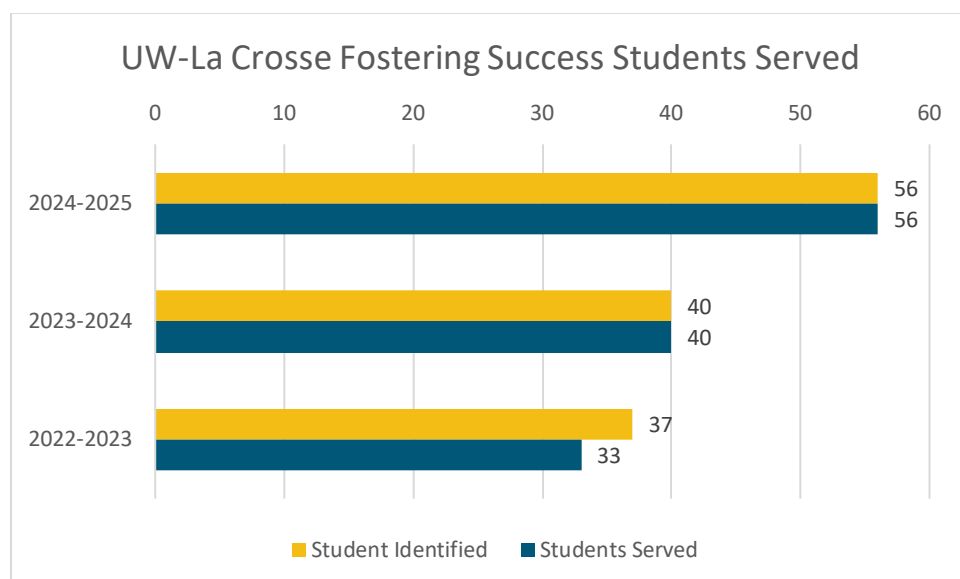


Program Location: Division of Access, Belonging & Compliance - TRIO Student Support Services

Program Coordinator: Luke Fannin (lfannin@uwlax.edu, 608-785-8538)

Website: uwlax.edu/student-support-services/fostering-success-for-independent-scholars/

Fostering Success Students Identified and Served



Strategies for Connecting with Eligible Students

The UW-La Crosse (UWL) Financial Aid Office shares with the TRIO Student Support Services (SSS) Director a list of students who are eligible or potentially eligible for Fostering Success for Independent Scholars (FSIS). The SSS Director works with the FSIS coordinator to send outreach emails with program information to everyone on the list. UWL offers assistance in completing FAFSA verification steps to any students still in that process, as well as invites those not already enrolled in SSS to do so. Additionally, UWL maintains an FSIS-specific Canvas course which all eligible students are invited to join. Students are not automatically enrolled in the Canvas course—they must accept the invitation — but once enrolled; they have access to a variety of information from campus contacts to state and local aid agencies. Canvas also gives the option to “assign” certain tasks to students, such as filling out a brief form identifying any upcoming needs they might have over break.

While most independent scholars at UWL remain fiercely independent and do not respond to a great deal of messaging, the staff was successful in enrolling 95% of eligible students in the FSIS Canvas course, which resulted in a slight uptick of students requesting supplies and other material services. The best way to get students to take advantage of FSIS benefits has continued to be getting them to first enroll in SSS. Once they’re coming in for advising and tutoring, they are far more likely to approach us about other needs they might have.

Programming and Services Provided

- SSS Services & Programs: Advising, Tutoring, Career Readiness, Financial Literacy Programming, Free Printing Services
- Access to FSIS Supply Cabinet for school supplies personal hygiene, toiletries, household supplies, cleaning supplies, and more
- Direct Financial Assistance (\$500 per semester per student)
- Access to a wide variety of campus and community events focused on educational and personal enrichment, leadership develop, career prep, and more

Program Goals 2024-2025

Goal	Outcome
Establish family dinners to deepen community building efforts.	For the 2nd year, UWL had difficulty getting students interested in the idea of a recurring “family dinner” focused on community and wellbeing. In October, surveys were sent out to gauge interest and identify possible dates, though only a few responses were received. The team eventually incorporated this idea into drop-in style SSS events that combined de-stressing and belonging activities with timely informational services related to course registration, FAFSA, education abroad, scholarships, etc.—and, of course, a hot meal. Twelve independent scholars participated in at least one of these events over the course of the year.
Bring in UWL's Underserved Populations Coordinator for wraparound support for Fostering Success participants.	This position, part of UWL's Counseling & Testing Center, was not filled in 2024-25. The recruitment continues with an SSS staff member on the search & screen committee, and UWL is hopeful to build this connection in 2025-26.
Provide targeted, customized career day events for program participants.	FSIS offered all participants the opportunity to engage in a custom-guided Career & Internship Fair experience with one of our SSS staff. Students were able to participate in a pre-Fair prep session in which they could explore the list of employers attending and have their resume reviewed. On the day of the fair, they also had the option of attending with a staff member as a guide and/or other peers for encouragement, advice, and moral support. Seven independent scholars participated.
Maintain or improve all program metrics.	The number of eligible students participating in the program continues to increase annually. Good academic standing numbers increased slightly, while average GPAs decreased slightly—overall these metrics show positive academic progress. Retention and graduation numbers held relatively steady.
Engage 50% of program participants in at least one community/cultural/career event during the 2024-2025 academic year.	Despite offering numerous events of these types (over 20), only about a third of FSIS students (19/56) participated in at least one of these events.

Non-University Student Outreach

When high school groups arrange visits through UWL's admissions office, they indicate whether they are bringing populations who would benefit from services provided by TRIO SSS and Multicultural Student Services offices, and whether they would like to schedule presentation time with respective program representatives. When SSS is invited to present, information about FSIS is always included.

Additional Program Highlights

N/A

Non-University Commitment or Additional Support

In 2024-2025, UW-La Crosse received private donations to the program totaling \$6,625. UWL will continue to work with the UWL Foundation to spread the word about FSIS among donor networks.

Staffing

- TRIO Student Support Services Director
- Fostering Success for Independent Scholars Coordinator

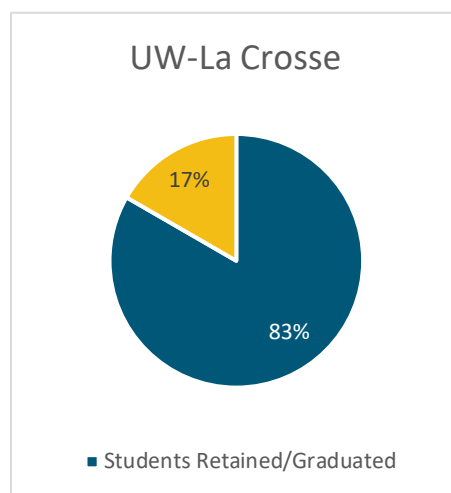
Common Program Metrics

The average GPA of UW-La Crosse Fostering Success students was 2.77 in the fall and 2.78 in the spring. Out of the 36 students served in the fall 2023 semester, 30 students (83%) were either retained for the fall 2024 semester or graduated.

University-Specific Program Metrics

The following metrics are also being tracked across program participants at UW-La Crosse to further evaluate the impact of programming in supporting student success:

- *Engagement with student services:* 96% (54/56) of independent scholars engaged with at least 1 students services office or program outside of FSIS during the 2024-25 academic year. Independent scholars engaged with an average of 2.85 student services offices, with 73% (41/56) of independent engaging with at least 2 such offices. Most commonly sought-after services included the Academic Advising Center, TRIO Student Support Services, Multicultural Student Services, Career Services, and Financial Aid.
- *Academic Standing:* 80% (45/56) of Independent Scholars maintained good academic standing (cumulative GPA above 2.0) during the 2024-25 academic year. Among those who did not, over half (6/11) were new first-year or transfer students.
- *D/F/W Rates:* Independent Scholars enrolled in 495 total courses in the 2024-25 academic year, receiving a grade of D, F, or W (withdrawal) in 89 of them (18%). Nearly half (27/56, or 48%) of independent scholars received no grades of D, F, or W in 2024-25.



- *Job Placement/Grad Program Enrollment:* Of the 10 independent scholars who graduated from UWL during the 2024-25 academic year, 2 have successfully enrolled in graduate programs and 5 have secured employment, with 1 more of those 5 planning to attend graduate school after a gap year. The other 3 graduates did not respond to our inquiries.

