



NRC-FAHE: National Research Collaborative for Foster Alumni and Higher Education

WELCOME!

The National Research Collaborative for Foster Alumni and Higher Education (NRC-FAHE) is a network of researchers and practitioners whose aim is to improve practice and influence policy related to foster care youth/alumni and higher education by creating and advancing a clear research agenda and facilitating communication and collaboration among interdisciplinary scholars and practitioners to promote postsecondary access and retention of youth in care and foster care alumni. The NRC-FAHE promotes innovative ways to use research and best practices to inform and influence policy making and values practice-informed research and the voice of youth in care and foster care alumni in improving access and outcomes in higher education.

Our Leadership:

Angelique Day, PhD
School of Social Work
University of Washington

Lisa Schelbe, PhD
College of Social
Work
Florida State
University

Amy M. Salazar,
LMSW, Ph.D.
Department of Human
Development
Washington State
University Vancouver

Kerri Kearney, PhD,
MBA
Higher Education
& Student Affairs
Oklahoma State
University

Thank you to those who contributed to the creation of this newsletter:

Sierra Wollen,
MSW
University of
Washington

Mukta Vaidya,
BS
University of
Minnesota

Amanda Saxton,
MSWc
University of
Washington

Emma Fontaine,
MSWc
University of
Washington

IN THIS ISSUE

Welcome - Dr. Angelique Day
Page 2

Higher Education Highlight -
Dr. Kerri Kearney
Page 3

Practice Highlight - Island
Harbor
Interview with Dr. Rachel Kirk and Jessica Aleman
Page 4

Policy Updates
Page 6

Article Highlight
Publications by and for our Collaborative
members. Highlight: Community College Reform:
Placing Foster Youth at the Center of a More
Equitable Vision for Success.
Page 8

Announcements
Page 9

Welcome and Introduction

I am proud to share the 8th issue of the National Research Collaborative for Foster Alumni and Higher Education newsletter with you.

Much has happened in the federal policy space over the December 2020 holiday Season. Specifically, the passage of the [**Supporting Foster Youth and Families through the Pandemic Act \(H.R.7947\) through the larger Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2021 \(H.R. 133\)**](#). A detailed description of this critical piece of legislation and how it impacts college going foster youth can be found on page six of this newsletter. Also, in this issue Dr. Kerri Kearney shares the importance of coming together with colleagues with varying expertise, training, and perspectives while navigating this time of crisis and uncertainty. We are also highlighting the great work of Island Harbor, a campus-based supervised independent living program operating out of Texas A & M's Corpus Christi campus, and the recent publication of Dr. Lauren Ford, who directs Strategic Initiatives and Planning for San Mateo County Community College District. Dr. Ford's qualitative article is entitled "Community College Reform: Placing Foster Youth at the Center of a More Equitable Vision for Success."

Also featured in this newsletter is a host of upcoming conferences and webinars scheduled in 2021 where you will have the opportunity to apprise of the latest policy and practices in the foster care and higher education field. Finally, in the announcements section of this newsletter is information on how you can access an exciting new book recently published by our very own

Dr. Nathanael J. Okpych, Assistant Professor, University of Connecticut!

As a reminder, our speakers program is organized by Dr. Amy Salazar. We are actively looking for new speakers to volunteer to share your important research on future webinars. Please contact Dr. Salazar if you are interested in presenting at amy.salazar@wsu.edu. Information about past and future webinars can be found on our website at (<https://www.nrc-fahe.org/archive-webinars>).

ANGELIQUE DAY, Ph.D.



Angelique Day, PhD, MSW, is an Associate Professor in the School of Social Work at the University of Washington-Seattle. Much of her research focuses on foster care youth, including examining the differences in college retention rates between foster care youth and other low-income first-generation college students, and examining "youth voice" and its impact on child welfare, education and health policy reform. Dr. Day leads the Policy Review team for the NRC-FAHE. Questions about the policy section of this newsletter can be directed to her.

dayangel@uw.edu

Higher Education Column

KERRI KEARNEY, PH.D.



