

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

COUNSELOR

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Supporting resilience in student success —
A tale of two programs

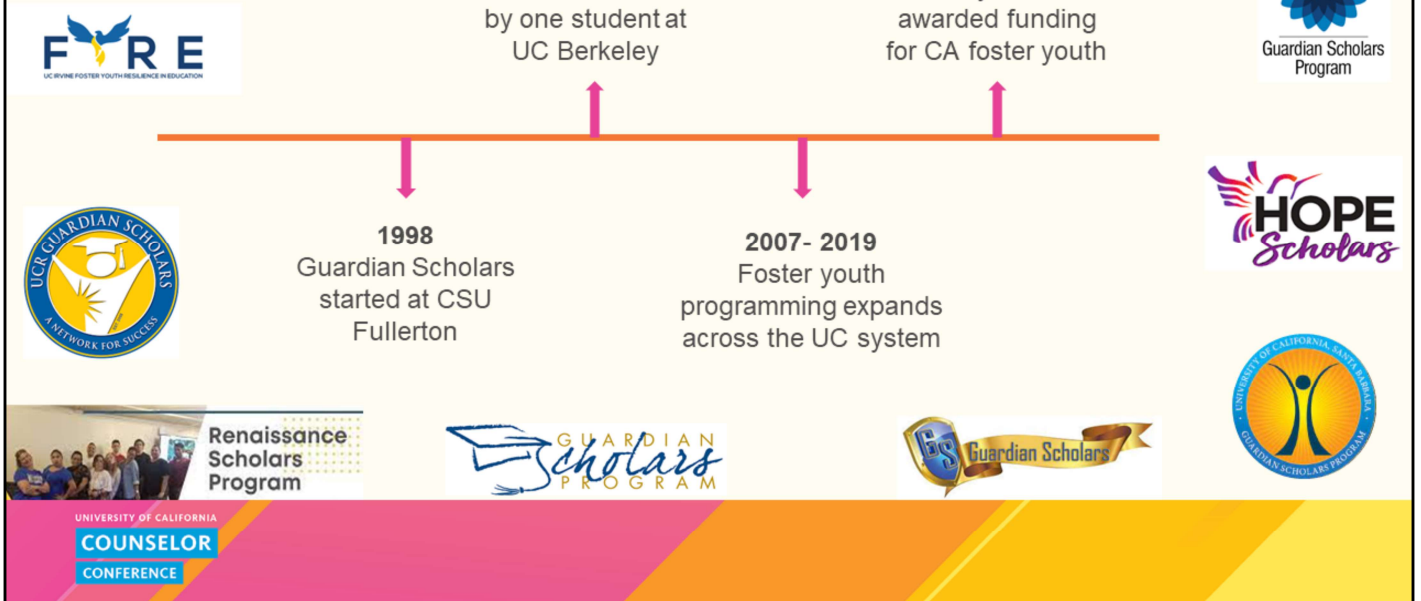
An overview

- Origin story
- State funding
- Current state-of-affairs
- Services available
- Tips for counselors
- Resources



Introducing Guardian Scholars

Origin story



Guardian Scholars started in 1998 CSU Fullerton with just three students. Businessman Ron Davis, a California State University, Fullerton alumnus, founded Guardian Scholars in 1998 at that campus. He wanted to make educational dreams come true for foster youth.

The program design offers a comprehensive model that has since become nationally recognized as a highly successful, life-changing program for challenged foster youth, according to the CSUF website. Guardian Scholars has served thousands of aspiring student scholars and is utilized nationally as a model. In California, it has expanded to more than 30 colleges and universities.

At UC, Foster youth programs were/are based on grant and donation funding so it varies from campus to campus in name and services provided.

UCB- Founded in 2005 with one student, the Berkeley Hope Scholars program has delivered direct services to over 140 students. Currently, we are 60 students strong!

UCD- Guardian Scholars Program is committed to improving the educational outcomes for students with lived experiences in foster care by providing services and support to meet their needs through transition, graduation, and post-graduation planning.

UCSC- Renaissance Scholars Program is committed to fostering the professional, academic and personal development of *former and current foster youth, formerly incarcerated students, students who experienced chronic homelessness prior to the age of 18, and other students with adverse circumstances that qualify them for independent status.

