ScholarMatch



ANNUAL REPORT 2024-25

15 YEARS MAKING COLLEGE POSSIBLE

At ScholarMatch, we believe that every student deserves the opportunity to pursue their college and career dreams.

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A Letter from the Executive Director

KARLA V. SALAZAR



Dear ScholarMatch Community,

As I reach my fifth year as Executive Director of ScholarMatch, I have been reflecting on this transformative journey. While I have always sought innovative solutions to increase our impact, I am most inspired by our authentic interactions with the communities we serve and the families that harbor such a grand vision for their children's success.

Every student story, parent testimonial, and volunteer insight helps define our "why," fueling our ongoing advocacy for underserved communities. As a mother, I want every child to have access to free, high-quality public higher education. As the granddaughter of immigrant educators who believed in education as a catalyst for change, I find deep purpose in our work.

At ScholarMatch, we are committed to building a stronger foundation for the future. Over the next three years, our goal is to deepen our programmatic impact, invest in our people and technology, diversify our funding streams, and elevate our mission. Through strategic partnerships, we are working to reach more first-generation students in underserved communities, such as the Southeast Los Angeles region, by providing essential college and career mentorship to bridge the college attainment gap and support their career pathways.

As we conclude this program year, I'm pleased to share our latest ScholarMatch annual report. We remain dedicated to supporting first-generation students through college and into meaningful careers. I hope you enjoy these highlights and look forward to our continued work together.

Sincerely,



Karla V. Salazar
Executive Director

2024-25

BY THE NUMBERS

1,304 Students Served



540 Active Volunteers



$1.3M Awarded in Scholarships



100% Four-Year College Acceptance Rate
(Self-reported data)



98% Freshman Persistence Rate
(Scholars Program)



80% Graduation Rate Within Five Years
(Scholars Program)







ScholarMatch

We are committed to supporting first-generation college students

from low-income backgrounds to earn a bachelor's degree within five years.

Over the past 15 years, we have been working toward our vision of helping first-generation students gain access to higher education, receive support to persist to graduation, and pursue fulfilling careers.

Our ultimate goal is to nurture a community of young people who can successfully navigate the higher education landscape, confronting its challenges, breaking barriers, and redefining success on their paths to graduation and beyond.

Since our founding in 2010, ScholarMatch has served thousands of students in California and nationwide, awarded nearly $10M in scholarships, and engaged hundreds of community supporters.

This work is grounded in individualized guidance that meets students where they are.

At ScholarMatch, mentors support students every step of the way.

THE ROAD TO HIGHER EDUCATION

STARTS HERE

The ScholarMatch Difference



Student-centered support backed by proven practices that help students thrive.

1:1 Mentorship

Personalized quidance from high school through college graduation.

Financial Support

Flexible scholarships to help alleviate the cost of college and remove barriers to graduation.

Whole-Student Care

Academic, financial, and emotional support tailored to each stage of the college journey.

ScholarMatch combines individualized mentorship with financial support to help first-generation students succeed in college and beyond.

WHY WE'RE NEEDED

*1 Source: Lumina Foundation
*2 Source: American School Counselor Association



Education Opens Doors

A pathway to opportunity

Obtaining postsecondary education remains one of the most effective ways to achieve economic mobility, often leading to higher earning potential across multiple career paths; however, there are many benefits beyond economic outcomes,*1 including greater well-being, personal growth, and increased civic engagement.

Financial barriers are real

Financial barriers are widely recognized as one of the biggest impediments to degree completion among first-generation students from low-income backgrounds, but access to individualized college admissions advising also plays a significant role in students' success as they consider their postsecondary options.

The gap is huge

Additionally, students from low-income backgrounds often attend underfunded schools, which can have counselor-to-student ratios of nearly 500:1,*2 making individualized guidance nearly impossible.

Our solution

That's where organizations like ScholarMatch step in to address these issues by providing holistic support that meets students where they are, offering personalized guidance from college application through graduation. Individualized attention from a mentor often leads to increased confidence and a greater sense of belonging among students as they begin their college journey.

Support that goes further

But our work doesn't end there. ScholarMatch's holistic approach also includes targeted financial aid to reduce barriers to graduation and career readiness support to ensure students are prepared for life after college.