Kerri Kearney, M.B.A., Ed.D., is an associate professor in Higher Education & Student Affairs. Through her work, she prepares individuals to lead at institutions of higher education or function in related research or policy roles. She teaches and advises students almost exclusively at the doctoral level. Her research, teaching, and service agendas focus on the broad areas of other mothering issues (fostering and adoption) with an emphasis on college students who are alumni of foster care, the role of emotions in human transition, issues related to organizational behavior, and visual or arts-based methodologies in qualitative research.

As I approached this particular column amid the one-year “anniversary” date of the discovery of COVID-19, I stopped to reflect on the past year’s major events and found myself *still* amazed by the sheer number of issues we have been faced with. And yet I am still writing this column. And here you are still reading it! And we are all still moving forward with our focus on the continuing success of students with experience in foster care and related social justice issues.

Like many industries, events of the past year threw higher education into a type of flux. And, as I mentioned in my last column, times of crisis management tend to drive organizations toward concerns for the basics: logistics, dollars, survival. One thing I didn’t mention, however, is that stress, crisis, and related fatigue may also cause *individuals* to withdraw into themselves. Mass individual withdrawal quiets our collective voices and may damage burgeoning relationships that would move us toward shared goals. An

ongoing storm can cause even the best and brightest of us to lose our bearings.

I am an organizational behaviorist and a higher education practitioner and researcher. So the question I posed to myself is: How do we stimulate positive change in higher education for students with foster care experience when we are in such uncertain times?

I generated a list of to do items. When I compared it to lists created prior to the last year’s crises, I still came to the same overarching conclusion. We effect change for foster alumni in higher education by humbly coming together in spite of differing disciplines, training, and perspectives. I’d like to consider what “togetherness” might mean for those of us concerned with individuals whose journeys included foster care.

My humble suggestions/reminders:

1. Organizations are made up of people. When considering organizational change, all the strategy and process in the world can’t combat the common will of the people. Relationships are everything.
2. Policies, organizational rules, and forms were written (and supported) by someone(s) at some point. They get changed in the same way.
3. There is currently a very significant focus on human rights and social justice. Now is the time to research, write, podcast, speak, educate, coach, and encourage decision makers. But, first(!), imagine how powerful the message becomes if you are in collaboration with others with expertise in other areas. Huh? The “experts” actually agree? Now **that’s** a powerful message.
4. Consider that there is something for you to **learn** (not just to accommodate or critique) from those other “experts.” Yes, both the person with the lived journey and the person without it have unique strengths to contribute. Yes, practitioners have a wealth of knowledge and experience that strengthens researchers, and vice versa. Our shared concerns are not about winning.

From the above, I also posed the following questions to myself:

1. Who have I dropped the ball with? For me, this is likely due to “time” or “load” and is in the area of building or nurturing a relationship that might grow my understanding.
2. Whose perspective is “bugging” me or I am still trying to figure out? I can overthink *everything* and sometimes I need to open a real conversation.
3. Where have I drawn a boundary that I may need to reconsider? Where do I need to create a boundary to protect my own wellbeing, fairness to others, or common goals?

As I close this column, I’d like to offer one additional consideration of togetherness and effecting organizational change in higher education. Given that elevated organizational concerns during crisis tend toward logistics and enrollment, dollars, and survival, who else should we, as a community interested in students with foster care backgrounds, be considering ties with? As many others have pointed out, individuals with experience in foster care also have many other identities and experiences. Where might we have drawn the boundaries too tightly and in ways that assume that foster care experience is the dominant factor in their journeys? Would broadening our boundaries of inquiry provide opportunities to make our voices louder? At what point would that effort dilute the focus on students with foster care experience?

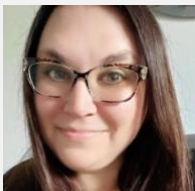
The Fall 2021 National Conference for Engaged Scholarship on Foster Alumni *and other traditionally hidden college population* (virtual format) will hold space to continue the conversation. Please see the posted [research conference updates and the Call for Presentation Proposals](#). If you focus on any aspect of individuals with experience in foster care or other types of hidden populations on college campuses, these are your people! Please join us!!