UCM- Guardian Scholars initiative started at UC Merced in May of 2019.

UCLA- Bruin Guardian Scholars (BGS) Program was established in 2009 at UCLA out of

student advocacy to help address the unmet needs of the current and former foster youth attending the university.

UCI- FYRE: Foster Youth Resilience in Education, aims to create a network that enhances the academic success and personal well-being of current and former foster youth attending UCI.

UCSB-Guardian Scholars Program at UCSB currently supports approximately 180 students and officially founded in 2009.

UCR- Founded 2008, Tuppett Yates, a professor of psychology at UCR, launched the Guardian Scholars Program in the hopes of creating a support system for students who grew up in foster care.

UCSD- Hope Scholars, formerly Guardian Scholars is a holistic student support program committed to supporting students who identify as current or former foster youth, under legal guardianship, unaccompanied homeless, or disconnected.

2022 UC system is awarded funding for CA foster youth, helping with continued growth throughout the UC system.

Current state of affairs

The 2022/2023 budget bill included funding for campus support programs for foster youth across all three public postsecondary systems. Language governing these programs was included in AB 183, the higher education budget trailer bill.



Foster Youth numbers have actually been decreasing across the UC system in the past couple of years. According to the UC, the number of enrolled undergraduate current and former foster youth decreased by about an average of 350 students from 2019 to 2022 across all campuses. It's important to note that we are still seeing well over a thousand former or current foster youth enrolled across the UC system.

Not all eligible students answer yes to the foster youth question on the UC application so there are more out there. There is a stigma in admitting they were in foster care. But with the increased availability of foster youth support services we will create more visibility of our programs to increase our numbers. The state of California and the UC system agree, which is why \$6 million dollars were allocated in the state's budget to expand services and support for foster youth. If you scan the code here you will see a summary of the trailer bill language for guidance on how these funds are being spent.

<https://jbay.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/Fact-Sheet-FY-Campus-Support.pdf>

State funding and expanding programs

An increase of \$6 million ongoing General Fund to increase support for foster youth students across all UC campuses.

Funding to be used for...

- Outreach
- Collaborations with County Jurisdictions (K-12 Foster youth)
- Targeted marketing of Program Services
- Efforts towards student retention and academic success

The funds will be allocated to foster youth support programs based on participating campus enrollment.

Each campus will be required to use the funds in the following way:

- Services include outreach, eligibility verification, referrals, counseling, supplies, housing, etc.
- Extend services to enrolled students pre-course start and during summer for fall term.
- Each campus needs program director, space, and peer mentor opportunities.
- Strengthen existing foster youth programs with allocated funds.
- Services should add to, not replace, existing support.
- Biennial reporting required from each systems office starting March 31, 2024.

Services available

Retention

- Priority housing and enrollment
- Material and financial assistance
- Free printing & testing materials
- Liaison services w/housing, financial aid, counseling services, etc.
- Community-centered programming

Success

- Mentorship
- Career advising & development
- Networking opportunities
- Graduate & professional school preparation
- Tutoring & academic advising

Support for students who are current and/or former foster youth at the UC can be categorized into two different areas, retention and success.

In regards to retention, the goal is making sure that students have all the tools, resources, and support needed to not only attend any one of our institutions, but also to stay and perform well at them. A number of these services, particularly priority housing & enrollment, material & financial assistance, and community-centered programming, are available in some form at all 9 of our undergraduate campuses. Nonetheless, we'd still encourage you to do more research on the services available at a specific UC campus. Priority housing and enrollment can be particularly helpful to former/current foster youth students who are facing home insecurity, who may not have folks to visit during holidays, or a place to go home to during summer breaks or winter closures. Tangible resources are provided through material & financial assistance programs like technology scholarships & textbook grants. Additionally, many campuses will also have free printing for students and/or access to free testing materials like scantrons. Lastly, some other services offered include events and programs intended to build community amongst former/current foster youth students, as well as liaison services with relevant departments like housing, financial aid, and/or counseling services to ensure that students are receiving necessary support and resources.