WHY WE'RE NEEDED

Unlocking Students' Potential

Nationwide, only 24 percent of first-generation students from low-income backgrounds graduate within six years.*[3]

At ScholarMatch, thanks to our holistic approach, 80 percent of students who complete the full program graduate within five years. Almost four times the national average!

80%

ScholarMatch Graduation Rate

*[3] Source: FirstGen Forward

We Create Superior Outcomes for Students

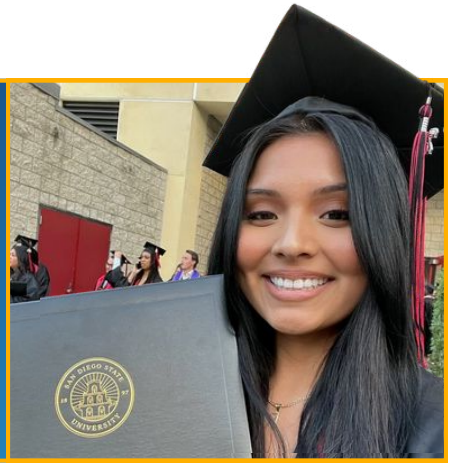
National Average **24%**

On a national scale, only 24 percent of first-generation college students from low-income backgrounds attain a bachelor's degree.

ScholarMatch Students **80%**

The ScholarMatch program creates an outcome almost **four times better** for this population of students.

> *I wish every student had the opportunity to have ScholarMatch be there for them.*
>
> Cely Pablo | Class of 2024
> San Diego State University



OUR PROGRAM MODEL

Support in Three Key Transitions

Our program model spans from the junior year of high school through college graduation.

1

College Access

One-on-one advising for juniors and seniors as they navigate the college application process. With the support of volunteer college coaches, students research colleges, apply for financial aid, draft personal statements, and prepare for college.

2

College Success

Continued year-round advising in college, up to $5,000/year in flexible financial aid, and access to workshops that support academics, well-being, and career readiness.

3

Career Readiness

Career coaching, access to internships and professional development workshops, and networking opportunities to help scholars launch successful careers.

> *I was matched with a college coach who reassured me that I could get into college... and I did! I also had access to personalized mentoring throughout college and a scholarship package that helped me cover essentials like groceries, transportation, and school supplies so I could stay focused on my studies.*

Jazmine Stanek | Class of 2025
California State University, Fullerton



DESTINED FOR COLLEGE PROGRAM

The College Application Process at ScholarMatch



Beginning in high school, ScholarMatch offers free, virtual college advising support through the Destined for College program to students who are the first in their family to attend college.

In the 2024-25 program year...

1,058
STUDENTS SUPPORTED

High school students received personalized college advising support from volunteer college coaches who guided them through every step of the college application process.

4,365
COLLEGE APPLICATIONS SUBMITTED

College applications were submitted with the support of college coaches who also helped our Destined for College participants draft personal essays and apply for financial aid.

100%
ACCEPTANCE RATE

According to admissions data, **our students' hard work has resulted in a 100%* acceptance rate!**

** Self-reported data*

Program Updates: College Access

DESTINED FOR COLLEGE PROGRAM

Resources for Students

- **ScholarMatcher:** Our free in-house college search tool designed for first-generation students.
- **College-Ready Milestones:** Our free, comprehensive step-by-step guide to the college application process.
- **Financial literacy & aid webinars** led by UC Irvine's School of Education Early Academic Outreach Program (EAOP).
- **Academic subject tutoring** and SAT preparation offered by our partners at AJ Tutoring.
- **Access to courses** to meet A-G eligibility, including college prep, advanced placement, and vocational courses, thanks to a partnership with UC Scout, a University of California Student Academic Preparation and Educational Partnerships (SAPEP) program.
- **College application fee waivers** to students who need additional financial support applying to CSU and UC system schools.
- **College access webinars** led by ScholarMatch staff, covering fly-in programs, national scholarships such as QuestBridge and Gates Millennium Scholars, and other components of the college application process.





DESTINED FOR COLLEGE PROGRAM

Resources for Volunteers

- **Access to financial aid webinars:** Thanks to a partnership with **uAspire**, we're able to provide specific training for our volunteer college coaches covering the financial aid planning process.
- **Varsity Coach Program:** Our varsity coaches, who are longtime ScholarMatch volunteers, also offer additional support to new volunteers in our program.
- **Coach-Led Webinars:** Coaches with expertise in a breadth of topics lead webinars geared toward our volunteer community as part of our professional development series.
- **Year-round training and support:** Access to multiple online resources developed in-house, such as the ScholarMatch college toolkit, scholarship database, and more.