Practice Highlight - Texas A&M Corpus Christi's Island Harbor Supervised Independent Living Program

DR. RACHEL KIRK & JESSICA ALEMAN



Dr. Rachel Kirk received her bachelor's degree in Psychology from Lenoir-Rhyne University in Hickory, North Carolina, and her Ph.D. in Educational Psychology from Texas A&M University, College Station, Texas. After receiving her Ph.D., she worked as a licensed mental health counselor and manager. In 2009, she was hired as an academic advisor for Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi (TAMU-CC) and in 2018 she became the Anchor Coordinator. Dr. Kirk currently serves as TAMU-CC's Anchor Program Manager, overseeing 7 different programs which include a variety of populations such as dual credit students, specially admitted students and students in foster care.



Jessica Aleman received her bachelor's degree in Psychology and Sociology from Washington and Jefferson College in Washington, PA and her master's degree in Social Work from California University of Pennsylvania in California, PA. In 2013, she became a licensed clinical social worker. In July 2019, Jessica moved to Corpus Christi, TX and that September she began working at Texas A&M University - Corpus Christi as the Foster Care Liaison and Program Specialist for Island Harbor, the campus based Supervised Independent Living Program.

Can you give us some background on your program and how it started?

Rachel: The program started several years ago when some colleagues mentioned they knew of a federally funded program called Supervised Independent Living (SIL), but it had never been done on a college campus. I was pretty sure that we could make it work on our campus, so I started doing research and putting together a proposal. I talked to the director of the SIL Program who looked at it. While he reviewed the proposal, I talked to departments on campus, all of whom were very enthusiastic about the idea.

We had buy-in from the campus community from the beginning. Our tutoring and learning center said they could assign one constant person who would be willing to work with the students. Islander Housing also got on board, which was important since some students are asked to leave their foster home immediately after they graduate high school. Dining services stepped up to take a look at what different rates could be put into place for these students. After meeting with members of the campus community, our proposal was approved!

We started the pilot program for the State of Texas with three students. We've grown since then and we currently have ten this fall and we're bringing in two more in January. We are already accepting applications for Fall 2021 and we are looking to grow.

What are your roles in the program?

Jessica: I provide on the ground support. I shoot students a text every week and we meet at least once a month. I'm also trying to solicit donations, reaching out to school districts to promote the program and give out information, consulting with CPS workers, etc.

Rachel: I'm responsible for the oversight of the entire program day to day, the policies, the procedures, the

rules, the contracts. Because I started this program, I have a more hands-on approach. The students know me and don't hesitate to contact me.

What are the program's components?

Rachel: Students who are funded by the state are required to attend weekly Islander navigation sessions with Jessica for the first year and monthly sessions with her from that point on until they turn 21. They also have a community mentor within that program, assigned tutors, a university counselor, and connections with other departments on campus. We also have some students who have aged out of the state funding but they're receiving funding and scholarships from our community agencies, so they're still considered part of the program.

Jessica: We also have different staff from the university and community come in and speak. They are introduced to an assigned mentor. Someone speaks to them about doing taxes, and the local transportation authority comes in because students can ride the city buses for free with their student ID.

Which program components are the most successful?

Rachel: All of the campus connections Jessica has been able to make for the students. It's also valuable to have one university counselor appointed for the students and to have that counselor offer drop-in hours so that the students don't have to make an appointment, they can just literally drop in. That is a huge barrier for these particular students. They have a negative attitude about counseling when they get here because they've been forced to do it and it hasn't worked for them. It's huge for these students to not have to go through all the red tape, and our counselor is a certified trauma counselor and is consistently available for the students.

It's also important to have one tutoring and learning mentor assigned to the students that is with them throughout their years so that they can develop that connection, as well as having Jessica remain as a stable presence.