On the other hand, success is the second pillar of support for foster/current former youth at the UC as we not only want our students to be retained and perform well in their undergraduate careers but also want them to be prepared and exceptional candidates for post-graduate pathways and opportunities. Mentorship, networking opportunities, and career advising & development can be helpful for students as they can receive necessary and beneficial advice and guidance. It also can be a chance for students to cross paths with someone who looks like or has a similar background as them and help combat the effects of imposter syndrome. As mentioned earlier, students have access to preparation resources, like test prep services and books, for a wide variety of graduate and/or professional school programs. One example of this can be found in UC Merced's Guardian Scholar's program. Lastly, most campuses will offer tutoring and academic advising for students. At UCSD for example, the Hope Scholars program offers it's scholars priority for on-campus tutorial workshops.

Please refer to the resource slide for services and resources at each UC campus that are available to students who are former/current foster youth.

Tips for counselors

- Be inclusive in your language and programming.
- Be aware of a few resources or organizations for current and/or former foster youth.
- Inform your students of resources and services that will be available to them in the UC system.
- Encourage students who may be current and/or former foster youth that higher education is a path they can take and succeed in.
- Engage in trauma-informed care training, if available or given the opportunity.

Be very mindful when making generalizations about students families, parents, or home life. Students may not live in a 2 parent household or may not live with their biological families at all. This is relevant for more than just former/current foster youth students, as students can have a variety of different living and home situations ranging from being former/current foster youth to living with a legal guardian to kinship care. When it comes to programming, always remember to think of those students who may not have "traditional" households.

One of the biggest hindrances to success and matriculation for current/former foster youth is a general unawareness or lack of knowledge of resources, services, and avenues of success available to them. Become familiar with any local groups or organizations that might offer services and support that could be helpful for former/current foster youth while they are in high school. Additionally, be aware and inform students of support and resources available to them at the university level, whether it be in the UC system or elsewhere. Letting students know about these resources could be hugely beneficial to their pathway to graduation and matriculation.

Similarly, be sure to empower and encourage students that are current/former foster youth in regards to higher education, their matriculation to universities, and their success at universities. If possible, connect them with mentors and alumni that have had similar experiences or journeys or organizations for former/current foster youth that focus on community or feature some aspect of community building.

Resources

Find all the campus contacts for current and former foster youth services directly on the UCOP website:



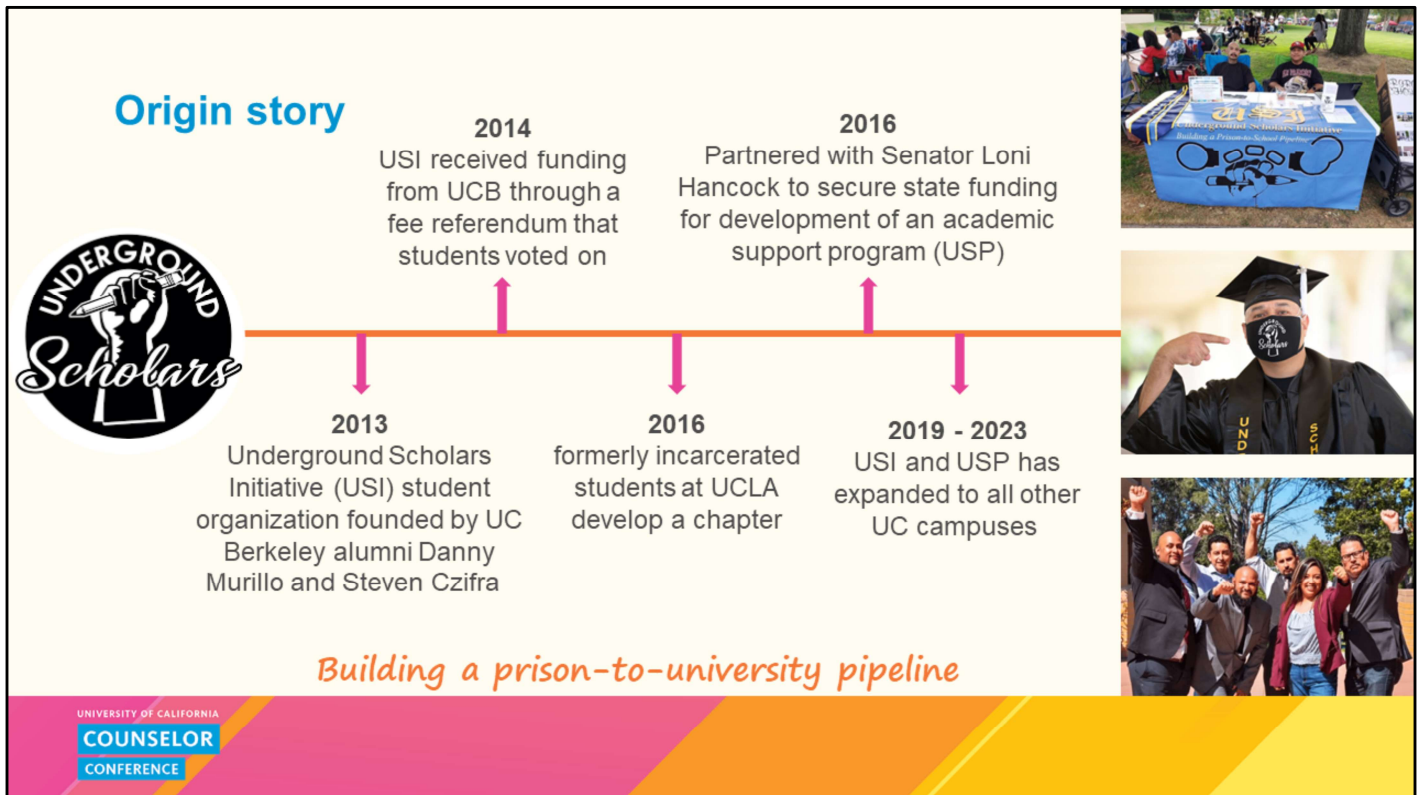
Foster youth campus resources

Campus	Program Name	Website	Contact Person
Berkeley	Berkeley Hope Scholars	https://www.hope.berkeley.edu	Charly King Beavers charlykb@berkeley.edu
Davis	Guardian Scholars	https://opportunity.ucdavis.edu/programs/guardian-scholars	Valeri Garcia vqgarcia@ucdavis.edu
Irvine	Foster Youth Resilience In Education (FYRE) Scholars	http://fyre.due.uci.edu	Martha Contreras m.contreras@uci.edu
UCLA	Bruin Guardian Scholars	https://www.guardianscholars.ucla.edu	Teaira Nelson tnelson@saonet.ucla.edu

Foster youth campus resources cont.

Campus	Program Name	Website	Contact Person
Merced	Guardian Scholars	http://guardianscholars.ucmerced.edu	Edith Ramirez eramirez226@ucmerced.edu
Riverside	Office of Foster Youth Support Services	https://fosteryouth.ucr.edu	Stephen Morales stephan.morales@ucr.edu
San Diego	Hope Scholars	https://oasis.ucsd.edu/programs/hope-scholars/index.html	Kesia Williams hopescholars@ucsd.edu
Santa Barbara	Guardian Scholars	http://www.sa.ucsb.edu/guardianscholars/home	Stephany Rubio stephany.rubio@sa.ucsb.edu
Santa Cruz	Renaissance Scholars	https://renaissancescholars.ucsc.edu	Liz Moya emoya@ucsc.edu





Underground Scholars was started in the Spring of 2013 by formerly incarcerated and system-impacted students at UC Berkeley as the Underground Scholars Initiative (USI), a student organization.

In 2014, USI received funding from the University of California Berkeley through a fee referendum that students voted on. That funding made it possible for USI to rent some office space at Stiles Hall, hire our first director, transfer coordinator, and five formerly incarcerated students to work in our office. In 2016, we partnered with Senator Loni Hancock who led an effort to secure funding from the state to initiate the development of an academic support program to serve formerly incarcerated students in addition to the student organization, USI. Berkeley Underground Scholars was born out of that effort

Shortly after USI was developed at UC Berkeley, formerly incarcerated students at UCLA began to develop a chapter. As Berkeley's USI members graduated and spread through the UC system for graduate school, they began building chapters on other campuses.