Future Recruitment Strategies

If time and budget allow, we would love to work more closely with local middle and high schools to create more accessible pathways to higher education for local students who are eligible for FSIS. We would also like to develop and strengthen transfer partnerships with Western Technical College, where many independent scholars might benefit from beginning their college careers before transferring to UWL.

Program Goals 2025-2026

- Establish FSIS-specific community & belonging events.
- Connect with UWL's Underserved Populations Coordinator (once the position is filled), to build in wraparound support for FSIS participants.
- Engage at least 25% of program participants in targeted, customized career & internship fair events.
- Maintain or improve all process and outcome metrics.
- Engage 40% or more of program participants in at least one event focused on educational or personal enrichment, leadership development, career readiness, or grad school planning.
- Work with UWL's Institutional Research, Assessment, & Planning and Registrar's offices to establish an Independent Scholar student group for better data tracking.

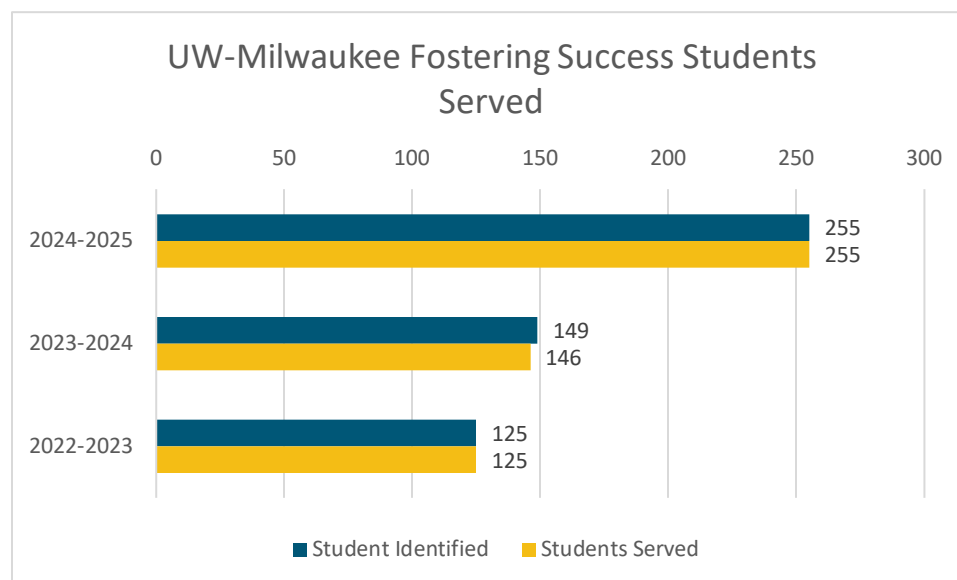


Program Location: Division of Strategic Enrollment Management; Student Success Center

Program Coordinator: Tawney Latona (tawney@uwm.edu, 414-229-4624)

Website: uwm.edu/fosteringSUCCESS

Fostering Success Students Identified and Served



Strategies for Connecting with Eligible Students

In 2024-2025, Fostering Success at UW-Milwaukee (UWM) used a range of intentional strategies to connect with and engage eligible students, beginning as early as their senior year of high school. Upon receiving a referral, staff initiated monthly virtual meetings to guide students through their transition to college. Personalized communication, especially through text messaging (which students often prefer), helped establish trust and build lasting relationships.

In addition to direct outreach, the program partnered with local foster care agencies, schools, and community organizations to identify and support eligible students. Social media and a newly developed resource website helped connect current students with both campus and community services. The program provided individualized college coaching through a dedicated success coach who supported students in navigating university systems, setting academic goals, and accessing resources. The number of coaching appointments increased from 505 in 2023-24 to 761 in 2024-25, reflecting a 50% increase in engagement. University emergency funds and basic needs support including food, housing, and a supply closet, helped students remain focused on their academic success. To create a sense of community, Fostering Success facilitated peer networking opportunities and supported a student organization, Fostering Success Together. This group helped lead 14 events during the year, ranging from social gatherings and student activity nights to

Meaningful Meals and midterm care packages. Students also had access to a dedicated lounge stocked with snacks, stress-reduction materials, free printing, refrigerator, and microwave, providing a vital “home base” for many commuting students.

Throughout the year, consistent outreach including calling campaigns, email check-ins, and text reminders kept students informed and encouraged positive habits. Together, these strategies created a strong foundation of support that helped students feel connected, equipped, and empowered to succeed.

Programming and Services Provided

In 2024–2025, UWM Fostering Success offered a wide range of programming and services designed to support enrolled students academically, socially, and emotionally. UWM hosted 14 events throughout the year, including the popular Meaningful Meal Series, which combined social connection with valuable learning opportunities. Topics included academic skills tutoring (such as time management), financial literacy, completing paperwork for power of attorney, finding internships, and maintaining healthy relationships, among others. These gatherings helped foster a sense of community while equipping students with essential life skills.

Additional events included a special viewing party featuring Andrew Bridge, a former foster youth and author, whose visit to the state was made possible through the Universities of Wisconsin Fostering Success programs. UWM also organized an open house, midterm care package pickup day, and a variety of student-centered activities like game nights, crafting parties, and study groups to encourage engagement and peer connection. To celebrate and support students, a partnership was started with For Goodness Cakes to provide personalized cakes and gifts for birthdays and graduations—for some students this represents the first time a cake was made to celebrate an important event in their lives.

This year, Fostering Success also played a key role in launching a Cap and Gown Recycling Program at UWM, ensuring that all low-income students have access to graduation apparel, reducing financial barriers to celebrating this important milestone.

Program Goals and Outcomes 2024-2025

Goal	Outcome
Develop a tiered strategy to manage limited resources and accommodate population growth effectively.	In 2024-2025, UW-Milwaukee successfully implemented a three-tiered strategy that used student data to align support levels with student needs. Students were assigned to a tier based on predictive success markers. Tier one students—those identified as most at risk—received frequent outreach through coaching appointments, account monitoring, and proactive support. This approach allowed prioritization of limited resources while ensuring those with the highest need received consistent, targeted support.
Enhance the average GPA of Fostering Success students by 0.2 points.	Exceeded this goal. In 2023-24, the average fall GPA was 2.44, rising to 2.62 in the spring. In 2024-25, the average fall GPA reached 2.64 and further improved to 2.70 in the spring. This steady academic growth likely reflects the effectiveness of expanded coaching, tutoring referrals, and engagement strategies.

Collaborate with the Center for Student Experience and Talent (SET) to improve career awareness and inform students about available services.	Deepened partnership with SET through several initiatives that expanded student access to critical career development services: • During the December Meaningful Meal event, a SET representative led a session on internship searches and provided access to the Career Closet. • SET appointed a representative to the Fostering Success Committee, who actively supported students in finding on-campus jobs and became an advisor to a student organization. • SET took over management of the Cap and Gown Recycling Program and collaborated on a summer resume-building campaign.
Engage with the UW-Milwaukee Foundation and other community partners to secure donations for Fostering Success.	While no new funding was secured through the UWM Foundation this year, a promising opportunity is under development. UWM experienced strong success with community partnerships, renewing existing relationships and forming new ones. These partners supported programming grants and donations of both funds and supplies. Notably, Zao MKE Church and the Order of the Eastern Star (Electa Chapter) became new contributors, helping expand the supply closet and meet students' material needs.

Non-University Student Outreach

In 2024–2025, UW-Milwaukee focused on early, personalized engagement with non-enrolled students. UWM held monthly virtual coaching meetings to guide eligible students through the admissions process and address common concerns like housing and financial aid. To help students feel more comfortable with campus life, the staff organized individual and small-group campus tours and site visits. The staff also attended career fairs and hosted tables at various events. These efforts aligned with broader programming by building relationships early, reducing barriers, and creating a supportive path to enrollment.

Additional Program Highlights

Since Fall 2022, Fostering Success at UWM has more than doubled in size, growing from 125 students to 255 this year. This growth underscores the urgent need for expanded support services tailored to the unique challenges faced by independent students, many of whom lack stable support systems and require specialized academic and personal guidance.

