

COLLEGE  
BEYOND



# Together.

2018 *IMPACT REPORT*



## A LETTER FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear Friends,

It's hard to believe that this report marks College Beyond's third year serving New Orleans, our community and home.

We are grateful to have much to celebrate! In the past year, we have expanded the number of students we serve at the University of New Orleans by more than half. We have deepened our partnership with UNO's administrative team, leading an intro class for freshmen and even enjoying a dedicated office in their new student services center. We have welcomed both new directors to our Board and new staff to our expanding program and administrative teams. I was honored to be selected as a Young Leadership Council Role Model for 2018. And College Beyond was chosen as one of just six nation-wide recipients of Education Leaders of Color's inaugural Boulder Fund grant, an honor which included a \$150,000 one-year gift to support further development of our coaching model and to seed a more robust micro-grant fund for our students.

As these pages will illustrate, the combined result has been a game-changing year for our students, and, I believe, for our organization.

This is best represented by the key outcome I hope you'll take away from this report: in 2017-2018, 73% of the freshman we served re-enrolled in college the following fall (with 70% returning to UNO -- just one point shy of UNO's overall rate). This is known as "freshman retention," and is a key indicator for college success. In more than closing the gap against their more advantaged peers, our students have delivered a powerful example of what is possible.

Many congratulations and thanks are in order! Kudos, first, are due to our amazing students, who work so hard within real adversity, and to the families that love and nurture them. Our students and families are supported by the intrepid Erica Martinez, our founding College Success Coach, and through her by the rest of our team: our volunteers, interns, AmeriCorps members, staff, board, and donors. And we are lucky to have true partners in our colleagues at UNO.

As our students can attest, it's hard to get to class if you don't have transportation. It's hard to do your homework if you can't afford your books. It's hard to focus if you're hungry. And it's hard to develop independence in navigating college without a coach who problem solves with -- not for -- you. But with the right support in the right places, big change can happen. And we are excited to keep pursuing it. In 2018-2019, we are expanding, serving 100 students in the first year of a renewed, 3-year partnership at UNO. We plan to serve more students in the greater New Orleans area in the coming years, and will be focusing energy on making micro-grants a sustainable resource for our students.

As we enter this new year, I hope you will continue (or join!) with us in helping New Orleans youth enroll and succeed in college.

In gratitude,



Paris Woods, Ed.M.  
Co-founder & Executive Director

## MEET OUR BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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OPSB, DIST. 5



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KIPP NEW ORLEANS

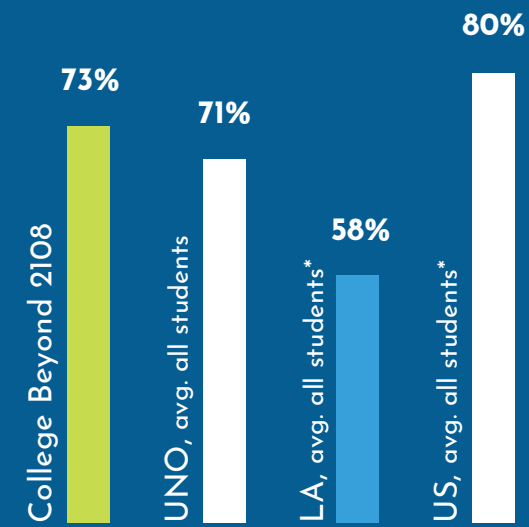


# OUR IMPACT

SERVING MORE STUDENTS,  
CLOSING GAPS

The transition to college is hard for anyone. But if you have limited financial resources, are a student of color, or are a first-generation college student, the transition is often much harder.

And that is what makes our 2017-2018 program outcomes extraordinary. This year, with support from College Beyond, our students closed the gap in freshman retention at UNO.



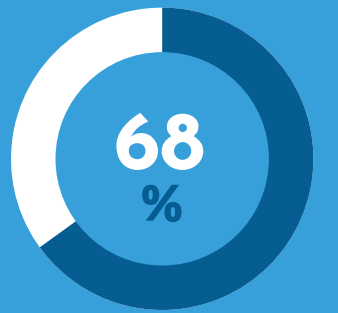
FRESHMAN RETENTION RATE

\*National Student Clearinghouse, 2018 (2016 cohort) at 4-yr public institutions

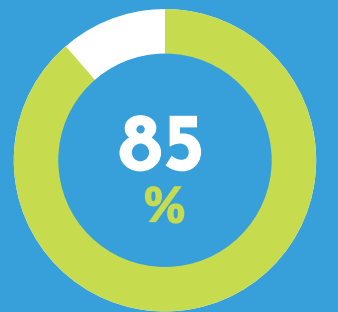
# WHO WE *SERVE*

College Beyond is designed for an underserved middle majority of college students: capable youth who have earned admission to college but generally are not eligible for top merit-based financial aid or selective college persistence programs. We are committed to bringing excellent resources to students who face the longest odds of college graduation.

