

Mission & Vision

Rainier Scholars cultivates the academic potential of talented and motivated young scholars from ethnic minority backgrounds. By offering access to exceptional educational opportunities and ongoing support to our scholars, we work to increase their college graduation rates and to develop new generations of leaders.

History

Rainier Scholars is based on a model developed by Prep for Prep, a successful academic and leadership development program for inner city youth, in New York City. Bob Hurlbut, the founder of Rainier Scholars, discovered this program model in the book *A Hope in the Unseen*, which chronicles the experiences of an African-American boy through an inner-city high school, and ultimately into an Ivy-League College. Bob started to research whether this model would be viable in Seattle and received positive support from the community. The program accepted its first class of 60 students in the summer of 2002 with a budget of \$500,000. As of the spring of 2006 we are recruiting our fifth class of 6th graders which will bring our total student base to 253.

Major Programs

Education services (6th grade through college)

	At Application-2002	Year 1 2002 - 2003	Year 2 2003 - 2004	Year 3 2004 - 2005	Year 4 2005 - 2006	Year 5 2006 - 2007
Org. Total Budget	\$210,240	\$580,000	\$869,000	\$953,000	\$1,024,875	\$1,294,738
Org. Staff Size	2 FT, 4 contract	3 FT, 21 contract	6 FT, 21 contract	9 FT, 28 contract	9 FT, 2 PT, 28 contract	13 FT, 2 PT, 28 contract
Cash reserves (months)				0	3	6
Clients Served	0	125	110	147	193	234

Rationale for Involvement

One of the key trends that the 2002 K-12 Education Committee learned about was the growing disparity in academic achievement between Caucasian students and children of color. Rainier Scholars was a strong choice because the organization focused on closing the achievement gap and helping to ensure that even more kids of color pursued higher education. In addition to a strong programmatic match with the K-12 Education Committee's goals, Rainier Scholars was being modeled after a highly successful nonprofit in New York called Prep for Prep which gave the Grant Committee confidence in the program. The Grant Committee anticipated that SVP would have a lot of opportunity to support Rainier Scholars in capacity building from a start-up stage to mature nonprofit.

SVP / Investee Achievements

- **Year 1**- developed outcomes framework and program evaluation tools; initial website planning and development; marketing video production; facilitated name change process; photography for promotional materials
- **Year 2** – further development of outcomes and assessment tools and framework; developed and facilitated strategic planning process; technology assessment; designed and implemented computer network; SVP partner joined board of directors
- **Year 3** - further development of outcomes and assessment tools and framework; website maintenance; board development, including assessment, board make-up and recruitment goals; database development
- **Year 4** - continued implementation of program assessment; database development; aided with executive search and transition; website development; marketing strategy and plan development; strategic planning and board retreat facilitation
- **Year 5** - Refined data collection systems for program assessment; created systems to use evaluation data to strengthen program management; database development; strategic planning; assessed current internal communication systems, helped develop plan for improvement and implement recommendations; strengthened human resources policies and procedures

Key SVP Impact to date by Calvin Lyons, Executive Director, and Mary Bristow, Development Director

In June 2006, we reflected on the start of our last year of funding with SVP and the impact this five year relationship has had on our young organization. We shared quotes from staff and Board members who have been with RS since the beginning. The common threads from all the feedback focused on three primary areas of impact – building organizational credibility, supporting the development of infrastructure and systems, and helping to define program measurements and outcomes to effectively communicate to potential funders and donors.

During this past year as we reflect on a most significant change, we continue to highlight the program measurements. As we grow and develop and implement new program phases and components, the foundation of asking “how do we measure our success” is critical.

Since our mission is to support college graduation and we have yet to send any of our students to college, it has been important to articulate the milestones and the benchmarks that indicate we will be successful in fulfilling our mission. As we grow and develop, we are creating new measurements, designing effective evaluation measures, and refining the systems of analyzing the data we have to make programmatic adjustments. This approach has been nurtured by SVP and it has served us well.

During this past year, SVP volunteer David Habib worked with key staff on updates to the Student data base which is the life blood of our tracking systems and program measurement outcomes. We were able to refine reporting strategies and create further controls and systems for utilizing the information. Through discussion and requests, new reports were created to assist in measuring the efficacy of specific program phases.

Additional work with ORS led to increased opportunities to identify new ways to measure and evaluate the positive impact of the eleven year program cycle.