While the current success coaching staff remains deeply committed, the rapid growth has stretched resources thin, putting at risk the quality and consistency of individualized support. To sustain and strengthen the program's impact, funding for an additional fostering success coach is essential. This investment would ensure students continue to receive high-quality coaching and life skills development services critical to their long-term success. When independent youth are equipped to thrive in higher education, they are more likely to graduate, enter the workforce, and contribute meaningfully to the state's economic vitality.

Graduates of the Fostering Success program are positioned to break cycles of poverty and instability, ultimately reducing reliance on social services and enriching their communities. Moreover, UWM's leadership in this area sets a standard for other UWs, advancing best practices in student support and elevating UW universities' overall effectiveness and reputation. In this context, funding an additional fostering success coach is not just a commitment to student success, it is a strategic investment in the future of Wisconsin.

Non-University Commitment or Additional Support

UW-Milwaukee received non-institutional financial support from several generous community partners and individuals throughout the year:

- A grant from Delta Kappa Gamma (DKG) Chi Chapter is funding three literacy-themed Meaningful Meal events and provided much-needed supplies for our student resource cabinet.
- The Order of the Eastern Star (Electa Chapter) contributed both financial support and donated items for the supply closet. Program staff also held the first-ever bake sale, raising funds to support the student organization.
- Various individuals and groups hosted drives that helped stock the supply closet, provide birthday gifts, and maintain the student lounge.
- Staff participated again in the 414 for UWM Giving Days, which brought in several small but meaningful donations from individual supporters.

While efforts to secure larger grants through the UWM Foundation were not successful this year, the smaller contributions received played a significant role in supporting students.

Staffing

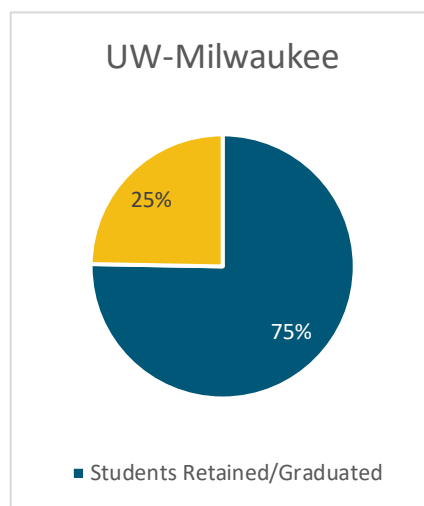
- Fostering Success Coordinator
- 2 Graduate Assistants
- 2 Peer Advocates

Common Program Metrics

The average GPA of UW-Milwaukee Fostering Success students was 2.64 in the fall and 2.70 in the spring. Out of the 174 students served during the fall 2023 semester, 131 students (75%) were either retained for fall 2024 or graduated.

University-Specific Program Metrics

The UW-Milwaukee program also tracks the number of coaching appointments utilized by students through Navigate360. During this academic year, the dedicated Fostering Success coordinator had 1,185 appointments scheduled with 252 different students.



Future Recruitment Strategies

With a new question related to Fostering Success on the Universities of Wisconsin Admission Application, program staff will be able to receive referrals early in the admission process. UWM has worked with Undergraduate Admissions to set up a weekly query report. Program staff will then reach out to students who answered yes to the question and set up a virtual meeting to assist with next steps.

Program Goals 2025-2026

- Start a community donation and fundraising committee made up of community members interested in fundraising or collecting donations for Fostering Success.
- Develop a standardized event survey to use at all meaningful meals and student organization events.
- Develop a series of community referral resources that include things like local dental care, eye doctors, or counseling services that take BadgerCare.
- Implement a plan for a Giving Tuesday campaign for December 2, 2025.

UW-PARKSIDE

FOSTERING SUCCESS PROGRAM

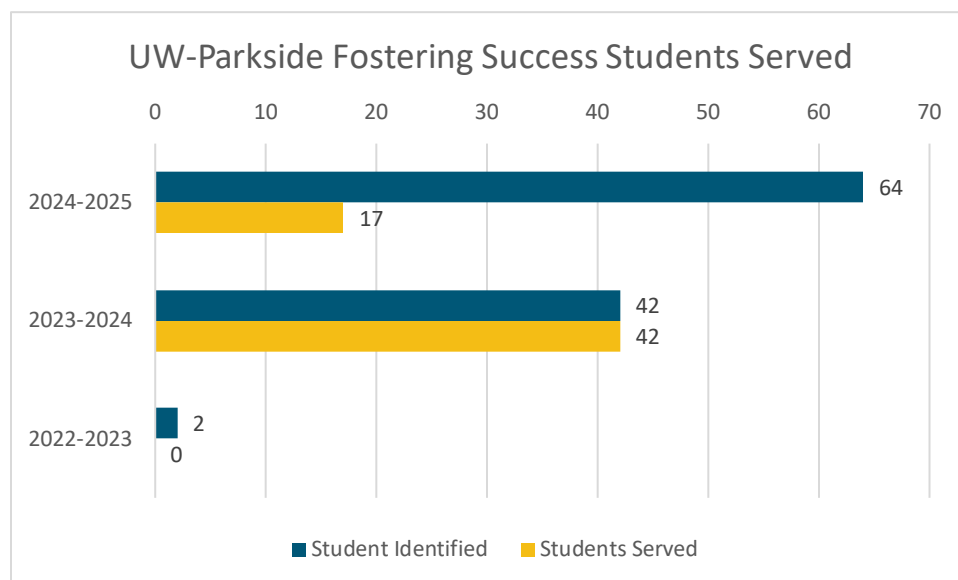


Program Location: Student Development & Engagement and Scholarships & Financial Aid Office

Program Coordinator: Wendy Johnson (johnsonw@uwp.edu, 262-595-2643)

Website: uwp.edu/apply/admissions/fostering-success.cfm

Fostering Success Students Identified and Served



Strategies for Connecting with Eligible Students

The UW-Parkside Fostering Success Program Coordinator worked closely with the Director of Scholarships & Financial Aid to identify students who may benefit from the program. An email/survey was sent via Navigate 360 to connect with students and inquire about their needs. A Fostering Success email address was established to help field student questions and provide additional points of contact. The UWP Program Coordinator presented to the Academic Advisors and Success Coaches about the Fostering Success program and asked for referrals for any students who might be eligible for the program. In addition, a campus-wide email was sent to all faculty and staff about the program to help gather even more referrals and bring awareness to the support initiatives. Tabling was also done on campus to make students aware of the program.

Programming and Services Provided

UWP Fostering Success students were invited as a cohort to participate in Student Life programs/activities including the following:

- September - Student Success Commons Block Party
- October - Pumpkin decorating event
- November - First Generation Student Week activities

- January - Men & Women's Basketball Game (special guests)
- April - Student Success Commons Easter Egg Hunt

The following services were also provided to all Fostering Success participants:

- Welcome Baskets and Supply Closet
- Financial support for housing and food insecurity
- Financial Aid assistance, such as processing forms and highlighting scholarship opportunities.

Program Goals and Outcomes 2024-2025

Goal	Outcome
Identify/develop a cohort of eligible Fostering Success students.	Worked with Financial Aid to identify students potentially eligible for the program. Sent a quick poll survey through Navigate 360 to allow for self-identification of potentially eligible students. "Tagged" students in Navigate 360 for tracking purposes.
Develop a series of engagement activities and events (educational and social) for the academic year.	Utilized campus programs/activities to bring the cohort together. Will continue to work on this with the newly appointed Program Coordinator.
Establish and define procedures for the Fostering Success Supply Closet.	Developed process to work with the Student Affairs & Enrollment Services division's Administrative Assistant to order and track items for the Supply Closet. Established way for individuals to purchase items in support of the program. Set up the Supply Closet in the Dean of Students suite.
Establish a referral system for prospective and current students.	Developed relationships with high school counselors and community resource centers to encourage referrals of potentially eligible students. Training held for Advisors and Success Coaches to make them aware of the program and encourage them to refer students whom they believe might benefit from the program's resources. Made faculty and staff aware of the program.
Determine direct financial needs.	Limited ability to do this given current available information (especially if the student does not complete a FAFSA). Will be easier moving forward with the addition of a self-identified field on the UW admission application.

Non-University Student Outreach

The UWP Program Coordinator engaged with school counselors during recruitment visits to high schools and discussed the program during group campus visits.

