

SpringForward: A Scholarship Program Envisioned for Equity/Excellence



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SpringForward Overview

SpringForward is an academic success intervention program committed to identifying and serving historically underserved, under connected students who are struggling in college, to help them succeed. The program helps students get back on track, build community, strengthen academic prowess, and develop a sense of purpose as they enter their second year. The program uses a three-tiered approach to help students: enrollment in an academic skills and strategies course, ESEPSY 2059, during their first year; participation in the Summer Enrichment Program in the summer before their second year; and ongoing monitoring, support, and engagement through graduation. The program has continued to grow since 2019 (+421%) when staff were hired full-time with the program.

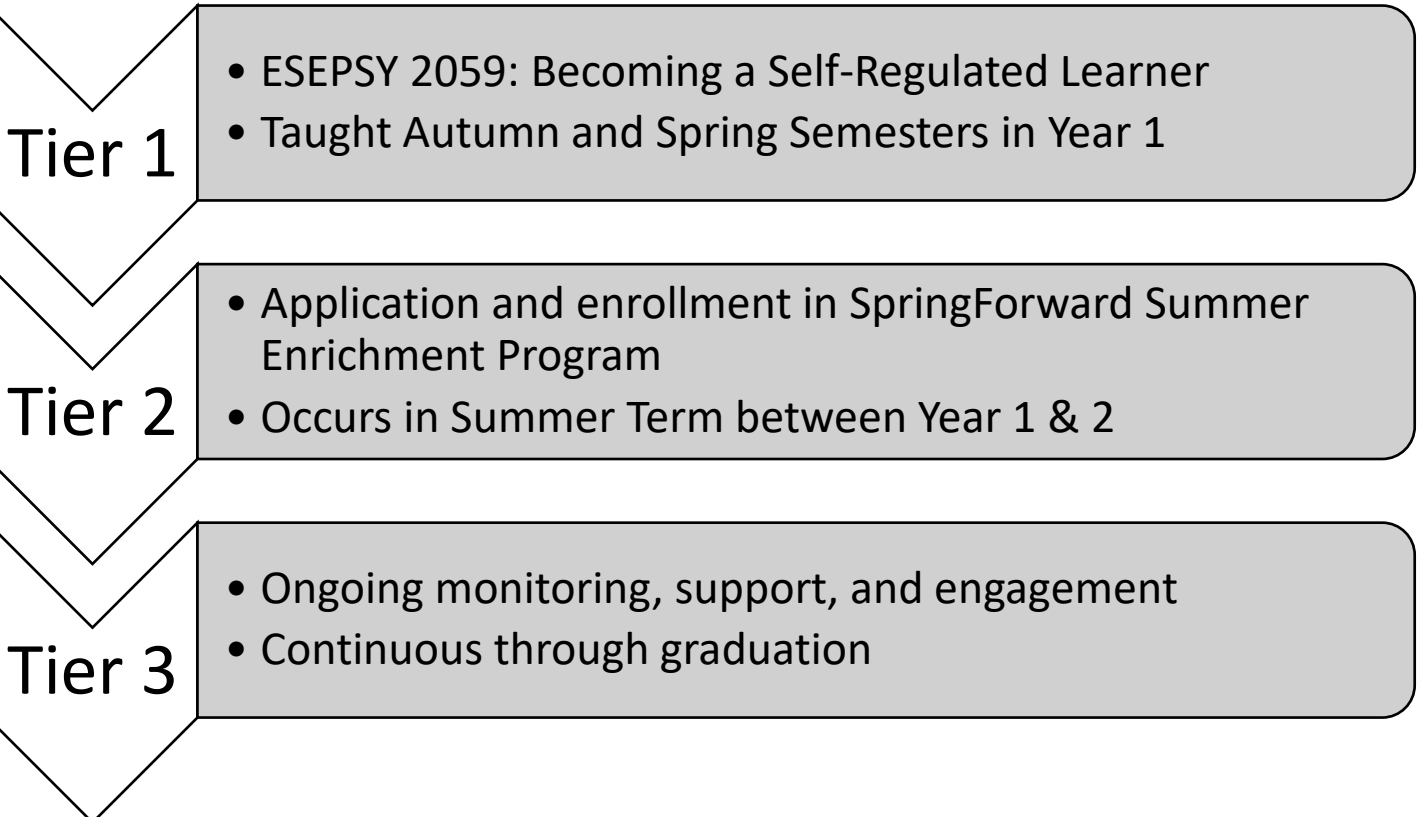
SpringForward Background

Over the past decade The Ohio State University has aimed to continue increasing the diversity in the student body while also increasing the first-year retention and persistence, which ultimately leads to a higher graduation rate. SpringForward was created in 2017 to address the concern of low academic performance for students during their first year which impacts first-year retention. The pilot intervention (2017-2019) showed great success in increasing first-to-second-year retention and was approved for a further five years of funding under the University President.