Jessica: The peer support aspect of our program is important. When we would meet as a group for Islander navigation there were definitely groups of students that connected. We noticed that students who connected with each other seemed to do a little better their first semester.

What are the main sources of funding?

Rachel: The major source is the state funding for the Supervised Independent Living Program. The students receive a daily rate which is \$43.56 per day. Part of the money for the daily rate goes to furnish a cell phone for the students and that is how we keep in contact with them. The SIL daily rate covers the cost of housing, food, incidentals and a cell phone.

Students don't have access to the federal funding after they turn 21. A lot of our students don't graduate before they turn 21, so we look for donations and agencies to partner with us to help us out. We have the Education and Training Voucher which students can apply for which is an additional \$5,000 per year. We want to make sure they are coming out of college with as little debt as possible because they don't have any other type of support.

Additional funding comes from donations. We reached out to local agencies and businesses and had \$12,000 donated from church members so that three of our students who were aging out of the SIL program could continue their degree. We've had faculty and staff members donate gift cards and supplies. The Foster Angels of South Texas donated gift cards, car insurance, laptops, bus tickets, etc. over the last several years, but now they're experiencing a funding shortage.

What impact has your program had?

Jessica: A lot of students have said they wouldn't be at college without this program. One student tried to delay graduation so they could stay in the program - we had to tell them, the whole point of you being here is to get your degree!

Rachel: One student was here working on her degree before the program existed and she couldn't afford to come back to school. She ended up in my office with her caseworker trying to figure out how to make it financially. She and I started talking about the program and we were able to work out how to bring her back into care so that she could utilize the program. She should be graduating with her degree in the summer. I am so proud that she's been able to come back to school, pay off all of her debts, and get her degree.

Another student feels that because of his health and his background, he's not sure whether he would be on the streets or in jail or dead if it weren't for the program. He truly believes that this program saved him and gave him a chance for his life.

What has been the impact of Covid-19?

Jessica: We don't meet face-to-face anymore which is difficult. It used to be really easy to make sure I was getting those check ins done because they would pop into my office all the time. I miss seeing them! Fortunately for us their funding has not been impacted. We also got a grant of PPE, so we were able to give all our students masks and thermometers.

Do you have any advice for other campus-based support programs?

Rachel: I believe that as people start these programs, they need to consider who they hire to work with the students on a daily basis. Anyone working with these students should have a background with trauma and working with children in care. These students are still dealing with the grief, the loss,

the trauma and it's going to show itself as they experience college.

What changes to law or policy would you like to see?

Rachel: Texas legislation and federal law states that the Supervised Independent Living Program does not begin until children reach their 18th birthday, instead of allowing access to services once they graduate high school. We have students who graduate when they're 17 and can't access our services until they turn 18. Students who are putting in the work to make sure that they graduate high school on time should be able to continue to succeed and go to college.

I think it's such a simple issue to change the wording so that instead of reading 18 to 21, it reads from the time they graduate from high school to the time they finish their college degree. The Texas A&M University system is joining with Education Reach in order to present our Supervised Independent Living Program model to the legislature to ask for more funding and present these concerns.

What goals do you have for the future?

Jessica: I would like to see programs like this on all college campuses. For students to have a true college experience they should get a choice of where to go, but right now it's limited to schools that have this program.

Rachel: I would like to see a partnership with our local community colleges. I absolutely think the students should have a choice for where to attend college so I would love to see this on every college campus across the United States. That is why we will meet with anybody who wants to meet with us and send our resources to anybody who wants to look at them because we want college campuses to realize that this can be done.

Policy Updates

Members of the 117th Congress were sworn in on January 3rd, 2021. All legislation from the 116th Congress that did not pass is now expired and will need to be reintroduced to both the House and Senate. Fortunately, former foster youth in higher education will enjoy many of the provisions that were part of The Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2021.