IN PARTNERSHIP WITH

u·aspire
PREPARE ★ AFFORD ★ SUCCEED

Program Updates: College Success

SCHOLARS PROGRAM



In the 2024-25 program year, students in our Scholars Program received personalized support at critical junctures in their college journeys.

What's Included:

- Robust college advising support from trained staff
- Financial support through flexible scholarships
- Career mentoring and networking opportunities
- Access to internships and post-graduation opportunities

Scholars Program Highlights

STUDENT COUNCILS (SECOND YEAR)

Student Advisory Council: Focus on program input and feedback and leadership development

Student Ambassador Council: Focus on scholar representation, outreach, and leadership development

98%
FRESHMAN PERSISTENCE RATE

$1.3M
AWARDED IN SCHOLARSHIPS

246
SCHOLARS SERVED

$218,600
CAREER DEVELOPMENT FUNDS & UNPAID INTERNSHIP STIPENDS AWARDED

3.31
AVERAGE GPA

$117,331
EMERGENCY FUNDS AWARDED

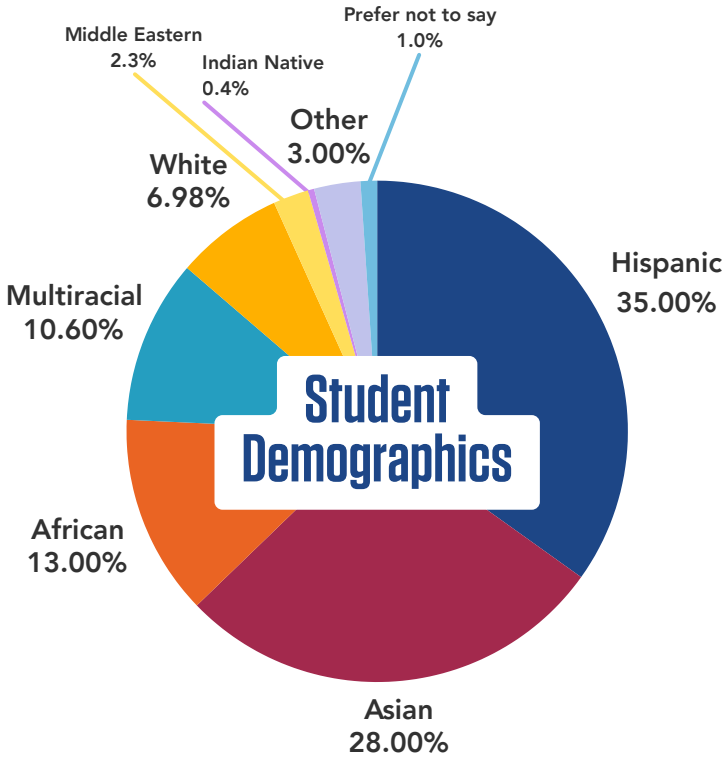
Program Impact

STUDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

(ACROSS ALL PROGRAMS)

Total Students 1,304

Hispanic	35%
Asian	28%
African	13%
Multiracial	10.6%
White	7%
Middle Eastern	2.3%
Indian Native	0.4%
Other	3.0%
Prefer not to say	1.0%



Most Popular Fields of Study

Scholars Program

STEM and **Social Sciences** are the top areas of interest among our scholars.