In September 2019, Berkeley Underground Scholars organized a statewide convening with formerly incarcerated students from across all the UC schools to plan the expansion of USI chapters across all UC's.

UCB-The Underground Scholars Initiative was founded by UC Berkeley alumni, Danny Murillo and Steven Czifra in 2013. Berkeley Underground Scholars was the first grassroots effort created by UC Berkeley students who had been directly impacted by the Prison Industrial Complex, including those formerly incarcerated people or with incarcerated family members. In the time since, USI has expanded to other UC campuses, including UC Davis, UC Santa Cruz, UCLA, UC Santa Barbara, UC Riverside, UC Irvine, and UC San Diego.

UCD-The Underground Scholars Initiative is a UC-wide movement led by formerly incarcerated people to support other formerly incarcerated and system impacted students and prospective students through recruitment, retention, and advocacy.

UCI-In 2018, the Underground Scholars Initiative (USI) student organization was established at UCI. After three years of providing their peers with support services, USI was able to advocate for the establishment of a program. In October of 2021, the UCI Underground Scholars Program was established.

UCLA- In 2016, several students naturally gravitated towards one other because they all shared something in common--they had experienced some sort of incarceration in the past. In 2019, the Bruin Underground Scholars program was developed to support the academic experiences of students that identify as formerly incarcerated and/or system impacted.

UCM-In Fall 2021, Underground Scholars Initiative was developed to support the academic and personal experiences of formerly incarcerated and/or system impacted scholars and their families at UC Merced

UCSB- The mission of the Gacho Underground Scholars Program is to provide peer-driven support, assistance, and guidance to formerly incarcerated and system-impacted University Of California, Santa Barbara students, who are adapting to the challenges of acclimating to the University while striving towards successful community and academic reintegration. Ryan "Flaco" Rising has become the program coordinator for UC Santa Barbara's Underground Scholars Initiative — which he started building from the ground up in September 2019. Underground Scholars is the university's first-ever program tailored to help formerly incarcerated and system-impacted students succeed in the higher education culture.

UCSC-Underground Scholars Initiative (USI) is the student org that works in partnership with Santa Cruz Underground Scholars. USI is completely student-run. The two organizations, Underground Scholars & USI, are separate and aligned.

UCSD-The Underground Scholars Initiative chapter at UC San Diego was kicked-off in the Fall of 2019 with their first organized event, "Education, not Incarceration" in collaboration with SAMI (Students Against Mass Incarceration) and C.R.E.A.T.E. The film, "From Incarceration to Education" (FITE).

UCR-Underground Scholars Initiative (USI) was created to support all prospective and current UC Riverside students who have been formerly incarcerated and/or system impacted to create a safe space and provide opportunities for success at the University and within the community.

State funding and expanding programs

An increase of \$4 million ongoing General Fund to increase support for the Underground Scholars Program.

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In the 2022-2023 California State Budget, funding was also allocated towards the expansion of support services for Underground Scholars Programs. An increase of \$4 million ongoing General Fund to increase support for the Underground Scholars program. The majority of the funds went directly to Berkeley's campus and was then dispersed amongst the rest of the campuses depending on their enrollment numbers.

Funding for justice-impacted students to make higher education more attainable and accessible.

Current state of affairs

Read more on the 2023-2024
proposed state budget

"... with \$80 million in approved spending on alternative schools and the continuation of \$15 million for programs to connect incarcerated youth to higher education, the new state budget furthers the goal of improving the lives and futures of incarcerated youth."



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Amid historic reforms to California's youth justice system, the state's newly signed budget funnels investments into higher education for young people in lockups, while strengthening oversight of juvenile court schools, educational institutions inside of youth detention facilities.

Due to a budget shortfall, the investment is modest and the funding is among the few spending proposals focused on youth justice that passed in the budget trailer bill signed by Gov. Gavin Newsom (D) on June 30.

But with \$80 million in approved spending on alternative schools and the continuation of \$15 million for programs to connect incarcerated youth to higher education, the new state budget furthers the goal of improving the lives and futures of incarcerated youth. So there is a lot more to come for system impacted students.