We believe our ability to demonstrate skill development and academic success, combined with effective communication regarding educational access issues creates a compelling case for support from both community leaders and donors. Our inaugural fundraising event solidified this belief as we were blessed with overwhelming support.

Program Outcomes Highlights

Of the ethnic minority students in Seattle Public Schools who qualify for the 14-month Academic Program, 49% of the African American, 30% of the Latino American, and 15% of the Native American will apply	The number of students that apply in each ethnic minority category (targets based on Seattle Public school college track program enrollment and graduation statistics)	Data compiled from student applications Tracked in master student database	Recruitment process completed with 1276 students eligible and 475 applications received. All demographic measures were met
80% of the students in Cohort V graduate the 14 month Academic Program (this includes all ethnic groups and the overall student number)	The number of students enrolled in the program	Data compiled from enrollment paperwork Tracked in master student database	Cohort V started with 54 students. 42 are on track to graduate. Since the original number was smaller, the retention rate is slightly lower at 77%
75% of the African American, Latino, and Native American students in Cohort IV graduate the 14 month Academic Program (this is a sub-group objective that does not include Asian-American students. The Asian-American retention rates are higher than the other ethnic groups. This objective is to insure that we have a measure and plan for improvement of those in the lower retention rate categories)	The number of African American, Latino and Native American students graduated from the 14 month Academic Program	Data compiled from enrollment paperwork Tracked in master student database	Cohort IV retention of these populations met the benchmark with 80%
Placement of graduated students - 37% into Independent Schools, 43% into Advanced Learning programs	The number of students accepted into independent schools or APP, Spectrum, or Honors programs for 7 th grade.	Case record data Tracked in master student database	Cohort IV 54% Advanced Learning Programs 42% Independent Schools 96% Placement rate Cohort V 45% Advanced Learning Programs 53% Independent Schools 98% Placement rate
63% of all students in ACSS (Cohorts I, II & III) maintain a GPA of 3.5 or above	Number of students receiving a GPA of 3.5 or above	Case records- Data compiled from student report cards by our Academic Counselors	Cohorts I – IV Average GPA is 3.25 66% of all scholars are on Honor Roll with 3.0 or above 43% are achieving 3.5 or above
85% overall retention of ACSS students (Cohorts I through IV)	Number of ACSS students served	Data compiled from enrollment paperwork	Overall retention of all ACSS students is currently 94%
80% retention of 9th grade ACSS students (Cohort I) transitioning into Leadership Development phase	Number of ACSS students served	Data compiled from enrollment	100% of Cohort I scholars made the transition to

(10 th through 12 th grades)		paperwork	Leadership Development 94% Retention throughout year
30 ACSS students participate in the SAT preparatory program in the Leadership Development phase	Number of students enrolled in SAT classes	Data compiled from attendance records	Fall 2006 - 25 Winter Spring 2007 54 students served (count does include some duplicate numbers of students who took multiple sessions)
80% participation from Cohort I students in Leadership Development Retreat #1	Number of students enrolled in LD retreat 1	Data compiled from attendance records	Retreat #1 in December – 22 students (52%) Retreat #2 in April – 34 students (81%)

	2002-2003	2003-2004	2004-2005	2005-2006	2006-2007	Total
Grants Awarded	\$50,000	\$60,000	\$60,000	\$57,000	\$50,000	\$277,000
Paid consulting support	\$0	\$12,378	\$5,722	\$9,002	\$6,970	\$34,072
Est. Worth of Volunteer Hrs. **	Not collected	Not collected	Not collected	\$22,000	\$13,100	35,100
Joint Projects Undertaken	5	5	4	6	5	25
Number of SVP Volunteers	7	5	3	4	3	22

** (rate = \$100/hr.)

Rainier Scholars and Social Venture Partners: A Case Study

Kyla Lackie, Social Venture Partners Seattle, August 2007

Introduction

Rainier Scholars is a long-term investment strategy designed to develop the academic and leadership potential of talented students of color. The organization uses an 11-year model with four program phases providing academic enrichment, educational access, and long-term comprehensive support with leadership development opportunities. The goal of the program is to prepare and support scholars through college graduation, increasing the number of students of color graduating from top tier colleges and developing diverse pools of qualified candidates for high level leadership roles in the Seattle community as well as across the country.¹ Social Venture Partners began working with Rainier Scholars in 2002, just six months after the program began in Seattle.