[The Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2021 \(H.R. 133\)](#)

The Consolidated Appropriations Act was signed into law at the end of December 2020. The act contains several notable provisions for youth who have been impacted by the child welfare system. The following sections are contained in “Division X – Support Foster Youth and Families Through the Pandemic.”

[Section 3: Continued Safe Operation of Child Welfare Programs and Support for Older Foster Youth](#)

This section includes the [Supporting Foster Youth and Families through the Pandemic Act \(H.R. 7947\)](#). Several provisions in H.R. 7947 support former foster youth in higher education programs. It provides for an additional \$50 million dollars for Education and Training Voucher (ETV) programs and raises the yearly award amount from \$5,000 to \$12,000 per student until September 30th, 2022. The federal government will provide a 100% match for Chafee and ETV appropriations during the pandemic. There is also more flexibility in what ETV can be used for, and youth no longer have to maintain satisfactory academic progress to continue receiving the award. Additionally, if youth are unable to enroll

in postsecondary education due to COVID-19, they may still be eligible for ETV funding. The age limit for ETV funding was raised to 27 through October 1st, 2021.

This section also waives limitations on the amount of funds allowed for housing assistance. States can now use more than 30% of Federal allotment for room and board payments. The act also expands eligibility for room and board payments to all former foster youth aged 18 and older who have experienced foster care after age 14, even if they did not age out of care. These eligibility requirements apply until September 30th, 2021.

Section 3 also appropriates up to \$500,000 to states to implementing driving and transportation programs for foster youth. Funds may be used for youth over age 15 to pay for licenses, insurance costs, and assistance purchasing a vehicle. Funds cannot exceed \$4,000 per youth, per year. This section may be beneficial for youth who need transportation assistance and are unable to use their ETV or other financial aid funding to do so.

[Section 4: Preventing Aging Out of Foster Care During the Pandemic](#)

In addition, if a foster youth ages out of care during the pandemic, H.R. 7947 stipulates they cannot be required to leave foster care simply due to their age, nor can they be denied voluntary re-entry into care. Youth must be notified of the option to return to care if they aged out during 2020-2021 and will continue to be eligible for foster care payments. This provision extends to September 30th, 2021.

Other sections of the Consolidated Appropriations Act will also impact current and former foster youth and higher education students.

[Section 103: Fostering Stable Housing Opportunities](#)

Another provision in the appropriations bill will assist youth aging out of the foster care system. Public housing agencies that provide timely assistance to eligible youth, including those who aged out of foster care, are eligible for assistance through this provision. If a youth is complying with certain housing programs, they can have housing assistance extended for up to 24 months.

[Section 479A: Discretion of Student Financial Aid Administrators](#)

This provision gives financial aid administrators discretion to adjust cost of attendance, values used to calculate student financial aid need, and values used to calculate Pell grant award amounts. Administrators can do so on a case-by-case basis and with adequate documentation as to why the change is needed. No additional fee will be charged for students who request these reviews.

[Section 479D: Special Rules for Independent Students](#)

This provision increases the maximum Pell grant award to \$6,495 (previously \$6,345). Additionally, the provision allows incarcerated students to receive Pell grants, greatly simplifies the FAFSA form, and forgives \$1.3 billion in loans made to historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs).

[The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act \(QIOA\) and the National Apprenticeship Act](#)

This provision provides around \$96.5 million to Youth Build activities, which provide work, training, and counseling opportunities for youth between ages 16-24, including youth who aged out of the foster care system or left foster care

for kinship guardianship or adoption after age 16.

November 10th, 2020 Supreme Court hearing on the Affordable Care Act (ACA)

As of yet, a ruling has not been made official on the court case, but some are hopeful that most of the ACA will [remain in place](#), even if the individual mandate is repealed.

Currently, the ACA mandates Medicaid coverage [until age 26](#) for young adults who have aged out of the foster care system. Repealing the ACA could do away with this mandate, especially if there is not replacement policy in place.

The Issue: Foster youth alumni have significantly higher rates of [mental health disorders](#), more [economic instability](#), and higher levels of [negative physical health](#) conditions than the general population. Studies have shown that poor physical health leads to [lower GPA scores](#) and mental health disorders make educational attainment even [more difficult](#) when considering effects on things such attention and energy level.