SpringForward Growth

In the past four years (2019-2023) SpringForward has continued to grow with the addition of three full-time staff: Program Manager, Academic Advisor, and Academic Coach. These staff have worked to expand the impact of the study skills course, ESEPSY 2059: Becoming a Self-Regulated Learner to be taught in 8+ sections across autumn and spring terms on the Columbus campus and on multiple regional campuses. The summer scholarship program has grown by over 400% and now supports approximately 100 students per cohort from all of Ohio State's campuses. Additional programming in the form of a second-year early arrival program, academic workshops, social programming, high-impact practices, 1:1 academic coaching, and advising appointments have been developed to support students after completing the summer program through graduation.

SpringForward Tiers of Support



SpringForward Population

For summer 2023 SpringForward received a record number of eligible applications-- 234 students! We received applications from students at each of Ohio State's campuses-- Columbus, Lima, Mansfield, Marion, Newark, and ATI (Wooster). After application review and admissions offers, we supported a cohort of 99 students for the 2023 SpringForward Summer Enrichment Program.

2023 SpringForward Cohort Data

68%	61%	55%
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• SpringForward students were identified as being in a racial minority• Compared to 27.4% Of OSU students identify as a racial minority	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• SpringForward students received Pell grants in their first year• Compared to 16.5% of OSU students received Pell grants	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• SpringForward students identified as being first-generation college students• Compared to 21.6% of OSU students identified as first-generation

Why do students participate?

"Simply put, the last two semesters have taken quite a toll on my mental health. I feel that I have not been able to achieve the high standards that I know I'm capable of. I struggle immensely with anxiety and depression. I am the biggest barrier between me and my success. I want to have a second chance at the college experience and my ability to find my ground on campus." –Music major, 2.5 GPA

"This summer my only commitment was to [get] a job because pay for school has been tough. My academics are my main priority, but so is the financial commitment that comes with these memberships. I am applying for this scholarship to learn about resources that can aid me through overwhelming times, minimizing the pressure of having to take many credits in autumn/spring, and the financial stress of paying for an education." –Social Work major, 4.0 GPA

"I am applying because I didn't have a fantastic first semester. I took on a class that was a bit of a challenge and instead of knowing my limits, I pushed passed them and ended up failing the class. That was also my first time failing a class, so I believe the summer program will help me come to terms with failure, and also acceptance. I need help with accepting the fact that I may not always get a good grade in a class, but how I respond to that is what truly matters." –Finance major, 1.7 GPA

Boyer Report: Equity/Excellence in Teaching and Learning

Access to Excellence: How can we render high-impact practices-- hallmarks of excellence-- accessible to all?

The Boyer Report points out that High Impact Practices (HIPs) are often not accessible for many students due to the time commitments or expenses involved (pg 24). By moving the program online, students were able to participate from home. This meant that they were still able to work full time as needed to pay for school the rest of the year; they were able to take care of siblings which eliminated the cost of childcare; they saved on travel costs of having to move in and out of residence halls for another semester. Moving this HIP to an online format resulted in saving money for both the students and the program, which ultimately allowed the program to expand the number of students it supported.