Background

Rainier Scholars is modeled after Prep for Prep, a successful academic and leadership development program for inner city youth in New York City. Bob Hurlbut, the founder of Rainier Scholars, discovered this program model in the book *A Hope in the Unseen*, which chronicles the experiences of an African-American young man through an inner-city high school, and ultimately into an ivy-league college. Bob started to research whether this model would be viable in Seattle and received positive support from the community. The program accepted its first class of students in the summer of 2002. As of the spring of 2007, Rainier Scholars is recruiting their sixth class of 6th graders bringing the total student base to 281.²

One of the key trends SVP's 2002 K-12 Education Grant Committee learned about was the growing disparity in academic achievement between white students and students of color. Rainier Scholars was a strong choice for the Grant Committee because the organization focused on closing the achievement gap and helping to ensure that even more students of color pursued higher education. In addition to a strong programmatic match with the Grant Committee's goals, Rainier Scholars was being modeled after a highly successful nonprofit which gave the Grant Committee confidence in the program. The Grant Committee anticipated SVP would have a range of opportunities to provide support to Rainier Scholars in capacity building activities from a start-up stage to a mature and stable nonprofit.³

At the beginning of the relationship, Rainier Scholars was only a concept. The program model spans 11 years, working with a cohort of students from sixth grade through college. Rainier Scholars' model requires that the organization grows with the youth, expanding their programming and capacity to serve an additional grade level each year. They are currently still building their program, completing the component for junior and senior year. Until the first cohort graduates from college, the organization is still in the development stages. Emily Anthony, SVP Partner, summarized Rainier Scholars' growth: "In a way they are turning a corner but until we can graduate kids from high school and see that they went to college, it still feels like a new program."

Emily has been involved with SVP for ten years, since SVP's beginning. She was drawn to SVP's unique venture philanthropy model and its systematic approach to funding and support. Emily explained, "I joined SVP to meet others who were capable of giving and had a desire to be thoughtful about it."⁴ After learning about Rainier Scholars on the K-12 Education Grant Committee, Emily decided that regardless of the Committee's decision, she would volunteer to work with the organization. SVP Partner Patti Brooke became Rainier Scholar's first Lead Partner. After one year, Patti became the Board President for Rainier Scholars and Emily took on the Lead Partner role.

¹ Rainier Scholars Cover Sheet and Proposal, 2002.

² Rainier Scholars Investee Profile, 2007.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Emily Anthony, Interview by Carol Ryan, January 2006.

Describing her initial attraction to Rainier Scholars, Emily said, “I was really taken with the concept of their mission and vision – we don’t really change the world until we have people of color as leaders in our community and that’s not going to happen until people really have access to education.” She also emphasized an idea from Rainier Scholars’ founder, that education is the single most important social justice issue of our time.⁵

SVP was an existing grantor when Calvin Lyons became the executive director of Rainier Scholars in June 2005. He explained, “I thought SVP was an intriguing model. My background includes both business and nonprofit experience, and I enjoy the unique combination.” Calvin emphasized the importance of defining measurements and outcomes, stating, “The data-driven culture is as important in the non profit world as in the for-profit; ensuring we’re measuring and making decisions based on actual data is critical. SVP’s background added credibility; they could do an effective job of supporting us in this work.”⁶

As an organization modeled after a New York program, Calvin described how Rainier Scholars had to “Seattleize” the model, adapting it to work in the Northwest. This translated into building a strong partnership with public schools, focusing recruiting efforts on a broader range of qualifications, and focusing efforts on family support. Calvin explained, “Some of the tools that SVP provided helped us do that quickly. You have to have resources early to accomplish this task. I think that the word going around town about our partnership added to our credibility and encouraged people sign up to support us.”