If the entirety of the Affordable Care Act is repealed, former foster youth are at risk of losing all insurance coverage. Considering their economic instability, they are unlikely to be able to pay for insurance premiums out of pocket. Especially during the pandemic, guaranteed access to Medicaid until age 26 is critical to well-being and success in higher education

The State of Tuition Waivers

Currently, 22 states have implemented statewide tuition waivers, and 8 other states have grant programs for students

affected by foster care. An additional 8 states also provide a scholarship program for youth affected by foster care.

All states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico utilize the Education and Training Voucher (ETV) funding provided through Chafee. Currently, states are eligible to award students up to \$12,000 per year through the ETV program, and students may receive funds for up to five years if they under the age of 27.

More details about each state's tuition waiver policy can be found at <http://depts.washington.edu/fostered/tuition-waivers-state>.

We know that there may be legislation in your state that we have not listed here. If you know of a specific effort in your state that you would like us to mention in the next newsletter, please email Angelique Day at dayangel@uw.edu.

Article Highlight

In this issue we highlight an article entitled **Community College Reform: Placing Foster Youth at the Center of a More Equitable Vision for Success.**

For a complete list of resources, please see the Library tab on our website.

If you would like to have your recent article highlighted, please send us an article summary in this same format to nrc.fahe@gmail.com.

About the Authors

LAUREN FORD, EDD



Lauren Ford (she/her/hers) currently serves as the Interim Director of Strategic Initiatives and Planning in the San Mateo County Community College District where she facilitates the expansion of programs related to student educational access and completion. Ford has an extensive background addressing college access and student success in higher education and served as a Biden Foundation Higher Education Fellow in 2018-19. Ford holds a B.S. from Xavier University, MEd from USC and a doctorate from San Francisco State University's Educational Leadership program.

Ford (2020) conducted a qualitative, multi-case study focused on the implementation of the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office (CCCCO) Vision for Success strategic plan. The Vision for Success Plan focuses on improving completion rates and closing equity gaps in California community colleges. A critical

component of this plan is the Guided Pathways (GP) framework which is used to support students from the time they are on-boarded up until graduation.

Ford's dissertation addressed two questions. First, how community college practitioners were utilizing the GP framework to address equity within reform. Second, how former foster youths' educational experiences could be used to inform recommendations for equity efforts within community college reform.

Across three California community colleges, Ford reviewed campus documents describing the implementation of Vision for Success. At these colleges, Ford interviewed campus practitioners who were involved in the implementation of the GP framework to understand how they were utilizing it to address equity in reform. Finally, Ford interviewed former foster care youth ("foster youth scholars") at the three colleges about their experiences in higher education in order to inform her understanding of how colleges were addressing equity gaps and develop recommendations for addressing equity gaps in community college reform. Deductive and inductive coding were used to analyze responses.

Responses from campus practitioners illustrated how particular nuances of student experiences can be difficult to address when developing equity interventions. For example, while each campus noted intentions to update orientation and onboarding processes, only one intended to include modules based on student identity. Other proposed interventions included providing translated materials for non-English speakers and developing student success teams. The participating colleges all addressed historical inequities in education; however, did not specify interventions for students disproportionately impacted by historical inequities.

Interviews with foster youth scholars (FYS) found that youths' motivations to attend college stemmed from both

external and internal influences such as relationships with social workers and desires to gain employment. FYS identified the Next Up/Guardian Scholars program as a valued support. Unfortunately, FYS noted a lack of community on campus and empathy from staff and faculty. FYS noted continued limitations posed by financial barriers, regardless of financial aid.

Ford formed several recommendations from her findings. For leadership specifically, Ford emphasized intentionality when creating opportunities for students. Leadership should ensure that is adapted for all types of students to better expand navigational capital. Leadership should take advantage of focus groups centering foster youth voices and other marginalized voices in order to better understand barriers they face. Additionally, leadership should increase efforts to create a welcoming community for vulnerable students and provide trauma-informed training for all members of the campus workforce.

