



UCLA

FIRST STAR UCLA BRUIN GUARDIAN SCHOLARS ACADEMY

2025 IMPACT REPORT



ABOUT FIRST STAR UCLA BGSA ACADEMY



UCLA BRUIN RESOURCE CENTER

The mission of the UCLA Bruin Resource Center (BRC) is to support students' development, well-being, and academic success and to foster an inclusive and socially just campus community.

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FIRST STAR MISSION

First Star provides high school youth in foster care with the opportunity, tools, and support to successfully transition to self-sufficiency through higher education or other viable pathways



**HIGH SCHOOL
GRADUATION
COMPLETION**

COMPARED TO 50% NATIONALLY

UCLA

FIRST STAR BGSACADEMY IN THE SPOTLIGHT



Op-Ed written by First Star BGSAC Alumni, Andi (Cohort 4), on EdSource



Advocacy Day in Sacramento

THE ACADEMY MODEL

ACADEMY PROGRAMMING INCLUDES THE FOLLOWING:



MONTHLY ACADEMIES

Monthly programming over four years for youth in foster care focused on academics and life skills while they are in high school.

CAREGIVER ENGAGEMENT

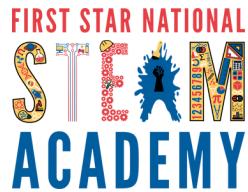
Seminars and workshops that provide tools to caregivers to become advocates for their youth.

SUMMER ACADEMY

Intensive 2-4 week residential enrichment program on a university campus.

VIRTUAL ENGAGEMENT

Weekly mentoring and tutoring sessions, as well as an open environment to connect and build community through virtual hangouts.



STEAM ACADEMY

Virtual Tech Talks and access to labs that focus on Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Math.



SCHOLAR ADVISORY COMMITTEE (SAC)

Leadership opportunity for scholars focused on becoming civically engaged and enacting change in their local communities.



ALUMNI PROGRAM

Offered to scholars who graduate the Academy as a resource during their transition to adulthood.

BRIGHT FUTURES AHEAD

CELEBRATING SCHOLAR SUCCESS



FIRST STAR ALUMNI PROGRAM

The First Star Alumni Program's goal is to remain connected and ensure Alumni have access to resources and the First Star network as they transition into adulthood, career, and advanced education.



100% of the 2025 graduating class enrolled in the Alumni Program

79% of enrolled Alumni engage with the program via resources, newsletters and events

22% of peer mentors are First Star Alumni

FIRST STAR STUDENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE (SAC)

First Star encourages advocacy and engagement in social justice through the Scholar Advisory Committee (SAC). SAC is composed of current scholars from across the First Star Academy network and from the Alumni Program. SAC allows scholars to build community, freely share their ideas and opinions, and dialogue about important issues!



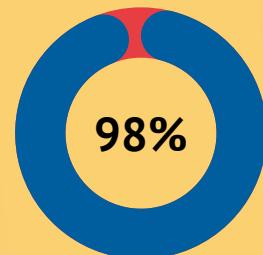
80% of SAC scholars were returners from last year

100% of SAC scholars stated they felt more confident taking on leadership roles

100% of SAC scholars stated they felt more confident in advocating for themselves

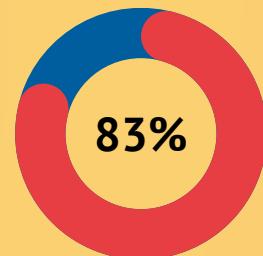
NATIONAL FIRST STAR CLASS OF 2025

National Graduating Class



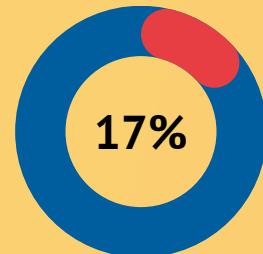
H.S Diploma: 98%
Credit Recovery: 2%

Post-Secondary Pathways



4-year: 46%
2-year CC: 29%
Vocation/Trade School: 8%

Workforce Pathways



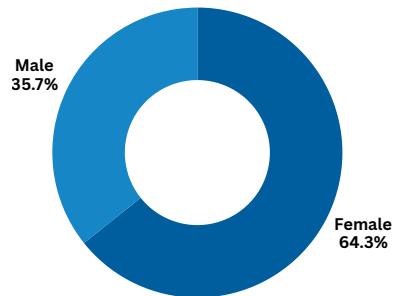
Apprenticeship/Union: 0%
Full-Time Employment: 17%
Military: 0%