53% STEM

27% Social Sciences

9% Business

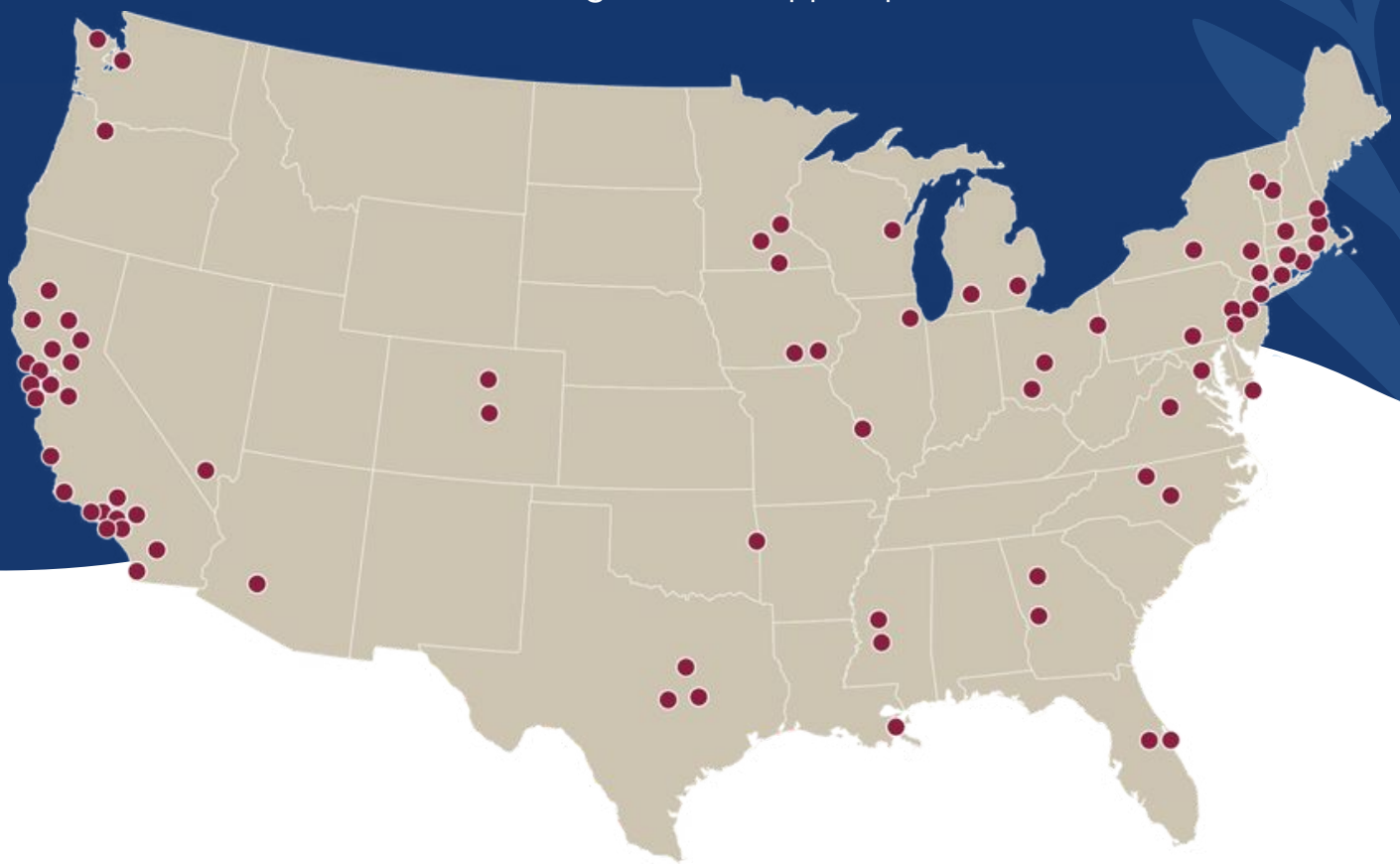
9% Arts/Humanities

2% Undecided

ScholarMatch's National Reach

Where our scholars enroll

We encourage students to choose schools based on their individual needs, goals, and support preferences.