The Program Coordinator sent an outreach email to community resource centers outlining the Fostering Success program and seeking their assistance in sharing information about the program at UW-Parkside and across the Universities of Wisconsin. Examples of community contacts include Community Care Resources, One Hope United Racine County, Foster Care Kenosha, Shalom Center, Kenosha Human Development Services, Independent Living Workers, Kenosha & Racine Homeless Liaisons, Safe Haven of Racine, United Way of Kenosha & Racine Community Foundation.

Additional Program Highlights

UW-Parkside did not share any additional program highlights for 2024-25.

Non-University Commitment or Additional Support

UW-Parkside did not receive any non-university commitments or other support to assist its program. The new program coordinator will be asked to engage with UW-Parkside's University Advancement staff to explore potential philanthropy opportunities.

Staffing

Support for Fostering Success students is provided through a committee model, including the following roles:

- Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs & Enrollment Services
- Dean of Students
- Director of Scholarships & Financial Aid
- Fostering Success Program Coordinator
- Administrative Assistant

Common Program Metrics

The average GPA of UW-Parkside Fostering Success students was 2.51 in the fall and 2.33 in the spring. Out of the 12 students served by Fostering Success during the fall 2023 semester, 11 students (92%) were either retained for fall 2024 or graduated.

University-Specific Program Metrics

N/A

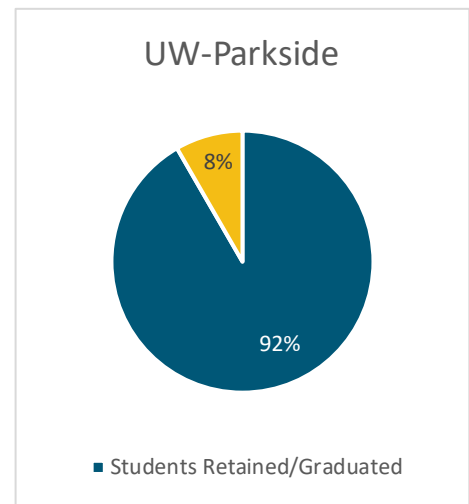
Future Recruitment Strategies

UW-Parkside will continue to share information about the program with high school counselors as well as UW-Parkside advisors and success coaches to encourage referrals.

Program Goals 2025-2026

UW-Parkside will work with the newly hired program coordinator to establish student/program goals for Fiscal Year 2026. In general, those goals will focus on the following action items:

- Identify and hire a dedicated Fostering Success peer mentor to provide continued support to our Fostering Success students.
- Promote a stronger sense of belonging by encouraging students to participate in campus events and resources.
- Increase utilization of Navigate 360 to communicate with and track student progress.



UW-PLATTEVILLE

FOSTERING SUCCESS

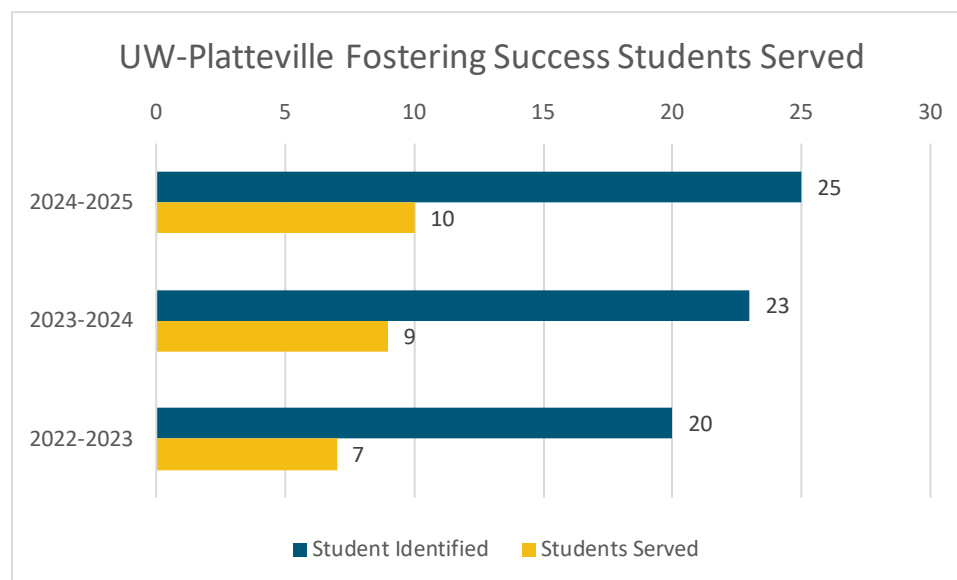


Program Location: Student Access and Academic Support

Program Coordinator: Bassirou Touré (toureb@uwplatt.edu, 608-342-1811)

Website: <https://www.uwplatt.edu/departement/student-access-academic-support/resources>

Fostering Success Students Identified and Served



Strategies for Connecting with Eligible Students

After identifying eligible students through their response to Question 52 on the FAFSA application, the UW-Platteville team emailed students to begin outreach. UW-Platteville also reached out to all academic advisors on campus about the program and encouraged referrals for any eligible students. In addition, UW-Platteville partnered with the TRIO SSS advisors to obtain referrals. All these strategies were successful in recruiting some students to enroll in the program.

Programming and Services Provided

Direct services offered to students participating in Fostering Success included the following:

- Academic advising and coaching
- Financial literacy advising (partnering with the Student Success Center)
- Designated lounge and study space
- Community building activities
- Monthly meal
- Peer mentoring
- Free printing
- Opportunities to participate in social/cultural, stress-relief and wellness activities

- Short-term housing opportunities over academic breaks
- Gas and grocery cards
- Access to a cabinet that provides free food, school supplies, and hygiene products

Fostering Success participants also had the opportunity to earn a \$400 stipend each semester. This stipend was earned when participants successfully completed engagement opportunities. For example, students were expected to attend three TRIO SSS/SSC workshops each semester, meet with their Fostering Success advisor and peer mentors twice monthly, and attend one joint cultural event and two monthly community meals to earn a stipend for that semester.

Program Goals and Outcomes 2024-2025

Goal	Outcome
The Fostering Success program will serve at least 12 students.	10 students engaged this academic year.
80% of participants served by the Fostering Success program will persist from one academic year to the beginning of the next academic year or graduate with a bachelor's degree during the academic year.	• Persistence Rate at UWP: 89% (8 of 9 students) ◦ 1 student graduated in spring 2024 ◦ 7 students enrolled for Fall 2024 • 1 student transferred to a different school with FS staff assistance
85% of all enrolled participants served by the Fostering Success program will meet the academic performance level required to stay in good academic standing at the grantee university.	Good Academic Standing: 80% • 8 out of 10 students met academic performance standards.
50% of incoming participants served in the Fostering Success program will graduate with a bachelor's degree or equivalent within six years.	Graduation Rate: 100% • All four seniors graduated.

Non-University Student Outreach

UW-Platteville did not engage with non-university student outreach but plans to begin seeking out grants at the state and national levels.

Additional Program Highlights

Since establishing the program three years ago, UW-Platteville has steadily increased the number of students served. Students who are part of the program continuously express how much Fostering Success means to them and appreciate all the services provided. During this academic year, UW-Platteville had one student graduate and one who transferred to a different university with the support and assistance of the program staff. The UW-Platteville team also stays in contact with Fostering Success alumni who have expressed interested in being a resource for current students.

Non-University Commitment or Additional Support

UW-Platteville did not receive any non-university commitments or other support to assist its program.

Staffing

- Program Coordinator
- Two (2) Student Staff

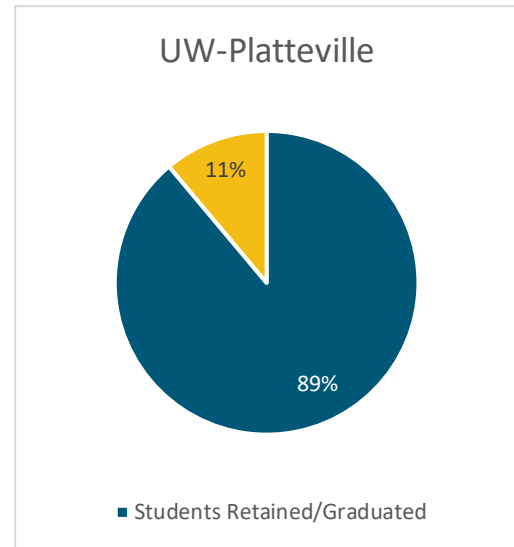
Common Program Metrics

The average GPA of UW-Platteville Fostering Success students was 2.29 in the fall and 2.33 in the spring. Out of the nine students served in fall 2023, eight students (89%) were either retained for the fall 2024 semester or graduated.

