

1st First-Generation Scholarships Change Lives

In 2006, Helios Education Foundation invested \$10 million to fund the First Generation Scholars Program for students in the State University System of Florida and the Florida College System. The investment created a \$5 million endowment in the State University System and a \$5 million endowment in the Florida College System to provide scholarships for first-generation college students in perpetuity. Additionally, every scholarship awarded from the endowment is then eligible for a full match from Florida's First Generation Matching Grant program.

Since that time, the Foundation's endowment has provided scholarships to first-generation college students, with a primary consideration given to students who are seeking a degree in education with plans to become a teacher in Florida. The scholarship program also provides each student with an individualized student-support plan based on their specific needs, such as advising, mentorships and referrals to campus resources.

Within the State University System, the program has supported 580 students since its inception who have graduated with a bachelor's degree, including 355 graduates in Teacher Education. Additionally, 174 State University System students were awarded scholarships totaling \$233,700 during the 2012-2013 academic year.

The Florida College System Foundation has awarded over \$2.7 million in scholarships to 2,759 students since its inception. During the 2012-2013 academic year, 550 Florida College System students were awarded scholarships totaling \$438,539.

Helios Education Foundation has received heartfelt thank-you letters, notes and photos from students who have benefited from the program. Some of those students are featured online.