TOP COLLEGES

West Coast

UC Berkeley
33 STUDENTS

UCLA
22 STUDENTS

UC Davis
21 STUDENTS

San Francisco State University
16 STUDENTS

CSU - Los Angeles
13 STUDENTS

TOP COLLEGES

East Coast

Harvard University
7 STUDENTS

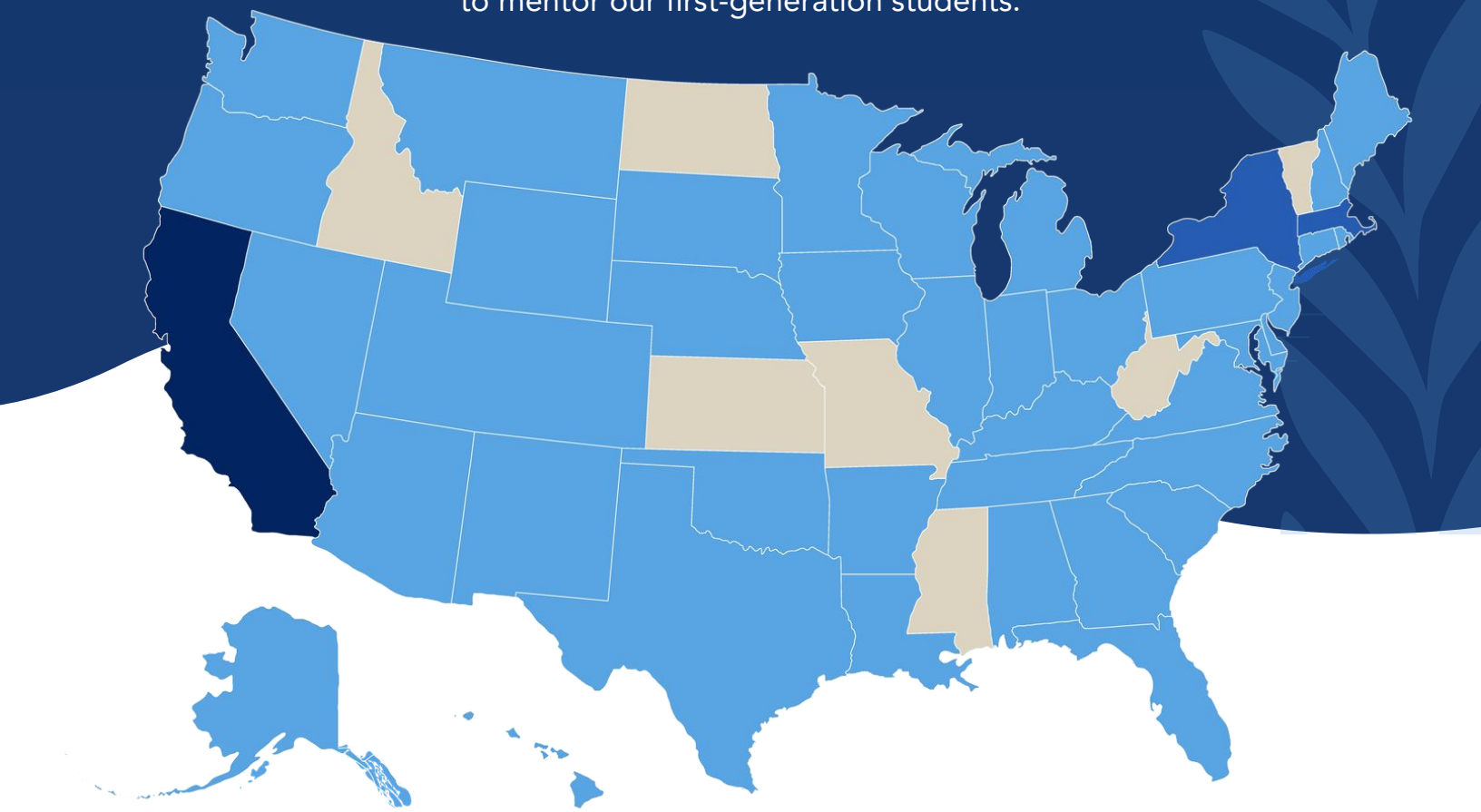
Florida State University
3 STUDENTS

Boston University
Northeastern University
Wake Forest University
Columbia University
TIED AT 2 STUDENTS EACH FOR THE REMAINING SPOTS

Our Diverse Volunteer Base

Dedicated mentors. Nationwide impact.

Volunteers join us from all over the country
to mentor our first-generation students.



VOLUNTEERS BY STATE

0 | 1-25 | 26-50 | 51-100 | 101-750

Matching Process

We match students and volunteers based on:

- Geographical Location
- Personal Preferences
- Intended Major(s)
- Home Language(s)



Congratulations, Class of 2025

In 2025, we celebrated the graduation of 31 scholars!

These dedicated students navigated many challenges to reach the finish line, including attending classes in the hybrid model during the pandemic, financial aid hurdles, and much more. Congratulations to these trailblazers who are the first in their families to graduate!

