

MACHEN FLORIDA

OPPORTUNITY

SCHOLARS PROGRAM



Annual Report

2013-2014

SOME PEOPLE

OVERCOME GREAT ODDS

→ TO BE **GATORS**

The Machen Florida Opportunity Scholars Program ensures a vibrant future for the state of Florida by providing a University of Florida education to first generation, low-income students.







DIRECTOR'S



WELCOME

The Machen Florida Opportunity Scholars Program had a busy eighth year expanding outreach efforts with new staff and graduating more scholars.

National studies have shown that students from low socio-economic backgrounds can be deterred from enrolling in a four-year college or university because of fear of debt and concern that working while in school could hinder their chances for academic success.

UF recognizes this issue in the state of Florida and is taking the steps to supporting students from low-income backgrounds. To date, the Opportunity Scholars Program has supported approximately 2,900 students in the eight years since the program's inception.

Every semester more students graduate, and successfully transition out of college into the next phase of their lives. Many choose to apply their talents and enter the workforce,

while others pursue advanced degrees.

Our scholars come from diverse backgrounds and are focused on many different fields of study. Though pursuing different career dreams, I see a common thread between them - They all leave a tremendous impact on our campus, and they also all desire to give back to the program after they graduate.

Opportunity Scholars are truly inspiring students, and I hope you get to learn more about their experiences at UF through this annual report.

Go Gators!

Leslie Pendleton

Director, Machen Florida Opportunity Scholars Program



1,833

Opportunity Scholars
who are now proud
UF graduates



1,274

Opportunity Scholars
currently enrolled



\$18,605

Average family income



65.73%

of Scholars identify as
Black or Hispanic.



0

Parents of scholars with
college degrees



8

Former Opportunity
Scholars have
graduated from
UF's law and medical
schools



UF FLORIDA

Ken
McGinnis

UF FLORIDA
Bernie Machen
President



VISION

To ensure a vibrant future for the state of Florida by leading in the transformation of public higher education. A self-sustaining Machen Florida Opportunity Scholars program will serve as the cornerstone of that endeavor by enabling qualified Florida high school graduates to attend the state's flagship university

regardless of their socio-economic status. By supporting low-income, first generation college students, the program will help Florida families rise out of economic hardships, make it possible for talented young people to reach their promise, improve communities and create a stronger workforce.

MISSION

The Machen Florida Opportunity Scholars Program provides financial resources and individual support with the primary goal of graduating first generation, low-income undergraduate students. By addressing systemic barriers and challenges, we provide a full grant and scholarship financial aid package as well as a comprehensive support

program to ensure students thrive at UF. We help students develop valuable college success strategies, build confidence, understand their first generation identity, connect to peer and professional mentors, and access campus resources which prepare them for a successful college career and meaningful post-graduate life.

SUPPORT



From the moment scholars arrive on campus, we connect them to one another. Opportunity scholars have an inherent bond where they easily understand each other. Developing a community of support matters to the success of first generation students.

Machen Florida Opportunity Scholars Program and the First Generation Support Services operates with two full-time staff, two graduate assistants, one AmeriCorps-VISTA and one student assistant.

This year, we welcomed William Atkins as the first assistant director for the program. Under Will's guidance, we've been able to expand our assessment efforts, national reputation, and quality and quantity of student outreach.

For a small office supporting so many students, one of our best resources is older, more seasoned students. Our older scholars who have successfully transitioned to UF can provide helpful advice to our younger scholars. Peers are quite important as they offer invaluable encouragement and support.

From the Opportunity Scholars Program staff to the Advisory Committee and Leadership Council, this program is a partnership and a university-wide commitment to supporting first generation college students.

ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The Advisory Committee provides support to scholars as well as assistance with the overall vision for the program. Committee members are great resources for our scholars and scholars are encouraged to contact them directly with questions that might arise. Many also teach sections of First Year Florida, a one-credit hour course that all MFOS first-year scholars are required to complete.

Meeting monthly, committee members are campus partners from a variety of areas including:

- Division of Student Affairs
- Office of Academic Support
- Office of Admissions
- Academic Advising
- Student Financial Affairs
- Office of the Provost
- Office of the Ombuds

LEADERSHIP COUNCIL

New this year is the addition of the Machen Florida Opportunity Scholars Leadership Council. Tasked with raising funds that will sustain the program for generations to come, the council's immediate goal is to inspire \$100 million in private gifts and commitments.