Summary of Investments

	2002-2003	2003-2004	2004-2005	2005-2006	2006-2007
Grants Awarded	\$50,000	\$60,000	\$60,000	\$57,000	\$50,000
Paid Consulting Support	\$0	\$12,378	\$5,722	\$9,002	\$6,970
Est. Worth of Volunteer Hrs.⁷	Not collected	Not collected	Not collected	\$22,000	\$13,100
Joint Projects Undertaken	5	5	4	6	5
Number of SVP Volunteers	7	5	3	4	2

Summary of Achievements

Year 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developed outcomes framework and program evaluation tools • Initial website planning and development • Marketing video production • Facilitated name change process • Photography for promotional materials
Year 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further development of outcomes and assessment tools and framework • Developed and facilitated strategic planning process • Technology assessment • Designed and implemented computer network • SVP Partner joined board of directors
Year 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further development of outcomes and assessment tools and framework • Website maintenance • Board development, including assessment, board make-up and recruitment goals • Database development
Year 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continued implementation of program assessment • Database development • Aided with executive search and transition • Website development

⁵ Emily Anthony, Phone interview, July 2007. All quotes from Emily are from this interview unless otherwise noted.

⁶ Calvin Lyons, Personal interview, July 2007. All quotes from Calvin are from this interview unless otherwise noted.

⁷ Worth of volunteer hours is calculated at the rate of \$100 per hour

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marketing strategy and plan development • Strategic planning and board retreat facilitation
Year 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Created feedback systems to strengthen programs using evaluation data • Database development • Strategic planning • Special event support • Marketing and communications strategy • Assessed internal communications, developed recommendations and implementation plan • Strengthened human resources policies and procedures

Summary of Rainier Scholars' Growth

	At Application 2002	Year 1 2002-2003	Year 2 2003-2004	Year 3 2004-2005	Year 4 2005-2006
Org. Total Budget	\$210, 240	\$580,000	\$869,000	\$953,000	\$1,024,875
Org. Staff Size	2 FT, 4 contract	3 FT, 21 contract	6 FT, 21 contract	9 FT, 28 contract	9 FT, 2 PT, 28 contract
Cash reserves (months)	--	--	--	0	3
Clients Served	0	125	110	147	193

Exploration of Impact

The K-12 Grant Committee envisioned many opportunities for SVP Partners to work with Rainier Scholars. Over the past five years, SVP Partners assisted Rainier Scholars in developing marketing materials, evaluation tools, technology resources, a student and parent database, executive search process, and two strategic planning phases.

Programmatic and Mission-Related Impact

Increased Number of Staff

Rainier Scholars added full time staff members each year as the number of Scholars increased. In the past five years, Rainier Scholars has hired a Development Director, an Office Manger/Development Associate in 2006, and several academic counselors, all with the financial support of SVP.

Logic Model Development and Evaluation

As a new organization, Rainier Scholars wanted in each program phase to clarify the program's most effective components and define short and long-term program outcomes. Emily began working on an evaluation project for Rainier Scholars in 2003 and quickly found that the organization would benefit from an outside consultant who specialized in evaluation. Emily recalled, "I think the big learning was to get the professionals to do the work that really needed a required expertise."

In 2004, Organizational Research Services (ORS), a business devoted to supporting outcome-based planning and evaluation, worked with Rainier Scholars to develop its logic model and evaluation systems for its programs. Rainier Scholars created benchmarks for each program component to measure effectiveness each year. Categories included recruitment demographics, retention, placement into advanced courses, GPA, and participation in SAT and leadership development retreats. In 2006, ORS used student focus groups to identify student coping skills and complete a program evaluation.⁸

⁸ Rainier Scholars Progress Report, 2005.

Although this work was challenging for the new organization, Rainier Scholars chose to take it on sooner rather than later. According to Calvin, "It was necessary for a young organization. Take the time to do those things early or you could think you're having great results when you haven't tracked the right metrics." Rainier Scholars worked with ORS for three years and will continue to build on the evaluation framework as the organization grows and the final phase of college support is implemented.

Organizational Development Impact

Strategic Planning

Rainier Scholars developed a strategic plan to define the organization's future direction and ensure that program activities were aligned with the overall mission and goals. Rainier Scholars held meetings with staff and board committees to discuss a vision statement, components of the plan, a finalized strategic plan including budgets, a development plan, and a staffing plan. The plan was approved by the board in 2004 and focused on program design and implementation, information technology needs, fund development, and board involvement in fundraising. A second strategic plan was created in 2006 with Calvin, SVP sponsored consultant Ted Lord, and members of the strategic planning committee. This plan will provide direction for the organization from 2007-2011.⁹

Executive Director Search

Rainier Scholars' founding director, Bob Hurlbut, transitioned out of the executive director role in 2004. The following executive director stayed for less than a year. In 2005, with SVP's support, Rainier Scholars hired a search consultant to widen their recruitment efforts to include communities of color and national networks. This process also provided Rainier Scholars with an opportunity to promote the organization's work in these communities, a critical step in continuing to build organizational credibility.¹⁰ Emily played a key leadership role in this process, describing it as "more work than I thought possible." In 2005, Rainier Scholars found Calvin Lyons who had a balance of skills and experience matched with passion for the organization.