University-Specific Program Metrics

The following metrics are also being tracked across program participants at UW-Platteville to further evaluate the impact of programming in supporting student success:

- Persistence
- Good academic standing



Progress on these metrics is reported in the Program Goals & Outcomes section.

Future Recruitment Strategies

UW-Platteville plans to host a Fostering Success Day for high school students to help bring program awareness and encourage eligible students to engage with the resources.

Program Goals 2025-2026

- The Fostering Success program will focus more heavily on recruitment to increase the number of participating students to at least 12.
- Increase student engagement and attendance to sponsored events/programming. Aiming for at least 70% attendance.
- 80% of all enrolled participants served by the Fostering Success program will meet the academic performance level required to stay in good academic standing.

UW-RIVER FALLS

FALCON LINKS FOSTERING SUCCESS

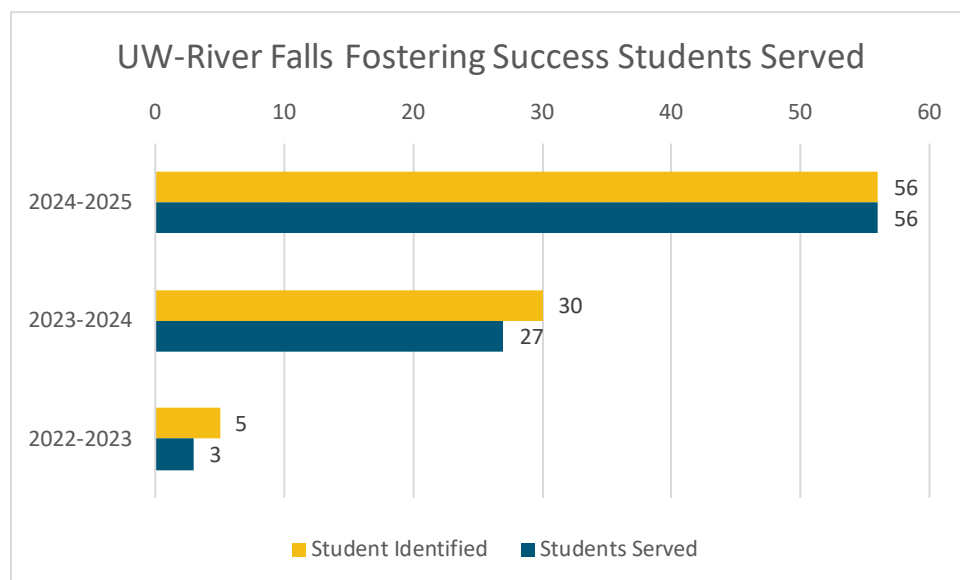


Program Location: Academic Affairs; Social Work Department

Program Coordinator: Tammy Kincaid (tamara.kincaid@uwrf.edu, 715-425-3376)

Website: <https://students.uwrf.edu/falconlinks>

Fostering Success Students Identified and Served



Strategies for Connecting with Eligible Students

UW-River Falls has sent mass emails, hosted a table at the Student Involvement Fair, met several times with admissions staff, and sent a targeted email to those students that the Financial Aid office identified as possibly eligible. UWRF placed printed brochures and posters around campus to spread awareness and presented to the Chancellor's Cabinet, Faculty Chairs, and campus organizations. UWRF has also found that student word of mouth was a very effective strategy and encouraged participating students to talk about the services if they felt comfortable doing so. These combined efforts resulted in significant growth in students identified and served during 2024-25.

Programming and Services Provided

- Small food, supplies, & clothing pantry
- Crisis support
- Referrals to mental health & counseling services
- Grief support group
- Food insecurity assistance
- Academic habits support group
- Group for social work/Falcon Links crossover students
- FAFSA application assistance

- Emergency funds
- Assistance completing public assistance & other assistance applications
- Study group
- Monthly dinners & activities
- Self-care emails & social media posts
- Assistance with obtaining legal documents
- Connections to home county records

Program Goals and Outcomes 2024-2025

Goal	Outcome
Engage 40 students to actively participate in the program.	Forty-eight students actively participated this year, not counting prospective or re-entry students.
80% of students will maintain enrollment from semester to semester.	91% retention of students from fall to spring semester. Most who left did so because of financial reasons.
75% of students will ultimately graduate with a bachelor's degree.	Still in the early stages of the program; however, three students graduated in 2024-25.
70% of prospective students will pursue a degree at any college or tech school.	Determined that this was not a sustainable goal. UWRF is only able to connect with the students who choose to come to River Falls, which was 2 of the 9 the prospective students we engaged with from last year, or 22%. We were not able to follow-up with most of the other prospective students and this will be too difficult to pursue as the program grows.
80% of students will report at least one factor that has contributed to their success in college.	Of the three graduates thus far, one was highly engaged and reported that her involvement with Falcon Links was instrumental to her success. She identified having a person to talk to about her concerns with her family members as one of the factors that contributed to her success.

Non-University Student Outreach

UW-River Falls has met with county social workers and high school guidance counselors to talk about the program and receive student referrals. Advisors met with students when identified and helped with financial aid applications as well as just general understanding of what college expectations are like. Program staff have also assisted in getting housing applications completed. Prospective students are invited to come to events but generally do not attend. In the past, these students have been invited to attend the Jump Start early move in program and have been connected with TRIO Student Support Services (SSS) once they are on campus before school starts.

Additional Program Highlights

Program staff continue to feel strongly that the full-time social worker position, while still not enough time to fully assist everyone in need, really makes a difference for our students. The two professional staff have a background in child welfare and general social services delivery in the community so are aware of and have connections to resources in the community. The university administration and foundation have been very supportive of the program and allow faculty to use

time to support the program which is greatly appreciated. Having a faculty member connection has also been useful as students are able to get both student and academic support in one program. The community of River Falls has been phenomenal in their support of UWRF students and the Fostering Success program. Community members regularly contact the staff and ask how they can do more. UWRF is currently working with one religious organization to locate off campus supportive housing options and staff are excited to see this develop.

Non-University Commitment or Additional Support

UW-River Falls received a SERV grant through the Covid Emergency funds that covered some additional staffing costs above and beyond the legislative appropriation to Universities of Wisconsin. The program also received donations from community service clubs like Rotary, Association of University Women, and others. Most significantly, Fostering Success received many donations from community religious organizations, including both financial and item donations. Generally, when student-specific requests are made, program staff are able to find an organization that is willing and able to cover the costs to support them.

Staffing

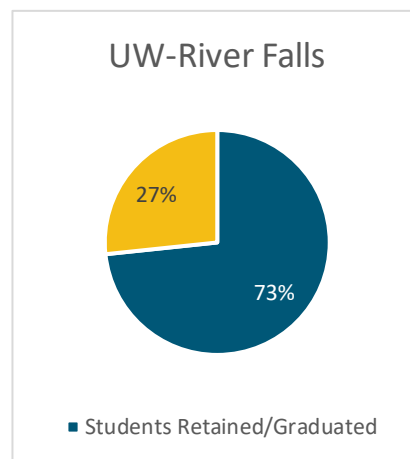
- Social Work Faculty Member
- Social Work Intern – Master’s Program (2)
- Social Work Intern – Bachelors Program (1)

Common Program Metrics

The average GPA of UW-River Falls Fostering Success students was 2.88 in the fall and 2.79 in the spring. Out of the 30 students served in fall 2023, 22 students (73%) were either retained for the fall 2024 semester or graduated.

University-Specific Program Metrics

N/A



Future Recruitment Strategies

UW-River Falls plans to continue working on connecting more closely and earlier with the Financial Aid office while spreading the word to faculty and staff about the program. Now that participating students are becoming juniors and seniors in the program, program staff are planning a student advisory committee to help plan events and mentor incoming students if appropriate. The team has also found student-to-student word of mouth to be successful and will be focusing more outreach to student organizations to spread the word.