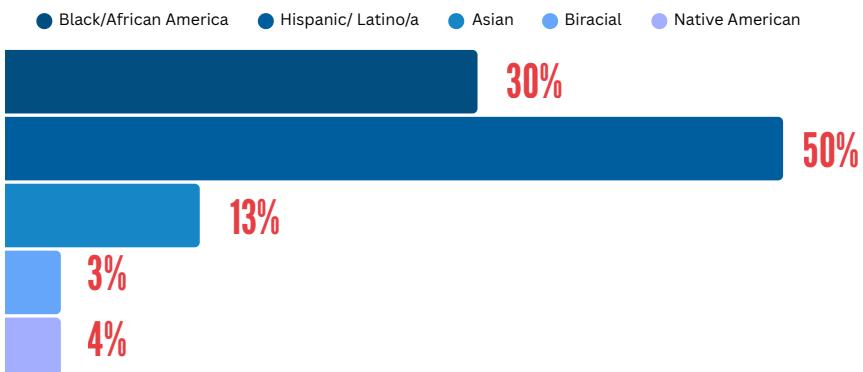
FIRST STAR UCLA BGSA ACADEMY

SCHOLAR PROFILE

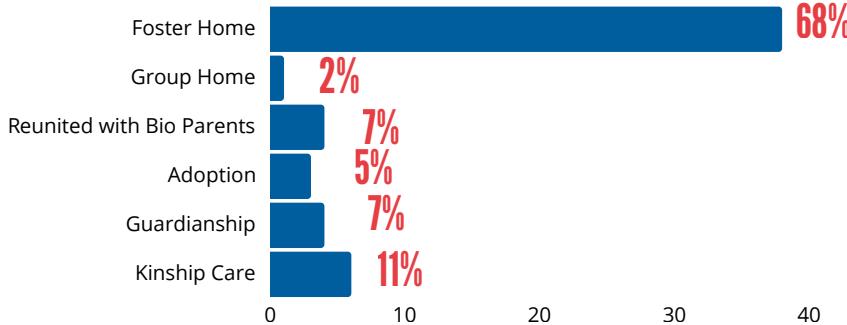
GENDER



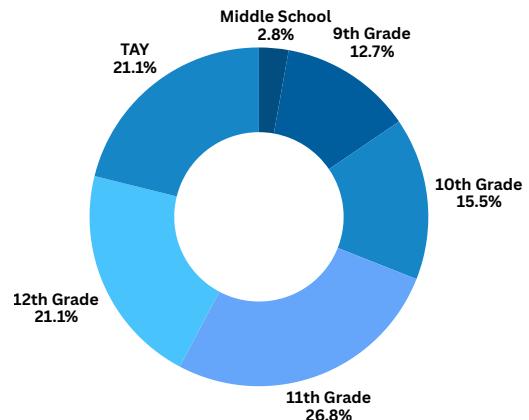
RACE AND ETHNICITY



PLACEMENT STATUS



GRADE LEVEL



Celebrating Class of 2025

93%

of First Star BGSA scholars graduated High School on time!

100%

of First Star BGSA scholars who graduated high school are pursuing post-secondary opportunities.

7%

of First Star BGSA scholars are pursuing credit recovery and community college!

FIRST STAR UCLA BGSA IMPACT

2024-2025 ACADEMIC YEAR



LIFE SKILLS AND SELF DISCOVERY

During the Summer Academy, Twinspire joined us for a day to host a financial literacy workshop, where scholars learned how to manage money and achieve their financial goals. They were also introduced to another nonprofit organization they can turn to for support. During Saturday Academies, scholars continued building life skills through additional financial literacy workshops and public speaking activities led by Youth Coaches. They practiced professional communication through group projects and presentations, strengthening their confidence in managing responsibilities both inside and outside the classroom.

HEALTH AND WELLBEING

Throughout the year, BGSA prioritized scholars' mental and physical well-being. A sound bath workshop hosted by a UCLA partner highlighted the importance of mental health and strategies to support it. During Summer Academy, scholars participated in multiple workshops and activities focused on mental health and wellness, and engaged in group discussions on stress management and self-care. These experiences encouraged scholars to prioritize holistic wellness as an essential part of their academic and personal success.



CAREER EXPLORATION

During Summer Academy, scholars attended numerous Possibility Talks featuring professionals from a variety of career pathways, exposing them to opportunities they may not have considered and helping them gain clarity on potential futures. They also participated in resume building and mock interview workshops during Saturday Academies, receiving personalized feedback from Youth Coaches.