Addressing policy makers, Ford suggested that the CCCCCO should seek collaboration with the Foster Youth Success Initiative liaisons and other advocacy groups. She also suggested that legislators should revisit current state aid allocations, ensuring adjustments for situations such as living with a dependent or living alone as well as cost of living differences across the state.

Future research recommendations include continued exploration of the impact of GP as it continues to be implemented in California's community colleges. More research needs to be conducted and published on the experiences of former foster youth in community colleges.

Ford, L. N. (2020). Community College Reform: Placing Foster Youth at the Center of a More Equitable Vision for Success. ProQuest Dissertations Publishing.

Announcements

Keep an eye out here for upcoming webinars, training sessions, or conferences that our collaborative members are hosting or attending. We will share any potential funding or employment opportunities that we think may be of interest. Please let us know if you would like a specific opportunity to be promoted in our next newsletter!

OPPORTUNITIES

Foster Club's All-Star Internship Application is open!

DEADLINE: February 28th, 2021

- The FosterClub All-Star Internship was founded on the belief that youth who have successfully transitioned into young adulthood can have the largest impact on their peers. All-Stars are recognized as leaders on a national scale, and their stories continue to affect policy and practice, significantly improving the lives of youth still in care.
- Interns receive leadership training, help improve outcomes for youth transitioning out of care, educate peers and industry professionals, and change public perceptions about foster youth across the nation at conferences and events all summer long.

[More information here](#)

CONFERENCES

January 19th-22nd, 2021

Society for Social Work and Research Virtual Conference

Virtual Conference Goals (fall 2021):

- The SSWR Annual Conference offers a scientific program that reflects a broad range of research interests, from workshops on the latest quantitative and qualitative research methodologies to symposia featuring studies in child welfare, aging, mental health, welfare reform, substance abuse, and HIV/AIDS.

[More information here](#)

[Register here](#)

May 4th-6th, 2021

Child Welfare League of America (CWLA) 2021 Virtual Conference Lessons Learned from 2020: Reaching New Heights for Children and Families

- The conference is currently calling for presentations. Topics may include education, collaboration, use of technology, engaging and supporting families, and more.

[More information here](#)

[Submit Proposals Here \(due January 27th, 2021\)](#)

September 15th and 16th, 2021

National Conference for Engaged Scholarship on Hidden Populations

Virtual Conference Goals:

- To stimulate research-to-practice-to-research knowledge about foster alumni and other traditionally hidden populations who are college-bound, in college, or college graduates,
- To create bridges among diverse areas of knowledge, researchers, and practitioners conducting research with or supporting foster alumni or other hidden populations, and
- To share updates and ways for higher education researchers, practitioners, and others to get involved with the 2022 face-to-face National Conference on Hidden Student Populations.

[More information here](#)

[Submit proposals here \(due March 12th, 2021\)](#)

WEBINARS

Save the date: May 7, 2021

NRC-FAHE will hold a spark talk presentation that will share the results of a multidisciplinary collaborative effort between NRC-FAHE, College Promise, and ETS.

Check out the [NRC-FAHE Webinar Archive](#) to see past webinar presentations.

NEW BOOK RELEASE

January 15th, 2021 – Book Release *Climbing a Broken Ladder: Contributors of College Success for Youth in Foster Care* – Dr. Nathanael J. Okpych

- About the Book: Although foster youth have college aspirations similar to their peers, fewer than one in ten ultimately complete a two-year or four-year college degree. What are the major factors that influence their chances of succeeding? Drawing on data from one of the most extensive studies of young people in foster care, Nathanael J. Okpych examines a wide range of factors that contribute to the chances that foster youth enroll in college, persist in college, and ultimately complete a degree. The book concludes with data-driven and concrete recommendations for policy and practice to get more foster youth into and through college.

[Get the book Here](#)