Database

SVP Partner John Fine designed and built a database for Rainier Scholars in 2005. This database was created to collect and analyze information as outlined in partnership with Organizational Research Services. These two projects worked together to strengthen the measurement of Rainier Scholars' outcomes. According to Calvin, "The database was one of the most important tools to facilitate our ability to be data driven." It provided Rainier Scholars with a method to collect the data needed to test their metrics. Calvin continued, "It was very important to get that done early. That data base was one of the most valuable SVP gifts for us."

During 2007, SVP Partner David Habib worked with Rainier Scholars staff to update the student database, refining reporting strategies and creating systems to use the information. The database was described as the "life blood of our tracking systems and program measurement outcomes." The database will continue to help Rainier Scholars measure the effectiveness of each program phase and will grow and develop as the program reaches capacity.

Communication and Marketing

In 2006, SVP Partner Mark Craemer worked as a member of Rainier Scholars Marketing Committee. This Committee, including Calvin, the Board Marketing Chair, a member of a public relations firm, and Mark, worked on a comprehensive marketing and communications plan for the organization.

In 2006, Rainier Scholars sought to increase the effectiveness of communication among staff and program components. SVP Partner Steve Trautman designed communication tools for Rainier Scholars after working with staff in one-on-one meetings, a daylong retreat, and follow up sessions.¹¹ According to Calvin, this work "ignited our ability to more effectively communicate internally and externally."

⁹ Rainier Scholars Progress Report, 2007.

¹⁰ Rainier Scholars Progress Report, 2005.

¹¹ Rainier Scholars Progress Report, 2007.

Fundraising

In 2007, Rainier Scholars dramatically increased their individual and corporate giving. The total number of donors increased from 183 in 2005-06 to 715 in 2006-07. This large jump was attributed to five years of donor cultivation and the success of their inaugural fundraising event. The lunch, attended by 634 guests, secured over \$200,000 in corporate support and \$618,795 in individual gifts.¹²

Many of those attending the lunch had previously been brought through Rainier Scholars on tours, some led by SVP Partners. According to Calvin, by bringing people on tours, SVP Partners helped build Rainier Scholars' credibility and visibility in the community. "I think we've reaped huge benefits from the two Lead Partners we've had... They have introduced new funders to the program and identified resources and developmental opportunities for the organization and board members."¹³

Emily described how relatively easy it was to help Rainier Scholars with fundraising. "The thing about Rainier Scholars is that when you see the kids, it grabs you. If you can get someone to go on a tour, they get involved. It's just that much fun." Calvin noted the importance of the connection that donors and volunteers are able to make with the program and the youth. He believes, "Where your heart is, your treasure will follow."

Emily has hosted a house party, led tour groups, and served as a table captain at the annual luncheon. She summarized her involvement, "I show up a lot." Emily recognized the importance of continuously expanding the number of Rainier Scholars' individual donors. "They are making the leap from being dependant on certain grants to really building their donor base and turning the corner from being a brand new organization."

Summary of Volunteer, Paid Consultant and Professional Development Support

Emily Anthony	SVP Partner	Lead Partner, Strategic Plan Framework, Evaluation Consultant
Patti Brooke	SVP Partner	Lead Partner, Board Member
Mark Craemer	SVP Partner	Marketing Consultant
John Fine	SVP Partner	Database Developer
David Habib	SVP Partner	Database Assistance
Steve Johnson	SVP Partner	Strategic Plan Framework
Jude Kavalam	SVP Partner	Website Developer
David Maymudes	SVP Partner	Technology Assessment
Lisa Merrill	SVP Partner	Photographer
Ed Mills	SVP Partner	Technology Assessment
Donald Mitchell	SVP Partner	Mentor
Barbara O'Halloran	SVP Partner	Video Producer
Kathryn Linehan	SVP Partner	Video Producer
Steve Trautman	SVP Partner	Team Dynamics Facilitator
Larry White	SVP Partner	Website Design and Developer
Ted Lord	Paid Consultant	Strategic Planning Consultant
Organizational Research Services	Paid Consultant	Program Evaluation & Performance Management
Sharon Carlsen	Paid Consultant	Mission and Vision Retreat Facilitator, Board Development
Janet Boguch	Paid Consultant	BoardTalks

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Rainier Scholars Most Significant Change Report, 2006.