# OUR ONLY ELIGIBILITY CRITERION IS NEED.



PELL GRANT RECIPIENTS



STUDENTS OF COLOR

# WHAT IT TAKES

114

books, book rentals, and book codes

9888

text messages

\$

296,000

in federal financial aid grant dollars College Beyond helped students access

1,597  
meals



77%

of students utilizing micro-grant support

623

coaching meetings

840

bus rides



KEREE **BLANKS**

CLASS OF 2022

BIOLOGY, UNIVERSITY OF NEW ORLEANS

“The College Beyond grant has been a blessing this semester. I was drowning in the amount of course materials that I had to pay for this semester. But the grant was a life raft that saved me. Knowing that somebody has your back financially is such an amazing feeling. Like I probably would have had to work two jobs to pay for all the resources and books and stuff I needed for classes. I am grateful that everyone at College Beyond was able to provide me with some well appreciated money. And for [College Success Coach] Erica especially, because she is the best counselor/advisor I have ever had. I appreciate all of the advice and guidance she has been providing me. I would not have been mentally ready to handle all the craziness of college without her!”



# WHAT OUR STUDENTS ARE SAYING

Each semester, College Beyond surveys our students and compiles their feedback. Here's what our 2017-2018 cohort reported on their end-of-freshman-year survey:

On a scale of 1 to 5, **100%** of respondents rated College Beyond's usefulness a 4 or 5. **89%** of students agreed or strongly agreed that

**"College Beyond helped me succeed in my freshman year."**

And, they told us, one size does not fit all when it comes to supporting college success. Students varied in their reports of which College Beyond supports they found most useful. **Here's what they said:**



**JAZMINE FOSTER**  
CLASS OF 2022  
BIOLOGY, UNIVERSITY OF NEW ORLEANS

“College Beyond has helped me so much. The best part has to be the study plan they gave me. I wasn't doing well on tests, but their week long study plan changed my test results. I feel like Ms. Erica can enlighten me on so much more.”

# CHANGING THE *NARRATIVE*

Like anyone working in the field of higher education, we often hear the question, “Who should go to college?”

College is expensive, individually and socially, and students drop out in droves. As the story goes, this might mean that some people just aren’t suited for college, or that college is a “bad investment” (or, worse, that people who drop out of college are).

This year, we’ve honed two important beliefs about how our work relates to these questions.

**First, we must center equity in conversations about college access and persistence.**

College may not be for everyone, but it is equally for anyone. If we believe a college education is important for children we know personally, it must be as important for children we do not know personally. Not only is earning a college degree associated with long-run benefits like higher income and better health, it is also a key pathway to leadership and influence for communities that historically have been excluded from them. Earning a college degree is no panacea for social or economic justice, and it would be a mistake to treat it as such. But it is an essential component in a body of work that will take our lifetimes to complete. Of course, this does not mean we should give up. Instead, it speaks to the magnitude of the challenge.

By being data-driven, we identified that our students needed an even more closely attuned approach to coaching and more concrete supports: in some cases books, in others meal cards or bus passes. By being nimble and responsive, we adjusted our coaching model and marshalled resources to meet their needs in real time. It took both a strong coaching relationship and material support to help our students close the freshman retention gap. In doing so, they have made a powerful statement of what is possible.

**Second, just as a diversity of students should be able to go to college, their success will require diverse -- and perhaps unconventional -- supports.**

This year’s 73% freshman retention rate (page 4) represents important impact in the lives of individual College Beyond students. More broadly, it changes the narrative about what is possible for students in our community, or in any community nationwide.

**Given the support they need and deserve, disadvantaged college students can succeed in their freshman year at the same rate as their more privileged peers.**



# OUR *SUPPORTERS*

College Beyond’s work is possible due to the support of individuals and institutions who have invested in our mission and believe in the potential of the young people of New Orleans.

We are deeply grateful for their support. Together, we believe we can change the landscape of college persistence and post-secondary attainment in New Orleans.

**\$100,000+**

EdLoC Boulder Fund  
Entergy Charitable Foundation  
GPOA Foundation

**\$50,000 to \$99,000**

RosaMary Foundation

**\$20,000 to \$49,000**

Keller Family Foundation  
Pro Bono Publico Foundation  
Rosenthal Family Foundation

**\$2,000 to \$19,000**

Capital One  
Lang Family Foundation  
Mary Freeman Wisdom Foundation  
New Orleans City Council-Harrah’s New Orleans Casino  
Community Support Grant Program  
Oscar J. Tolmas Charitable Trust  
Selley Foundation

# To. Through.

## **SUPPORT OUR WORK**

Our team is deeply grateful for our growing community of students, families, partners, and supporters. As we look to the coming year, we ask you to stay involved and spread the word!

Stay tuned to updates by joining our mailing list at [www.collegebeyond.org](http://www.collegebeyond.org). In order to deepen our impact in the coming year and beyond, we actively seek support for program expansion and for our micro-grant fund.

An individual gift of \$1,000 to our micro-grant fund buys books, transportation, and food, and can profoundly impact a student's college success. If you or your institution are curious to know more, please be in touch.

Contact us directly at [contact@collegebeyond.org](mailto:contact@collegebeyond.org).

*Visit us online. Tell others about our mission.  
Share this report.*



Special thanks to Heartsleeve for designing this report and to Gigsy for photography.