The council members hail from academic, business and industry spheres, including:

- Broadcasting
- Health Care
- Law
- Technology
- Real Estate
- Financial Management
- Veterinarian Science

PROGRAMS

FIRST GENERATION STUDENT OUTREACH

This year, the program forged new ground by connecting current first generation students to UF faculty and staff who were also first in their families to attend college. The First Generation Advocate Program allowed knowledgeable professionals a channel to give insight to students about what it is like to be first generation in varying academic fields.

The program provided a resource to Opportunity Scholars and non Opportunity Scholars of similar backgrounds. Faculty Advocates supported informal guidance regarding post-college planning and assisting students in navigating other first generation-specific challenges.

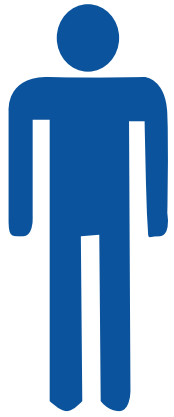
CAREER PREPARATION

Opportunity Scholars and first generation students are first in their families to attend college, but also first to graduate from college. Transitioning out of college can be daunting for first generation students, but with coaching and assistance, it can be exhilarating to plan for the next phase of their lives. Preparing for the post-graduate job search or graduate school search can

be a scary task, especially when there is no one at home who has been through a similar process. Helping scholars build life and professional skills gives them needed confidence to enter the workforce or graduate school. Our workshops, Summer Internship Symposium, Academy of Leadership and one-on-one counseling encourage students to strategically plan for the next steps.







PATH OF A SCHOLAR

Every Gator's journey at UF is unique, but our scholars have consistent opportunities and check points as part of the program to maximize their success.



ACCEPTANCE

After students are accepted to UF, they complete a supplemental information form and 300 are identified as Opportunity Scholars.



SCHOLARSHIP

The average award per student is \$8,017.



ORIENTATION

Attend UF's Preview and a separate Florida Opportunity Scholar Program orientation.



MENTEE

First-year students get paired with one of 60 peer mentors.



START SCHOOL

Scholars are required to take at least 12 credit hours per semester.



FIRST YEAR FLORIDA

Enroll in a section of First Year Florida, a one-credit-hour course which helps students transition to college life.



FINANCIAL LITERACY

Complete a series of two workshops to learn how to budget money and build credit.



GATOR PRIDE

Attend a women's basketball game and learn about hard work and school pride from the coaches.



CAREER PLANNING

Complete a series of two workshops to learn about resume writing and goal setting for internships.



STUDENT ORG

Whether it is research, service or leadership, there are more than 1,000 Student Organizations to join for involvement.



MENTOR

90 percent of peer mentors are Opportunity Scholars. It's a great way students give back.



ADVISING

Schedule a one-on-one with the scholarship program staff.



GO GLOBAL

Approximately 16% of Opportunity Scholars have studied abroad.



FOSAL

The Florida Opportunity Scholars Academy of Leadership accepts 75 applicants annually.



INTERN

Students are encouraged to complete at least one internship before graduation.



PREPARE

Post Grad Support includes advising, life coaching, connections with alums, and workshops.



GRADUATION

1,833 Opportunity Scholars have graduated.



GIVE BACK

After Graduation, Scholars give back to the program through their time and financial contributions.



ALUMNI ENGAGEMENT



For our scholars, walking across the stage in their caps and gowns is the realization of the dream. A dream held for them by the many generations that came before. And for our scholars, graduation is just the beginning.

Ensuring career preparedness is a focus of the program, specifically during scholars' junior and senior years. In addition to career and life planning workshops, we facilitate programs for alumni to create career and social networking opportunities with undergraduates. This outreach has the added benefit of allowing us to better track our young alumni.

ENGAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

- Focus Groups
- Digital Alumni Map on our Website
- LinkedIn



Our students' successes do not end when they move their tassels across their caps. Their impact is already being felt across the country, and they are making a point to give back.

Opportunity Scholars are easy to identify at graduation. It is not just because they wear their MFOS Alum lapel pins on their gowns, but they all grin from ear-to-ear.

Program alumni are teachers, police officers, nurses, lawyers, engineers, accountants and other professionals. Some are at organizations such as Amazon, General Electric, ESPN and Teach for America.

Others are in graduate programs at UF, Stanford, Harvard, Northwestern and other top academic institutions. Thirty-six percent of Opportunity Scholar alumni enroll in graduate school. Nationally, 27 percent of bachelor's degree earners attend graduate school.

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