Challenges

Transitions in Leadership

Since the Investee director plays such a large role in the relationship with SVP, the multiple transitions in leadership at Rainier Scholars slowed the growth of the relationship. Emily explained that it is challenging to communicate the myriad of resources available to Investees, stating, "It takes a while to realize what SVP can do for you." She continued, "Rainier Scholars has done a good job of leveraging SVP consultants... There are some organizations that really get it: there are people with expertise from whom they can learn."

The SVP – Investee Relationship

Emily talked about the difficulty of establishing a balanced relationship with Investees, and the importance of acknowledging power dynamics. She reflected:

I tend to worry that we are telling people what to do instead of offering suggestions. Sometimes, with telling people what to do comes the sense that we know what we're doing because we've done this a lot and that's really true. Yet at the same time, these are all organizations with really dedicated people who need to be making their own decisions.

Emily also had concerns about the amount of time Investees need to spend on the relationship. Emily described her discussions with Calvin about preparing for the refunding discussions. She tried to convey that the committee members liked Rainier Scholars and that he didn't need to be overly concerned or spend an extensive amount of time preparing. She continued, "It would irritate me knowing that on some level, we didn't need that much information on the PGC but we're still asking for it. It's tricky because I understand that we are responsible for the Partner's money but I am still uncomfortable with this oversight function."

Calvin explained:

It was a new model requiring rigorous follow-up. SVP, because of the strong business background and capacity building focus, required a different level of expertise on both sides of the partnership...I think they are a very challenging organization with their questions but it was necessary. If you don't build that foundation, you can't scale and you can't replicate... You have to be willing to learn how to do it.

Calvin also mentioned challenges organizations may have being open and transparent with funders. "It's always a factor when you're asking someone for money - there's a tendency to tell them what they want to hear. An Investee must fight this tendency and provide information that allows the funder to learn and make the best decision for all involved."

Website

A project that Rainier Scholars struggled with over time was the development of their website. According to Calvin, the project required multiple starts and stops and the volunteer's skill set and schedule did not always match Rainier Scholars' needs. They desired a website that was interactive and accessible for its teachers and students, as well as providing basic program information for community partners and potential donors. Rainier Scholars ended up completing the first phase of revising the website using other community resources, without SVP's assistance.

Lessons Learned

The SVP-Investee Relationship

Emily believes that SVP must continue to look for and develop collaborative strategies to work with Investees. She explained:

I think it's a problem the way the grant committee sets up and we bring in a whole bunch of people and ask them a million questions, and then transition to, 'Okay, now you're in. You can tell us all the bad stuff.' I don't know what the right answer is because you need to do that to make a good

decision but when you start the relationship that way, it's hard to change. I think we have to keep looking at that as a power relationship and how we think about the impact of that.

Emily continued describing that some of the efforts of SVP's Diversity and Cultural Competency Working Group may help SVP approach organizations in a more appropriate way. Emily reiterated the delicate nature of partnerships:

The more that we can be genuinely partners and not just in an oversight capacity, the more effective we will be. People will be more willing to be honest. The more we can be honest with each other, the more we are going to be able to help organizations. Organizations are very wisely not going to share stuff if they know their grant is at risk.

Building Trust

The Lead Partner has a unique opportunity to build trust with the Investee. Throughout the organization's change in leadership, Emily continued to work with Rainier Scholars. The staff and board trusted Emily throughout the transition. She built relationships with the staff and believes, "We'll be friends for a really long time now." As a Lead Partner, Emily could move between the staff, board, and SVP and act as a liaison. "I felt like I was in a unique position because I could sort of be neither [on staff nor on the board] but also be known by everybody." She believes it was valuable to have someone present who was objective as a third party but who also cared a lot about the organization.

Emily described how her role changed as staff and leadership changed within the organization. At the beginning of her relationship, she was seen as a part of the team and was able to build trust. Emily explained:

It's about relationships. It really takes time to build those relationships. The times I was able to be most effective was because we had the relationship already. Then when transitions happened, when trouble happened, people trusted me, came to me, and asked for help. That only happens when you've taken the time to develop relationships in a personal way.