Alexander Lomeli Garcia
UC SAN DIEGO
Business Economics, Finance

Alexandra Osorio
UNIVERSITY OF DENVER
Biological Sciences, Neurobiology, Neuroscience, Cognitive Science
Chemistry, Biology, Physics

Ali Jedrzejczyk
NORTHEASTERN UNIVERSITY
Bioengineering

Alicia Cooke
UC MERCED
Sociology

Charlene Juarez
UC LOS ANGELES
Linguistics, Education

Dominic Castillo
UC BERKELEY
Sociology

Dulce Lopez Hernandez
UC LOS ANGELES
Education

Eriana Leyva
UC IRVINE
Biological Sciences

Ingrid Lopez
SAN FRANCISCO STATE UNIVERSITY
Criminal Justice

Itzel Ramos
CLAREMONT MCKENNA COLLEGE
Political Science, Chicano Studies

Jazmine Stanek
CSU - FULLERTON
Business Administration

Jonathan Lim
UC SAN DIEGO
Psychology

Karen Chau
UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA
Public Health

Karen Hernandez
UC RIVERSIDE
Finance

Karilyn Duran
NORTHEASTERN UNIVERSITY
Environmental Science

Kayla Wong
UC IRVINE
Marketing

Laura Trinh
UC LOS ANGELES
Public Relations

Luis Moreno
SAN FRANCISCO STATE UNIVERSITY
Computer Science

Maria Herrera
UC BERKELEY
Sociology, Chicano Studies

Matthew Chang
NORTHEASTERN UNIVERSITY
Marketing

Melissa Corea
UC DAVIS
Genetics, Neuroscience

Miriam Villa Gongora
SAN FRANCISCO STATE UNIVERSITY
Marketing

Romaissa Khaldi
MIDDLEBURY COLLEGE
Neuroscience

Romi Ocadiz-Cruz
UC SANTA CRUZ
Film Media Studies, Studio Art

Shavonne Hines-Foster
HAMPTON UNIVERSITY
Political Science

Stacey Yoo
UC BERKELEY
Bioengineering

Tommy Hernandez
UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA
Computer Science

Venisha Patel
UC DAVIS
Economics, Communications

Vo Ly
UC DAVIS
Biomedical Engineering

Program Updates

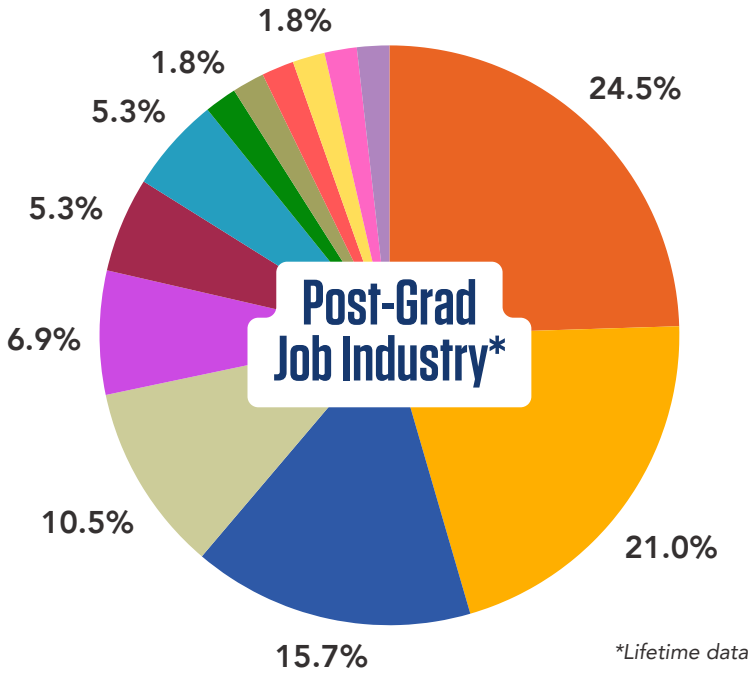
Life After College

Our scholars are building meaningful careers and making an impact in their communities.



