DSU and State Sign Agreement to Enroll "Aged Out" Foster Youths

Posted: February 14, 2011

Delaware State University and the State Division of Family Services (DFS) announced a new initiative today that will make higher education a reality for eligible foster youths.

DSU President Harry L. Williams and Vivian Rapposelli, Secretary of the Department of Services for Children, Youth and their Families, signed a formal agreement today (Feb. 14) that will annually provide an opportunity for two foster youths who reach the age of 18 to pursue a bachelor's degree at Delaware State University.

State Sen. Brian Bushweller, state Rep. Darryl Scott, state Rep. William Carson, state Rep. LIncoln Willis, attended the agreement signing to show their support for the initiative.

Although unable to attend the agreement signing due to a schedule conflict, Gov. Jack Markell today expressed his strong support of the program.

"This is about giving kids who've been dealt a difficult hand a chance for further success. It's about the opportunity to work hard, stay focused and accomplish their dreams,' Gov. Markell said. "The University and the Department have created a partnership that will bring great students to the school and give them opportunities for the future."

Secretary Rapposelli said that youths who age out of foster care face the same obstacles as other young adults, but often without the support of their families.

"This partnership with DSU provides the students it supports with stability, hope and peace of mind – allowing them to start the next phase of their lives on a solid foundation," Secretary Rapposelli said. "We are grateful to DSU and excited for the many young men and women who will benefit from this opportunity."

The DFS will identify two foster youths per year who have aged out (turned 18) of foster care, are academically eligible and personally motivated to attend DSU. The state agency will assist the foster youths in completing the necessary academic and financial paperwork

DSU will give the enrolled foster youths access to year-round on-campus housing and to its student support services, assist them

in the completion of the financial aid process and help them identify scholarship opportunities.

"With community and outreach being among DSU's five core values, this opportunity to help worthy foster youths achieve their dreams is consistent with the University's standing as a valuable education asset to the state," President Williams said.

The foster youths will receive state financial support in the form of Educational and Training Vouchers and Housing Vouchers. In the event there is a shortfall of state funds, the foster youths will be expected to apply for student loans or other financial aid opportunities to cover the shortfall.

There are over 700 children in Delaware's foster care system. In fiscal 2010, there were 94 foster youths that aged out of the system.

Source URL: http://www.desu.edu/news/dsu-and-state-sign-agreement-enroll-aged-out-foster-youths#comment-0