LEADERSHIP AND SELF ADVOCACY

During Summer Academy, we hosted numerous Possibility Talks featuring professionals from a variety of career pathways. These sessions exposed scholars to diverse opportunities and helped them gain clarity on potential career paths. Scholars also participated in résumé-building and mock interview workshops during Saturday Academies, receiving personalized feedback from Youth Coaches.



COLLEGE READINESS

During the academic year, scholars participated in college preparation workshops covering UC/CSU applications, financial aid, and personal statements. During Summer Academy, students visited the UCLA campus, envisioning themselves in a college setting and touring the Bruin Resource Center to learn about programs that support student success. These experiences strengthened scholars' readiness for college applications and helped them imagine their future in higher education. Additionally, Uprooted joined multiple times over the summer to lead online modules, guide college exploration, support students in starting personal statements, and assist with selecting potential majors.

FIRST STAR UCLA BGSA ACADEMY

BRIGHT FUTURES AHEAD

The National Bright Futures Survey was developed in partnership with Dr. Philip Hong from the University of Georgia to better understand our scholars' hopes and aspirations as it relates to their academic and future goals. In creating this survey and collecting feedback from scholars, we are embracing the challenge young people face and how we can be better stewards of their emotions and feelings as we support their growth in our Academies!

80%

of First Star scholars are feeling hopeful about the future and expect to complete further education after high school!



70%

of scholars feel a sense of belonging and connection since joining First Star!

70%

of scholars are confident that they have the necessary skills to succeed in college since joining First Star!



SUMMER ACADEMY

The Summer Residential Program offers scholars an immersive and transformative experience, fostering personal growth, meaningful connections, and hands-on learning that equips them with the skills and confidence to thrive in their future endeavors.



Sailing with Life Sail



UCLA's Cooking Kitchen



Community Service Day on Campus

FIRST STAR UCLA BGSA ACADEMY

COMMUNITY IMPACT



PEER MENTOR RECOGNITION

First Star recognizes the positive impact peer mentors have on our scholars. The First Star BGSA Academy awarded peer mentors and alumni for their years of service and unwavering support of the academy.



are current students or alumni of host university



identify as first generation



identify as current or former foster youth



identify as former First Star scholars



Hosted with all First Star Academies and live-streamed nationwide, the conference empowered youth to envision and pursue their futures while building community and access to opportunities.

CAREGIVER ENGAGEMENT

First Star BGSA Academy hosted virtual and in-person Caregiver Orientations and other engagement events on campus during the year. Caregivers each have 1:1 check ins with us and a "Caregiver Corner" on the newsletter to highlight resources for them and their scholars. For Summer Academy, BGSA hosted a mandatory Caregiver Orientation to introduce families to the Academy structure and resources.



PRESENTING AT THE FOSTER YOUTH EDUCATION SUMMIT

First Star's Director of Academy Engagement, Karina Garcia-Lopez, had the honor of presenting at the California Foster Youth Education Summit alongside inspiring young adults with lived experience from the UCLA BGSA Academy and Ashley Matysiak from Pivotal as part of the The Foster Youth Pre-College Collective.



ADVOCACY DAY

First Star National, along with staff and alumni from the First Star Bruin Guardian Scholars Academy at UCLA had the incredible opportunity to provide a public comment in support of the Governor's May Revision request to fund First Star Academies at UC campuses!

FIRST STAR UCLA BGSA ACADEMY

THANK YOU TO OUR PARTNERS

University of
California, Los
Angeles



Department of
Children and Family
Services



Los Angeles
County of
Education



Community Stakeholder Acknowledgments

Academy Programming Partners

UCLA Bruin Resource Center
UCLA Bruin Guardian Scholars Program
UCLA Residential Life
UCLA Bruin Corps
California College Corps
UpRooted Academy
UCLA Teaching Kitchen
Life Sail

Scholar Recruitment Partners

Los Angeles County of Education
Los Angeles Department of Children and Family Services
Los Angeles Unified School District

Funding Acknowledgements

Angell Foundation
Los Angeles County of Education
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Parsons Foundation

First Star is a member of the Foster Youth Pre-College Collective, which released a report called **Destination Graduation** in 2020. The report discusses the challenges faced by foster youth and the practices that can help them succeed in education and beyond.



On March 26, members of The Foster Youth Pre-College Collective gathered in Sacramento for our **inaugural Advocacy Day** to highlight the specific educational needs of California's youth in foster care. The collective met with 15 lawmakers to share the Collective's vision and discuss how our programs empower system-involved young people to reach "Destination Graduation" and prepare for their futures.

HOW TO GET INVOLVED



REFER A STUDENT.



VOLUNTEER.



DONATE.