Program Goals 2025-2026

- 80% of identified students will be actively engaged in the program.
- Engaged students will complete 75% of attempted courses.
- 80% of engaged students will be retained fall semester to spring semester.
- 70% of engaged students will graduate with a bachelor's degree from UWRF.
- 25% of prospective/re-entry students will enroll at UWRF the following fall semester.

UW-STEVENSON POINT

FOSTERING SUCCESS PROGRAM

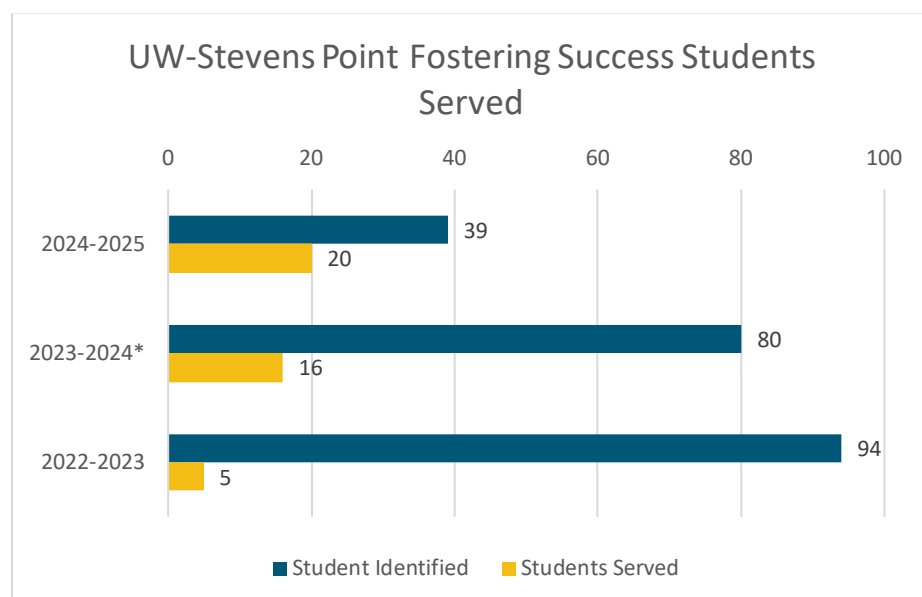


Program Location: Student Success Center: Student Experience and Transformation

Program Coordinator: Tana De Lonay (tdelonay@uwsp.edu, 715-346-2061, started Jan. 2025);
Samantha Samreth (ssamreth@uwsp.edu, 715-346-4076)

Website: <https://www.uwsp.edu/student-experience-and-transformation/student-success-center/>

Fostering Success Students Identified and Served



*Note: The number of students served in the 2023-24 was incorrectly reported in last year's annual report (25 vs. 16 students). It has been corrected in this report and will be the number used for future reports.

Strategies for Connecting with Eligible Students

UW-Stevens Point Fostering Success casts a wide net to identify all students who meet program criteria, regardless of age. This is in part because the program is located in the Student Success Center, which also has resources to serve non-traditional students. This strategy may result in a lower proportion of identified students who are actually served compared to programs on other campuses that focus recruitment on traditional-aged students. This is because older students, in general, are less likely to take advantage of support resources.

Summer Bridge and First-Year Experience: First-year students participated in a weeklong program before fall semester began. This was helpful for the students to stay engaged because each day was structured with success skills discussion, critical thinking, student involvement, employment, social media etiquette, and career enrichment activities.

Clear & Frequent Communication: The peer mentors, Fostering Success students, and the Fostering Success coordinator stayed connected using various communication platforms such as Navigate 360

email/text function and emails. The Fostering Success coordinator also sends information about important dates such as registration date, add-drop date, withdrawal date, etc., to keep students informed. The coordinator provided reminders about upcoming events, meetings requests, and emergency supplies availability. This was successful because the coordinator also gets a few eligible upper-class students to come to the center for support.

Peer Mentorship: Each student has a peer mentor they can connect with twice a month during one-on-one or group meetings. Peer mentors continue to support transition needs including those related to academic, personal, or other topics. During fall 2024, UWSP had a graduate student intern serving as a Fostering Success first year student peer mentor to complete a master's program requirement. The intern also served as a full-time residence hall director. Her full-time professional role has helped improve students' engagement both in and outside the residence hall.

Monthly program meeting/engagement activity: In fall, Fostering Success eligible students who were not a part of LEAD were welcomed with a welcome basket containing snacks, toiletry items, welcome notes/program brochure, and a program calendar, delivered to their residence hall. UWSP also hosted four luncheon activities in the residence hall throughout the year. This was successful overall, with attendance increasing each successive time throughout the semester, from two to eight participants.

In spring semester, the Fostering Success program collaborated with Non-Traditional Student Services for the end-of-semester cookout at the residence hall building. The peer mentors coordinated Earth Day activities such as painting with Bob Ross, planting trees in cups décor, etc.

Programming and Services Provided

- Monthly program with dinner, part of the LEAD program.
- Advising and Coaching with the Fostering Success coordinator (one-on-one or group).
- Mentorship by the peer mentors (one-on-one or group).
 - Ongoing training and leadership development for peer mentors.
 - Weekly engagement activities either in the Student Success Center, Union (DUC), residence hall, other UWSP's buildings, walking trails, or restaurants close to camps. The engagement activities have significantly improved from previous years with new peer mentors, intern, and Fostering Success coordinator.
- UWSP Diversity & College Access (DCA) offers cultural engagement activities with different identity groups' national holiday celebrations. Fostering Success students are invited to these programs.
- Leadership Development: Worked with peers to create a new student organization: Neurodivergent and Disabled Student Union (NDSU). This was successful and the organization has already gained approximately 20 members. NDSU had their first successful engagement event at the end of the semester in partnership with another student organization, which hosted about 25 student attendees. The group also holds weekly meetings that have a steady and growing attendance.
- Professional development that included Fostering Success student participation:
 - DCA department took students to the Madison 365 Leadership Conference to help enhance student leadership development.
 - DCA Sentry Insurance's presentation on career enrichment activities.
- DCA monthly financial literacy workshop.
- Emergency supply pantry of hygiene supplies, snacks, and other need items.

- Referrals to appropriate resources as needed by students such as the counseling center, academic and career advising, financial aid office, bursar office, and Dean of Students office for emergency grants, etc.

Program Goals and Outcomes 2024-2025

Goal	Outcome
Recruit 25 eligible students into the Fostering Success program.	Had 6 Fostering Success students in LEAD and 14 outside of LEAD. Experienced a 25% increase (from 16 to 20 students) from 2023-2024 to 2024-2025. Expanded outreach in spring 2025, which included presentations about the program to campus partners, Independent Living, community area churches, and the Operations Bootstrap Pantry. Continued partnership with the UWSP Upward Program and high school visits. Also collaborated with UWSP Admissions staff by providing brochures to hand out at school recruitment visits.
Build a comprehensive personal and academic support system	Improved campus and community engagement outreach for program knowledge and visibility on and off campus. Worked with off-campus partners to provide emergency support for Fostering Success students. Referred students to various resources as needed.
Strengthen financial literacy and aid support.	Continued monthly financial literacy workshops by partnering with the Office of the Student Financial Aid, U.S. Bank, and the Economics Department with Sentry School of Business and Economics. The workshops offered were online, in-person, and hybrid to provide more accessible access to students.
Increase student retention and graduation persistence.	The percentage of students retained or graduated from fall 2024 to fall 2025 was 64%, which was lower than the 80% achieved last year.
Use Navigate 360 to monitor the number of upper-level Fostering Success students fall 2024 eligible as enrolled cohort-year students to determine how many return the following year.	This was not completed due to being short staffed. We plan to complete this for 2025-2026 academic year.
Send a survey to eligible Fostering Success students to see what services, support, and activities they would like to have for academic year 2024-2025.	This was not completed due to being short staffed. We plan to complete this for 2025-2026 academic year.

Non-University Student Outreach

Fostering Success hosted presentations about the program for campus and community partners, visiting high schools in partnership with Upward Bound, and participating in the SPASH high school student services staff initiatives.

