First Scholars Program
Linfield University

The Linfield First Scholars Program is dedicated to the success of first-generation college students whose parents did not complete a four-year degree. First-generation college students bring an incredible wealth of cultural capital that contributes to the vibrancy of our liberal arts university, but also face unique challenges. The First Scholars Program consists of four vital elements: early arrival, scholarships, mentorship, and year-round programming.

- First Scholars are expected to arrive on campus one week prior to new student orientation and participate in one of five pre-orientation programs, one of which is run by the Linfield First Gen leadership team.
- All First Gen students are awarded a need-based scholarship that is renewable if the student is meeting satisfactory academic progress and fulfilling the First Scholar obligations.
- The mentoring model is composed of 3-4 first-generation student mentees who are matched and grouped with a first gen peer mentor and a faculty/staff mentor. These mentoring groups meet throughout the year to develop and strengthen relationships with one another, as well as share resources and support for each other.
- Students are expected to attend monthly lunches/meetings. These monthly meetings consist of helpful resources such as demystifying office hours, talking to family about college, resume assistance, trauma informed financial literacy, FAFSA guidance, and a variety of social activities.

Gerardo Ochoa
AVP for Retention & Student Success

Gerardo Ochoa holds a formal appointment as an officer of the board and has served on the President’s Diversity Advisory Committee (chair) and the University’s strategic planning and budget council. Mr. Ochoa is a co-author and independent consultant of Path to Scholarships®, a college readiness curriculum. He consults with higher education institutions on the inclusion of Latinx students, best practices to engage and serve undocumented students, and teaching strategies that draw on talents and address the needs of first-generation students.

Mr. Ochoa holds an Education Master from Harvard University and a Bachelor of Arts in Sociology and minor in Latin American History from the University of Oregon. He is an American Leadership Forum Fellow and alumni of the Senior Leadership Academy.
Dr. Chen Mahoney and the math faculty at Clover Park Technical College (CPTC) recognized the need for a multipronged approach that is based on extensive research and best practices, in order to improve access, completion and learning outcomes of math courses. Technical colleges face unique challenges when adopting the Guided Pathways approach to improve student outcomes, including high credit load, long lab hours, a student population with more working adults and students with dependents, and negative perceptions of general education courses.

The programmatic efforts comprised in the math redesign project at CPTC include four main elements: launching contextualized college-level math courses, designing a directed self-placement process for math, implementing a co-requisite teaching model, and working with professional-technical faculty to embed math courses in their program maps. These efforts recognize the interconnection of placement, just-in-time skills for professional-technical programs, and the correct timing of math courses in degree pathways to boost early math completion and thereby degree completion. The work continues through developing more co-requisite math classes, clarifying multiple math pathways, and aligning basic education math pathways with the College’s to provide for seamless transition.

Dr. Chris Chen Mahoney
Dean of Instruction for Academics and Design

Dr. Chris Chen Mahoney creates strategies for the division, oversees daily operations, and provides leadership, support, and supervision for faculty and staff in the division. Dr. Chen Mahoney is very active on a variety of college committees, and has been leading the college’s effort in Guided Pathways program mapping, math redesign, and English redesign projects. Prior to joining CPTC in 2018, Dr. Chen Mahoney was an Academic Director at the Art Institute of Colorado, overseeing all programs in the School of Design. In addition, she served as the VP of Education and Mentorship at the American Institute of Graphic Arts (AIGA) Colorado Chapter, and was a full-time faculty member in Industrial Design.

Chris Chen Mahoney holds a Doctor of Education (Ed.D.) in Higher & Postsecondary Education from Argosy University, a Master of Design (M.Des.) in Human-Centered Design from Illinois Institute of Technology, and a Bachelor of Engineering (B.Eng.) in Industrial Design from Tongji University.
The Centers for Academic Success (CAS) are an integral part of student achievement and success to the institution. CAS offers learning support in the Learning Commons, which includes the following services: College Presentations (public communication), Writing, Reading, Math, Science, Supplemental Instruction, embedded learning support, and assistance with learning technology support and traditionally challenging gateway courses.

At one time, the various College of Southern Nevada (CSN) tutoring centers were managed by separate academic schools with one appointment-based service in student affairs. CAS is now a department within Academic Affairs. The CAS team, along with leadership support, consistently uses assessment and data analysis for program improvement.

Dr. Shellie Keller, the Director of the Centers for Academic Success, approached CSN leadership four years ago, expressing a desire to consolidate 11 individual tutoring centers across three campuses into three one-stop academic support centers, incrementally adopting a Learning Commons Model. Over the past three and a half years, academic leaders realigned resources to create a coordinator position for each campus and to expand available CAS hours and tutor access; additionally, CAS partnered with the technology division to build the Learning Commons around each campus’ open computer lab. Dr. Keller, with the help of Caprice Roberson, Interim AVP Academic Affairs, and Dr. Margo Martin, Chief Accreditation and Institutional Effectiveness Officer, transitioned their successful on-ground work into the remote environment, partnering with Smarthinking and embedding tutors in gateway classes such as biology, math, and English.

The Centers for Academic Success led the team of full-time and part-time tutors through pedagogical training that transformed the tutoring process from simply helping with homework to helping students learn how to learn.