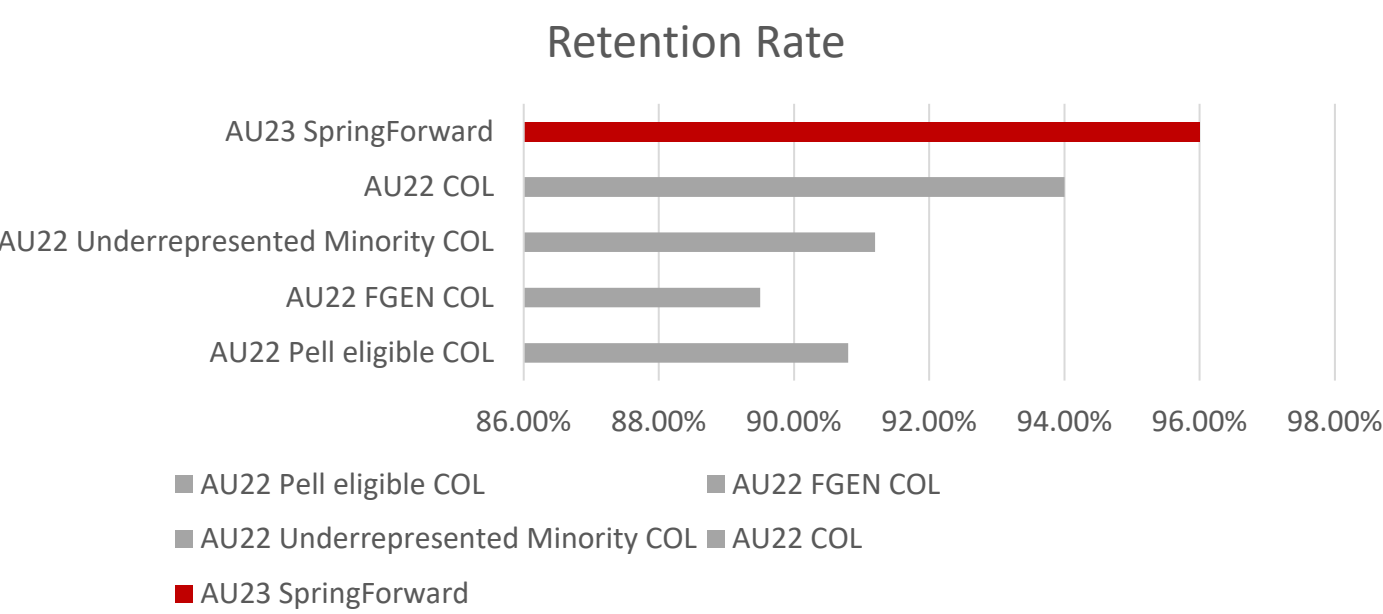
Teaching: How will we ensure that our students-- all of them, without exception-- are educated using evidence-informed pedagogies in intentionally inclusive and empathy-based educational environments?

SpringForward acted intentionally when moving the program online to ensure students were still receiving the same level of support and engagement as when they were in person. As the Boyer report indicates, "research shows that students learn more and more likely to succeed when research-proven pedagogical techniques are used, and learning environments are inclusive." (pg 26). During the summer, SpringForward students are enrolled in a credit-bearing course designed and taught by SpringForward staff. In designing and implementing the course we made sure to ensure students felt engaged and supported. To do this, we provide extensive feedback on assignments, implement a "flipped" classroom environment, and use inclusive pedagogy with specific awareness to not hinder the learning of BIPOC students.



Students creating vision boards at the 2023 Early Arrival Program

SpringForward Outcomes



SpringForward's first year retention rate of 96% is higher than other areas reported by the university while also serving more diverse populations of students

Results

Students are surveyed four times-- time of application (March), end of spring semester (May), after completing bridge modules (June), and at the completion of SpringForward Summer Enrichment Program (July). Students answered questions related to sense of belonging, community, and seeking assistance. The trends in the data support the interpretation that

- Students' felt less confident at the end of spring, which may be due to exam results, final grades, probation status, financial aid status, etc.
- The program increased students' confidence in their academic skills
- **In every case, students were more confident after their participation in the program than at any surveyed point prior**

Through participation in SpringForward students made strides in their academic performance which will allow them additional financial aid, internship, study abroad, etc. opportunities for the future

- Average **cumulative GPA increased** from 2.57 (AU22) to 2.81 (SU23)
- Average **credit completion increased** from 84.5% (AU22) to 89.6% (SU23)
- **70.7%-** Students who completed SU23 with improved GPA
- **54%-** Students who have changed major 1+ times to find the right path for them

"SpringForward completely changed my life. That is not an overstatement. I was completely rattled and lost after my first year; I had no idea what I wanted to do anymore nor what I could even do given my grades. SpringForward gave me a boost and lessons to help me move forward stronger and with the ability to accept that college is not linear."