Post-Graduation Job Industry

Educational Services	24.5%
Healthcare or Social Services	21%
S.T.E.M.	15.7%
Business	10.5%
Other	6.9%
Financial Services	5.3%
Nonprofit Administration	5.3%
Research Services	1.8%
Manufacturing	1.8%
Management Consulting	1.8%
Agriculture	1.8%
Law/Legal Services	1.8%
Retail	1.8%



*Lifetime data

Employment

Six months after graduation*

73.7%
Full-time employment

26.3%
Grad school or part-time employment

*Lifetime data



Community Spotlight

HONORING KAREN GRACE-BAKER



Celebrating Karen Grace-Baker's legacy as ScholarMatch's board chair

2024 brought significant changes to ScholarMatch's Board of Directors, as we said goodbye to our longtime friend Karen Grace-Baker after six years of service as a board member, three of which were dedicated as our board chair.

Karen's appointment as board chair was historic, as she became the first ScholarMatch volunteer and higher education advocate to serve in that role.

Karen's extensive experience in the corporate environment and higher education landscape, as an instructor and college counselor, made a significant difference at ScholarMatch as we navigated pandemic challenges and pivotal staff transitions.

Her well-rounded perspective has been instrumental in shaping ScholarMatch's programmatic focus over the years and will have a lasting impact on our legacy. We are deeply grateful for her leadership and guidance and look forward to her continued involvement.

Steve Bennet, a ScholarMatch board member since 2024, has been elected our new board chair, and Luz Gomez, a seasoned board member and ScholarMatch volunteer, will serve as our new vice chair.

We look forward to Steve and Luz's combined perspectives to help us strengthen our program offerings and financial health, enabling us to serve even more students nationwide.

Looking Ahead

WHAT'S NEXT?

2025 was an exciting year, marked by an intentional expansion to reach more first-generation students, with an emphasis on transfer students and those located in college-access deserts, such as the Southeast Los Angeles region.

Looking ahead, we're excited to continue building on these initiatives as we start implementing our roadmap for the next three years, fresh off our strategic planning process.

WHAT'S NEXT →

ScholarMatch LA Scholars

LA Scholars Program

Improving Outcomes for First-Generation Students in Los Angeles

We've expanded the reach of our proven college success model by piloting the LA Scholars Program to serve more students in the Southeast Los Angeles region through small-group college-persistence advising and personalized mentorship.

As demand for college access and persistence services grows, we anticipate serving more than 300 Los Angeles-based scholars in the coming years.

> *If it weren't for the career mentors and academic advisors at ScholarMatch, I wouldn't have had the support to become a pre-med student. Thanks to ScholarMatch, I can achieve my career goals and give back to my South Central Los Angeles community.*

Salvador Villafaña | Class of 2021
University of California, San Diego



Looking Ahead

WHAT'S NEXT?

WHAT'S NEXT →

STEM Transfer Program

Ensuring Transfer Students Successfully Complete a Four-Year Degree

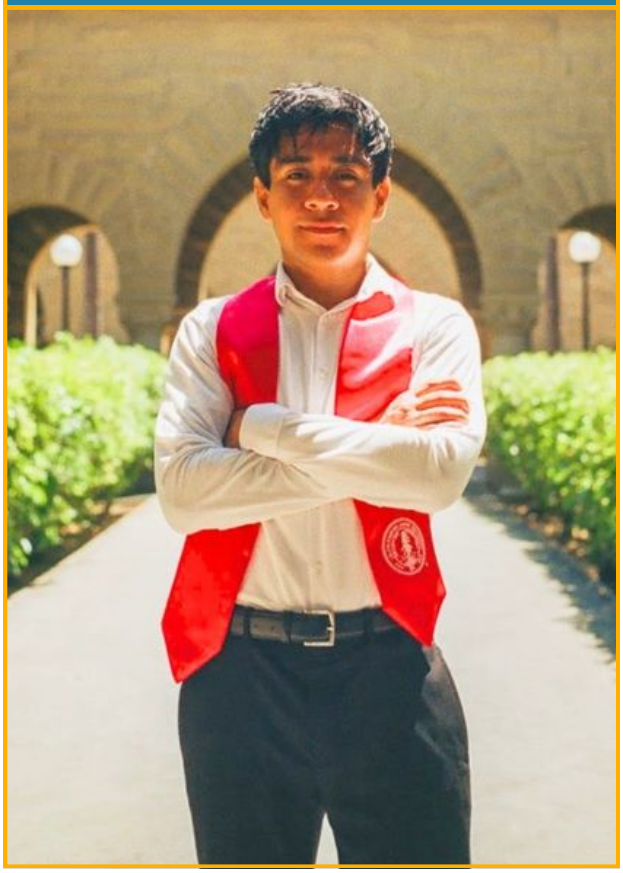
The ScholarMatch STEM Transfer Program was designed in partnership with the Genentech Foundation to help community college students transfer to four-year institutions while pursuing STEM degrees.