Additional Program Highlights

UW-Stevens Point's program is now three years old. Fostering Success is continuing to learn and grow from other programs that are more established. What's unique about UWSP's program is the built in LEAD Summer Bridge and First-Year Experience program that Fostering Success students are eligible to apply for. This provides an opportunity for Fostering Success students to start building community before school starts and provides a structured program throughout the academic year with an assigned peer mentor.

Non-University Commitment or Additional Support

UWSP did not receive any non-university financial commitments or support this year but plans to work with community organizations in 2024-25 to create a foundation account benefiting Fostering Success students.

Staffing

- Fostering Success and LEAD Program Coordinator
- Faculty/Professor (during Summer Bridge LEAD Week)
- 5 Undergraduate Peer Mentors (2 mentors were only a semester each)
- 1 Graduate Intern

Common Program Metrics

The average GPA of UW-Stevens Point Fostering Success students served was 2.53 in the fall and 2.68 GPA in the spring. Out of the 11 students served in the fall 2023 semester, seven students (64%) were either retained for the fall 2024 semester or graduated.

University-Specific Program Metrics

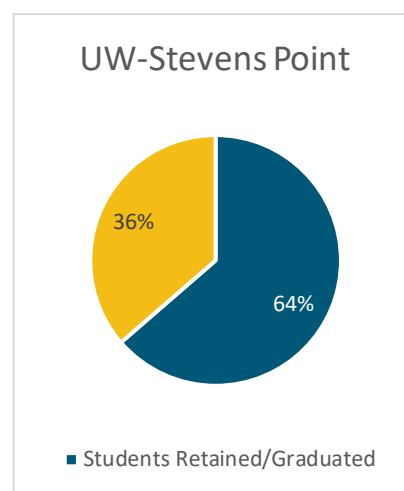
N/A

Future Recruitment Strategies

UWSP plans to do more direct recruitment and outreach at SPASH high school at least twice per semester. UWSP will also continue to build relationships with current campus and community partners to improve program awareness, support and services for Fostering Success.

Program Goals 2025-2026

- Twenty-five percent increase in student's engagement from 20 to 25.
- Continue the five goals from 2024-25 academic year.



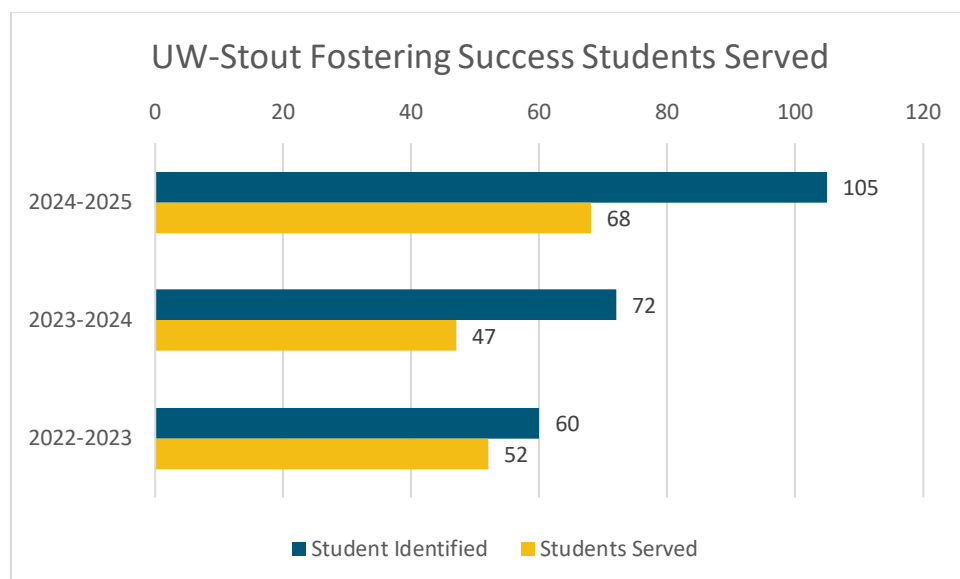


Program Location: Office of Student Opportunity and Excellence (OSOE); TRIO Student Support Services

Program Coordinator: Angie Ruppe and Jessica Brooks (fosteringsuccess@uwstout.edu, 715-232-5180)

Website: uwstout.edu/life-stout/fostering-success

Fostering Success Students Identified and Served



Strategies for Connecting with Eligible Students

Fostering Success staff participate in first-year registration and orientation (FYRO) in June. UW-Stout's orientation coordinator sends a survey with eligibility questions for Fostering Success (FS) and TRIO Student Support Services (SSS) to all students to complete when selecting their June date for FYRO. A list of eligible students is created from survey responses, and Fostering Success uses this list to initiate contact with eligible students via email. On their selected FYRO date, Fostering Success staff are present at the resource fair and in the course registration labs to connect with students. Post-FYRO, follow-up emails are sent to all eligible first-year students. Another way that staff connect/engage with eligible students is through referrals from offices such as TRIO Student Support Services, Disability Services, Advising, and the Counseling Center.

Programming and Services Provided

UW-Stout's Fostering Success program provided monthly Family Dinners (free meals), emergency aid, scholarships, and access to the "Foster Closet," which provides free items such as school supplies, hygiene products, dorm supplies, non-perishable food items, and more. In addition to hosting weekly drop-in advising hours, program staff ran workshops on important topics such as

completing the FAFSA and how to sign up for BadgerCare or Foodshare support. Fostering Success also shared TRIO Student Support Services programming in the areas of financial aid/literacy, career development, academic skill building, mental health, and tutoring. Lastly, a Fostering Success Library is maintained containing books that focus on topics related to foster care, adoption, homelessness, child welfare, and other related subjects for students to check out at any time.

Program Goals and Outcomes 2024-2025

Goal	Outcome
Establish a formal feedback process.	A survey was created and distributed but response rate was low (3 students). Of the three responses received, all indicated high levels of satisfaction with the program, the services offered, and methods of communication. There was also a request for more virtual services.
Develop dedicated programming for Fostering Success students separate from TRIO.	Successfully hosted programs including drop-in advising, a FAFSA workshop, and a BadgerCare/Foodshare workshop.
Build community connections with local high schools and county workers.	Increased attendance for summer camp and improved connections with local partners. These connections were made over phone and email throughout the spring semester.
Increase the number of individual advising meetings.	Successfully increased number of advising meetings during the academic year. Exact numbers could not be reported due to overlapping services provided by TRIO SSS and FS; however, appointment frequency significantly increased compared to spring 2024.
Collaborate with UW-Eau Claire to develop an overnight camp for foster youth in high school.	Doubled attendance rate of summer camp.

Non-University Student Outreach

UW-Stout runs a summer program for Wisconsin foster youth in high school to provide information on all post-secondary options and available funding sources. This year, the attendance rate of participants doubled compared to 2023-2024.

Additional Program Highlights

No additional program highlights were included.

Non-University Commitment or Additional Support

Over the years, the work that UW-Stout's Fostering Success program has done to cultivate relationships with the UW-Stout Foundation has resulted in two endowed accounts and several one-time private donations. During the 2024-25 school year, one of the endowed accounts received a \$30,000 donation from the original funders. Fostering Success also received a \$5,000 grant from Our Saviors Lutheran, which went to support emergency aid and scholarships.

Staffing

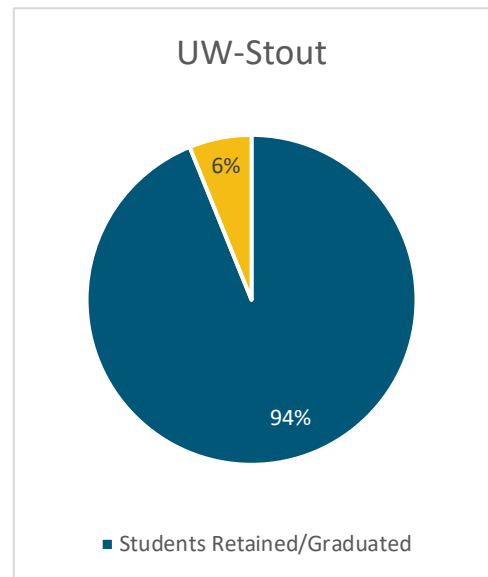
- Student Support Services Director
- Student Support Services Advisor
- 7 Peer Mentors
- 1 Summer Camp Peer Mentor

Common Program Metrics

The average GPA of UW-Stout Fostering Success students served was 2.73 in the fall and 2.63 in the spring. Out of the 49 students served in the fall 2023 semester, 46 students (94%) were either retained for the fall 2024 semester or graduated.