As the leadership changed however, she was seen more as a funder and "kept at arm's length." She emphasized, "You really have to take time to develop a trusting relationship. It can be hard to feel like you're starting over. It's true, you are losing some ground but I think it's worth it." She recommended being patient and putting in time developing relationships.

Emily believes that in order to have a positive experience as a Lead Partner, "You have to love your organization." She can't imagine contributing the amount of time and energy she has to a randomly assigned organization. "I think you have to start with a total infatuation with your organization and go from there," said Emily.

Calvin believes that the SVP staff has been very supportive of Rainier Scholars. He emphasized SVP's openness and level of understanding individual circumstances. "They were very open to feedback which brought equality to the relationship... It is part of being a responsible engaged partner; you have to share information to facilitate significant change." Calvin continued to describe why being direct was important in this type of relationship. "The one thing that I've learned and that I think they understand is that bad news must travel fast. If it doesn't and you're just giving them superlatives, then they can't help, they can't adjust and they'll continue to think they understand."

Calvin laughed as he described, "I think I've committed Aaron Jacobs' [svp staff] phone number to memory. These relationships are some that I treasure. I was new here and they treated me like they'd known me for eons... even dropping information by the office, just stopping by." He emphasized that building these relationships helped make the work more productive and lasting.

Awareness of Partners

Calvin noted that SVP Partners bring exceptional business backgrounds to their work with Investees. "I thought that was a great way to do business -Not taking the approach that for-profit has the model and nonprofit needs to catch up, but to realize there is a lot of good business minds in nonprofit." Calvin emphasized, "Make sure Partners are educated in the nuances of the nonprofit world. Be sure that they

understand the mission, understand that some things in the nonprofit world will be more difficult to measure" than in the for-profit world.

Summary of SVP's Overall Impact

Emily described Rainier Scholars as "an overwhelming success story," noting that they have thrived with the capacity building projects over the past five years. Calvin also reiterated, "It's been well worth it and as a leader, I'd do it again in a heart beat." To Calvin, the most important resource SVP has brought to Rainier Scholars is Emily Anthony. He described:

Over the course of the relationship, Emily Anthony has had the most positive impact... without her working as a liaison, explaining to us how the process works, we felt like we always had a place to go with questions... Emily has vast nonprofit and fundraising experience. She is so very connected from her heartstrings, and from her mind. She knows the business. She knows education and she has been active in this arena for some time... She was willing to give her time, talent, and treasures to this organization. Without Emily, we would not have had as successful a relationship with SVP.

Looking Ahead

Emily loves Rainier Scholars. She has viewed her role as Lead Partner as an interesting and unique way to volunteer with Rainier Scholars. "I had planned to volunteer for them even if we didn't choose them. It was nice that I got the support of SVP and it was clear what my role should be with them." She continued, "Although I'm technically done as Lead Partner, it's not like I'm ready to sign up as someone else's Lead Partner. I'm still volunteering for SVP and I'm still volunteering with Rainier Scholars."

Emily is now a member of the Rainier Scholars Resource Council, where she plans to continue working with the organization. She also is committed to continue bringing people on tours and promoting Rainier Scholars in the community. Since Rainier Scholars is still developing, Emily believes they will keep building on the evaluation work with ORS for several years. Calvin is also established as the executive director and the first annual fundraising lunch was a success. "These projects are really lasting," Emily emphasized.

As to what the future brings for the Rainier Scholar's work with SVP, Calvin noted, "All of it will depend on the support we get through this transition." Calvin emphasized that support during their transition at the end of SVP official relationship "is going to be instrumental for us, not just in maintaining but in elevating us to the next level."

After six years, the organization is still developing. In 2007, the students who started five years ago as sixth graders are starting their junior year in high school and are contemplating their college choices. Calvin explained Rainier Scholars' unique situation as a growing nonprofit:

Some nonprofits ramp up quickly and enjoy foundation support for two to three years before the funding from that particular source comes to an end. Our mission demands a much longer ramp-up time, in our case 11 years, and states that we will provide support to our students and families from the summer after 5th grade through college graduation, so we are still in the start-up phase. Our results so far have been outstanding but we continue to approach our work with humility and look forward to our first college graduates in 2013... With our long ramp-up time, my hope is that foundations consider a longer-term partnership and help us bring our efforts to fruition.