California's community college system serves nearly 2 million students and is the primary entry point into higher education for most of the state's college-going population. Increased transfer-focused support is critical to expanding equitable access to STEM degrees and the economic opportunities they provide.

After successfully launching this program and supporting many transfer students on their paths to four-year institutions, we look forward to continuing to build this initiative to serve more students in California and beyond.

> *My ScholarMatch career coach is also Hispanic and Latino in the STEM field, just like me. Seeing that he has an established career, I felt I could also find a place in the industry.*

Esau Veliz | Class of 2024
Stanford University



Looking Ahead

WHAT'S NEXT?

WHAT'S NEXT →

Strategic Planning Process

Over the next couple of years, we will begin implementing a roadmap thoughtfully designed during the recent strategic planning process, building on our organization's success and helping us fine-tune our efforts to ensure our work remains aligned with our mission.



> *It was amazing to be in the ScholarMatch program during my time at UC Santa Cruz. Now I know that I am prepared for anything because I have the skills, community, and professionalism that I received through my education and the ScholarMatch program.*

Mia Kennedy | Class of 2021
University of California, Santa Cruz



WE LOOK FORWARD TO ...

As we expand our work to serve more students across the country, we will continue to adapt our program offerings to best meet our communities' needs and respond with confidence to an ever-changing higher education landscape.

2024-25

FINANCIALS

Platinum Transparency 2024 Candid.

Charity Navigator FOUR-STAR

Statement of Activities

Revenue & Support:

Contributions	$3,821,890
In-kind donations:	$4,700
Investment income:	$188,097
Total Revenue & Support	**$4,014,687**

Expenses:

Student assistance programs	$1,796,272
Scholarships	$1,271,663
Management and general	$640,610
Fundraising	$732,557
Total Expenses	**$4,441,102**
Change in net assets	($426,415)
Net assets, beginning of year	$6,799,186
Net assets, end of year	**$6,372,771**

2024-25

FINANCIALS

Statement of Financial Position

Assets:

Cash and cash equivalents	$3,705,964
Contributions receivable	$1,678,434
Investments	$1,126,729
Prepaid expenses and other assets	$7,477
Total assets	$6,518,604

Liabilities & Net Assets:

Liabilities

Accounts payable and accrued	$145,833
Total liabilities	**$145,833**

Net Assets:

Net assets *without* donor restrictions	$3,041,391
Net assets *with* donor restrictions	$3,331,380
Total net assets	$6,372,771
Total liabilities & net assets	**$6,518,604**

Our Supporters

DONORS & PARTNERS

Contract Partners

826 Valencia
Adobe
Bon Vivants
Claudia Barrios
Conference for Women - Massachusetts
deWilde Family Foundation
Frederick A. DeLuca Foundation
Isabel Allende Foundation (Adais Marvez)
Jeff Balaguras & Jin Sun Park
Leonetti/O'Connell Family Foundation
Leung Family
Local2/Hospitality Industry Child & Elder Care Plan
Mary Riew
O'Melveny
Randie Bencanann
Roseann Torres
Smart Cookie
Someland Foundation
Swig Family Foundation



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Trudy Fleisher
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Abhinav Garg
Michael Gavino
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Pauline Godfrey
Terry & Steve Godfrey
Luz Gomez
Brenda Gonzalez
Holly Gordon
Jennifer Gordon
Matthew Goss
Karen Grace-Baker & Richard Baker

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Juneyon Kim
Yelee Kim
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Brent Looney
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Jocelyn Munroe
Margaret Murray
James R. Neal
Kia Wang Nevarez
Anshul Nigham
Richard Michael Norwalk
& Laura Mobilia Norwalk
Benjamin Olds
Christopher Opie
Federico Pacheco
Judith Painter
Prasad Paranjape
Roger Parsons
Debra Patrick
Craig Peine
Alicia Perla
Jessica Pespitro
Barbara Peters
Barbara Pettersen
Jobylyn Pineda
Elleni Pippis
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Susan Rengstorff
Deborah Robbins
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Rich Thornett & Susan Baird
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