University-Specific Program Metrics

UW-Stout is logging Fostering Success group programming attendance in Navigate 360. UW-Stout also tracks the number of scholarships awarded to engaged students—dispensing 22 individual scholarships in 2024-2025. Finally, UW-Stout has new students complete an intake form through Microsoft Forms, which collects relevant data about each student and their needs that helps personalize follow-up conversations.



Future Recruitment Strategies

UW-Stout plans to continue its current strategy, where eligibility questions are asked in a pre-orientation survey. A list of eligible students is then created from survey responses and used to initiate contact via email. Additionally, program staff are considering adding an eligibility question to the Residence Life application form for University Housing. There is also a new Fostering Success eligibility question on the Universities of Wisconsin Admission Application, which will hopefully increase the number of student referrals. Follow ups with identified students will be done at orientation, during both the resource fair and the course registration labs. After orientation, communication through email will continue, including introduction and invitation emails from FS Peer Mentors to incoming eligible students.

Program Goals 2025-2026

- Continue to increase engagement.
- Improve early identification of eligible students.
- Build connections with community resources and stakeholders.
- Increase staff capacity
- If staff capacity is increased, additional goals include:
 - Enhancing community engagement efforts
 - Expanding program offerings
 - Pursuing additional local and federal grant opportunities for more funding

UW-WHITewater

FOSTERING SUCCESS AND INDEPENDENCE

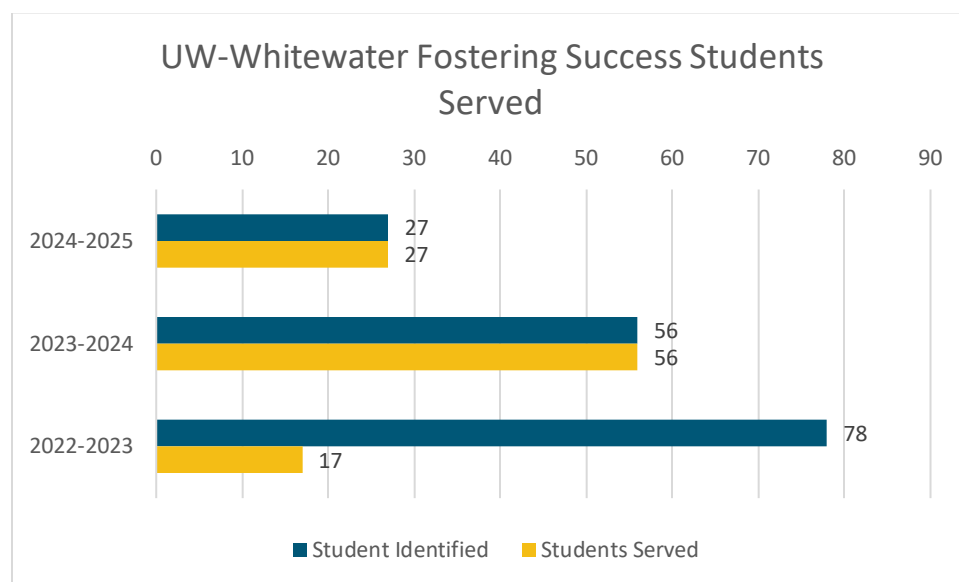


Program Location: Division of Student Affairs; Dean of Students Office

Program Coordinator: Malayna Oswald (OswaldMP01@uww.edu, 262-472-1533) and Bridget Vaughn (VaughnB@uww.edu, 262-472-1533)

Website: uww.edu/dean-of-students/support-services/fostering-success-and-independence

Fostering Success Students Identified and Served



Important to Note

Between 2023-2024 and 2024-2025, the UW-Whitewater program experienced a change in leadership that resulted in a loss of knowledge and data transfer. Participant numbers reported in previous years may have been higher due to discrepancies in eligibility criteria used and differences in tracking of eligible students.

Moving forward, program coordinators have established a stable tracking system to monitor program participants and are working closely with Financial Aid and Admissions as they manage referrals and self-disclosures on applications. There is now a case management model in place so that future data will be clearer, more efficient, and consistently tracked.

Strategies for Connecting with Eligible Students

UW-Whitewater program staff communicated via emails, text messages, and phone calls on a routine basis informing students of events, contacts, and other valuable information. The university did tabling events (put signs on tables in dining halls or in the University Center), put flyers in the dorms, and hosted all-community events. Staff also had a booth at university tour days and SOAR (student orientation, advising, and registration) events.

Programming and Services Provided

- Andrew Bridge (author) livestream event
- Fostering Success and Independence (FSI) goodie bags
- Pumpkin decorating event
- Provided winter gear
- Scholarships
- FSI bowling nights
- FSI x Warhawk pantry collaboration event
- Aldi food bags
- FSI x success coaches "Snapshot of Success" workshop
- Rock painting

Program Goals and Outcomes 2024-2025

Goal	Outcome
Develop a trained peer mentor program	This is an ongoing goal of UWW FSI. Program staff are working to solidify a training program that works best for the staff and students.
Offer early arrival orientation for Fall 2024	This goal has been pushed to 2026.
Raise awareness of our program and remove barriers to in-kind and financial donations for items that cannot be purchased with grant funds	This goal was met and will continue to be addressed.
Collaborate with admissions to develop marketing and promotional materials	Program staff continue to collaborate with the Transfer Admissions Representative to work on promotional materials. Staff table at Admitted Warhawk Days and SOARs and have connected with Independent Living Coordinators in the Whitewater area.
Develop a tracking system to gather information	Working on developing a tracking system to better keep track of data as the system this past year was ineffective.
Collect data on pre- and post-learning on trauma-informed practices training	The individual who ran this training has left UWW, and therefore it is unknown if this goal was met.
Have students provide feedback on events and programs	Planning to create a feedback survey for students to take so that UWW FSI has qualitative feedback for the 2025-2026 year.

Non-University Student Outreach

UW-Whitewater staff connected with two Independent Living Coordinators in Wisconsin who are willing to provide information about FSI to the youth they meet with. The UWW Admissions Office talks with all eligible incoming students about FSI and has taken a very active role in identifying prospective students. FSI staff have a table at Admitted Warhawk Days and SOAR. Staff also hand out information about the program and how to donate.

Additional Program Highlights

UWW program staff were able to provide 14 FSI students with \$1,500 scholarships during the spring 2025 semester, totaling \$21,000 provided in support of participating students.

Non-University Commitment or Additional Support

A drop-down menu on the UW-Whitewater Foundation giving page allows individuals to give directly to the Fostering Success account. UW-Whitewater also continues to promote its Amazon wish list for in-kind donations, where it continues to obtain gifts, and held a winter jacket drive that received over 15 jackets and other warm winter gear for students. Moving forward, UW-Whitewater is working with its foundation to recruit donors, and one donor has already expressed interest in making a significant contribution to the program. Additionally, UW-Whitewater will continue with the Amazon wish list and UW-Whitewater Foundation alumni giving account.

Staffing

- Associate Dean of Students
- Admissions Counselor
- Program Coordinator
- Executive Assistant
- Graduate Student Peer Mentor
- Undergraduate Student Peer Mentor (2)

Common Program Metrics

The grade point average of UW-Whitewater Fostering Success students was a 3.03 GPA in the Fall 2024 semester and a 2.92 GPA in the spring 2025 semester. Due to staff turnover, student retention rates were not tracked for the 2024-2025 academic term.

University-Specific Program Metrics

In addition to the common program metrics tracked by all universities, UW-Whitewater further evaluates the impact of programming by tracking outreach efforts and participation.

Future Recruitment Strategies

UW-Whitewater's main strategies will be using phone calls and texts in addition to emails. Program staff started using these additional outreach methods during the spring 2025 semester and plan to continue with these outreach methods. In addition, there are plans to use social media more this upcoming year to make people aware of the program and have a broader reach.

Program Goals 2025-2026

- Have participating students evaluate the program and provide feedback on program needs.
- Recruit and engage a higher number of students.
- Provide more scholarships.
- Host at least one event per month.
- Offer early fall orientation and collaborate with Pre-College Programs
- Offer a campus visit during academic year to local high schools.