<https://imprintnews.org/top-stories/california-budget-invests-in-education-for-incarcerated-youth/242859>

Services available

Recruitment

- Cross enrollment programs
- Ambassador programs
- Transfer programs
- Incarceration to college program

Retention

- Community space/ events
- Tutoring and advising
- Employment and leadership development
- Financial support
- Housing assistance

Advocacy

- State policy and budget advocacy
- Advocacy for students
- Policy research
- Humanizing language

Underground Scholar Programs at the University of California aims to provide services and build a prison to university pipeline through recruitment, retention and advocacy. The services available among the different UC campuses may differ from campus to campus, but most programs offer similar services, nevertheless, it is encouraged to look into what each individual campus has to offer.

Recruitment: Underground scholar programs support formerly incarcerated, and system impacted students by conducting outreach events, supporting them through community college (through ambassador programs), preparing them for UC (for current community college student interested in transferring to UC), sharing educational resources, coaching students through the UC application process, offering campus tours, and workshops to navigate the education system. Incarceration to College is our newest recruitment program developed to create sustainable youth justice. Incarceration to College (ITC) is an A-G verified Career Training Education college readiness course designed to be taught inside juvenile facilities and allow students to earn CTE credits towards graduation (Program Specific to UC Berkeley) in partnership with Contra Costa County Hall, Alameda County Juvenile Hall, and San Francisco County Juvenile Hall. Cross Enrollment Programs allow community college student to take courses at UC for credit while still attending a community college

Retention: Building community is a big part of what makes these programs special and providing ample opportunities for students to engage with one another is imperative. Providing safe spaces on campus for students to congregate through facilities and events are key for student success, additionally, tutors and advisors are available to ensure students academic success as well. Some Underground Scholar Programs also have partnerships with financial aid departments to provide financial aid advising tailored to Underground Scholar members, with that, housing these students becomes a point of conversation and some students are able to access early move-in and emergency summer and winter housing for those that may need it. Furthermore, retention program provide formerly incarcerated and system-impacted students with peer coaching, leadership development, student employment, community events, and workshops on how to navigate their UC campus.

Advocacy: Underground Scholar programs advocate for currently and formerly incarcerated students and their families. In addition to individual advocacy for students on campus and on parole/probation, programs engage in local, state, and national policy advocacy to remove barriers and create opportunity for currently and formerly incarcerated people. We advocate within the UC system to make UC campuses more accessible and safe for incarcerated and formerly incarcerated students. Underground Scholars helped in efforts of the "Ban the Box" on UC employment applications in 2017, and are currently advocating for the expansion of the Underground Scholars model, an accessible UC application for our incarcerated students, and creating more resources to address the specific barriers formerly incarcerated UC students face. Some other Legislative Advocacy efforts included SB 575 (2019) which would have restored Cal Grant Access to incarcerated students, AB 277, AB 2342 (2019,2020) to allow people on parole to earn early release from parole for completing college and other educational programs, and SB 118 (2020) which banned the box asking about criminal convictions on all California college applications.

Tips for counselors

- Be informed and raise awareness of programs and services you can refer your students to once they transition into the UC system.
- Use humanizing language when communicating with students involved in the carceral system.
- If given the opportunity, engage in trauma-informed care training.
- Acknowledge student successes and accomplishments.

Programs and Services for Underground Scholars At UC: Please refer to the resource slide for services at each UC campus.

Humanizing Language Examples:

Incarcerated Person refers to anyone currently incarcerated. It makes no claim about guilt or innocence (contrary to words like “convict”), nor does it attach a permanent identity to an often temporary status (like “prisoner” etc.)

Formerly Incarcerated Person refers to anyone who has been in a carceral setting and is now released. Prison, immigration detention centers, local jails, juvenile detention centers, etc. are included under this umbrella term. Attaching the prefix ex- to anything (ex-convict, ex-felon, etc.) is a clear indication that it, and the root word itself, are unacceptable.

System Impacted includes those who have been incarcerated, those with arrests/convictions but no incarceration and those who have been directly impacted by a loved one being incarcerated. While those close to us, as well as the broader society are negatively impacted by our incarceration, it is often our partners, parents, children and/or siblings who face the most significant disadvantages behind our absence and thus, categorically merit this designation.

Carceral System is far more accurate than the ubiquitous term “Criminal Justice System.” Not all who violate the law (commit a crime) are exposed to this system and justice is a relative term that most people in this country do not positively associate with our current model. In this context, Carceral System is best understood as a comprehensive network of systems that rely, at least in part, on the exercise of state sanctioned physical, emotional, spatial, economic and political violence to preserve the interests of the state. This includes formal institutions such as, law enforcement and the courts, surveillance and data mining technology, NGO / non-profit consultants, conservative criminologists, those who manifest and/or financially benefit from modern slave labor, corporate predation on incarcerated people and our communities, the counterinsurgency in communities of color through ‘soft-policing’, etc.

Underground Scholars Language Guide Link at UC Berkeley:

<https://undergroundscholars.berkeley.edu/blog/2019/3/6/language-guide-for-communicating-about-those-involved-in-the-carceral-system>

Increasing attention is being given to the language people use when discussing individual or group identities and experiences. In large part, marginalized people must demand the respect to create and amplify language that they consider more humanizing than the negative narratives imposed on us by dominant society.

Trauma Informed Care:

Trauma-informed care is a strengths based framework that is grounded in an understanding of and responsiveness to the impact of trauma, that emphasizes physical, psychological, and emotional safety for both providers and survivors, and that creates opportunities for survivors to rebuild a sense of control and empowerment. Hopper, E. K., Bassuk, E. L., & Olivet, J. (2010). Shelter from the Storm: Trauma-Informed Care in Homelessness Services Settings.

Many community colleges offer Trauma Informed Care Certificates, as do many public and private organizations for free and at a cost that professionals can look into.

Resources

Find all the campus contacts for formerly incarcerated and system-impacted students directly on the Berkeley Underground Scholars website!



USI UC BERKELEY:

Link to Join: <https://callink.berkeley.edu/organization/usi>

Instagram: @theundergroundscholars

Facebook: facebook.com/undergroundscholars

USI UCLA:

Bruin Underground Scholars Program Website: <https://undergroundscholars.ucla.edu/>

Bruin Underground Scholars Program Email: undergroundscholars@saonet.ucla.edu

USI UCLA Student Org Email: undergroundscholars@gmail.com

Instagram: @undergroundscholarsinitiative

USI UC IRVINE:

Email: uciundergroundscholars@gmail.com

Instagram: @undergroundscholarsuci

Facebook: USlatUCI

USI UC RIVERSIDE:

Website: <https://highlanderlink.ucr.edu/organization/usi-ucr>

Club President: Carlos Cruz - ccruz019@ucr.edu

Mailing Address: 900 University Ave HUB 229
Riverside, CA 92521

Email: undergroundscholarsucr@gmail.com

Instagram: @undergroundscholarsucr

Underground Scholars campus resources

Campus	Program Name	Website	Contact Person
Berkeley	Berkeley Underground Scholars	https://undergroundscholars.berkeley.edu	Azadeh Zohrabi azadehzohrabi@berkeley.edu
Davis	Underground Scholars	https://linktr.ee/undergrounducd	undergrounducd@gmail.com
Irvine	Underground Scholars Program	https://undergroundscholars.uci.edu	Hector Cervantes hcervan1@uci.edu
UCLA	Bruin Underground Scholars Program	https://www.guardianscholars.ucla.edu	Aaron Bray abray@saonet.ucla.edu

Underground Scholars campus resources cont.

Campus	Program Name	Website	Contact Person
Merced	Bobcat Underground Scholars	https://learning.ucmerced.edu/bobcat-underground-scholars	Edith Ramirez eramirez226@ucmerced.edu
Riverside	Riverside Underground Scholars	https://diversity.ucr.edu/underground-scholars-initiative	Ismael Davila ismael.davila@ucr.edu
San Diego	Triton Underground Scholars	https://oasis.ucsd.edu/programs/USI-folder/	Collen Murphy usi@ucsd.edu
Santa Barbara	Gauche Underground Scholars	https://gauchoundergrounds.wixsite.com/my-site	gauchoundergroundscholars@gmail.com
Santa Cruz	Underground Scholars Program	https://undergroundscholars.ucsc.edu/	Joshua Solis jgsolis@ucsc.edu



Thank you