



COLLEGE
BEYOND
— TO. THROUGH. TOGETHER. —

IMPACT REPORT

a letter from our EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear Friends,

I'm penning this letter just shy of eight months into the Covid-19 pandemic. This year, while we were covering our faces with masks and donning gloves, the covers of systemic inequities came off. This unprecedented crisis has led to devastating loss of life, freedom, and security, and has thrown light on deep cracks in our health, educational, and economic systems.

Yet the College Beyond team has managed to find reasons to remain optimistic. These challenging times reinforced our belief that resilience and relationships are critical for college success. We saw the impact of our coaching model as our students found new ways of coping with and mitigating the stress of disruption: with their determination and our coaching, our freshmen persisted at almost exactly the same high rate as our past two cohorts did. The families we serve found great comfort in knowing that they could count on us to be a steady source of support during the uncertainty that we all faced. Our institutional partners shared that it came as no surprise that we were able to pivot and adjust quickly to the needs of our students so that no one slipped through the cracks. This crisis affirmed that we are positioned exactly where we need to be and are doing exactly what we should.

Knowing that we were able to carry out our mission during the most challenging times underscores that we are providing the right services, to the right people, at the right time. This both gives us hope and fuels our excitement for our next phase of growth.

The consequences of the pandemic and increase in social unrest made clear the urgent need for solutions to resolve the inequities in higher education as a path to improving the quality of life for all. The shift to the virtual world also

helped us to re-imagine our impact strategy. While many organizations had to pause and reset, we were fortunate to be able to focus on our future. This year's Impact Report outlines our new strategic plan. The next three years will be dedicated to learning more about our impact, laying the groundwork for a major scale in services in 2024, and serving more students.

As we look ahead, we also take a moment to reflect on our past. 2020 marks the fifth anniversary of our founding, and we have many reasons to celebrate. Since our inception, we have helped over 400 students enroll and persist in college. We have consistently improved student outcomes while serving ever more students. One of the most significant highlights of this year was that we were able to celebrate with our first cohort of College Beyond graduates: page 7 details our four-year graduation rate as compared to state and national rates.

The past five years have given us a glimpse of what is possible in improving the college success of underserved students. However, we know there is much work ahead of us in fighting for justice and equity in education. Many of you have been on this journey with us since the very beginning. We thank you for your early and continued support in the years to come. And I would be remiss if I did not include a special note to two important individuals. With deep appreciation, I would like to thank founding Board Chair, Ben Kleban, and founding board member, Sean Blondell, for their years of service, vision, and support to College Beyond.

While this year has presented challenges and changes, I could not be more optimistic for what is to come for College Beyond and our students.

To. Through. Together.



Erin R. Wheeler, PhD
Executive Director



Dr. Keisha D. Smith, Chair



David Page



Dr. David W. Robinson-Morris



Malana Joseph Mitchell



Gina Rachel, CPA



Katie Walmsley



Dr. Keisha D. Smith, Board Chair

"While COVID-related school closures impacted continuity of learning for all students, students from low-income families disproportionately experienced learning loss. Additional supports will be critical to ensure they are successful in their first year of college. College Beyond is uniquely positioned to provide those supports. Our staff works selflessly and tirelessly to provide personal, one-on-one, and just-in-time coaching to meet students' individual needs."

The entire College Beyond team wishes a fond farewell to out-going Board members Ben Kleban and Sean Blondell, to whom we are deeply grateful for their years of service to our students and to our organization as a whole.

MEET OUR BOARD

OUR MISSION OUR APPROACH

College Beyond is a non-profit organization dedicated to helping underserved students enroll in and complete college.

- PREVENT SUMMER MELT**
 Help students complete pre-college checklists and financial aid for successful enrollment
- COACH FOR SUCCESS**
 Personalized and student-driven coaching on academics, social-emotional development, and finances
- AWARD MICROGRANTS**
 Financial support for essentials like food, books, and transportation
- CONNECT COLLEGE-TO-CAREER**
 Curriculum to build students' social and cultural capital in preparation for the transition to career
- CREATE STRONG PARTNERSHIPS**
 With students, families, and institutions

WHO WE SERVE

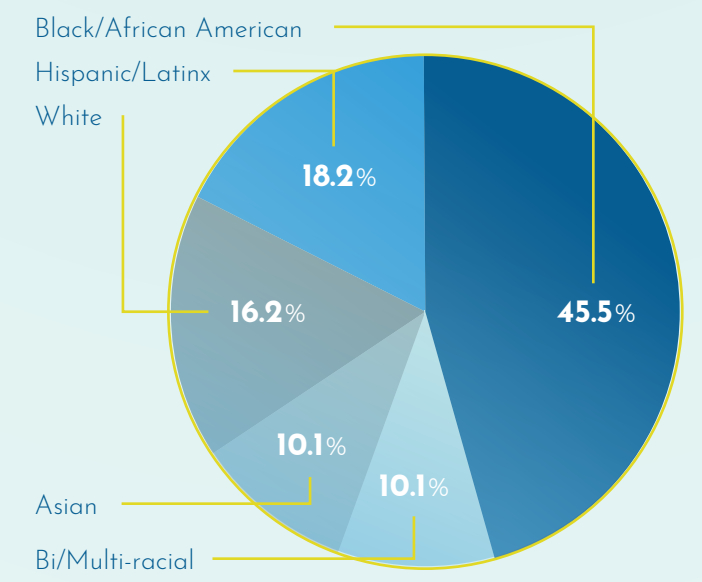
College Beyond is designed for an underserved middle majority of college students: capable youth who have earned admission to college but generally are not eligible for top merit-based financial aid or selective college persistence programs.

We are committed to bringing excellent resources to students who face the longest odds of college graduation. We serve all Pell-eligible first-year students at our partner campuses.

OUR ONLY ELIGIBILITY CRITERION IS NEED

OUR STUDENTS ARE

84% Students of Color 99% Pell Grant Recipients



A Year Unlike Any Other

COLLEGE BEYOND & COVID-19



Covid-19 is testing us all. But, as a society, we witness that this pandemic is broadly worse among groups that already bear more social and environmental vulnerability: low-income people, people of color, and people with existing health conditions.

This spring, our students faced the unprecedented challenge of transitioning their college lives online — and doing it practically overnight. Like students from all walks of life, they had to quickly learn new platforms, technologies, modes of interaction, habits, and strategies for building relationships and receiving support.

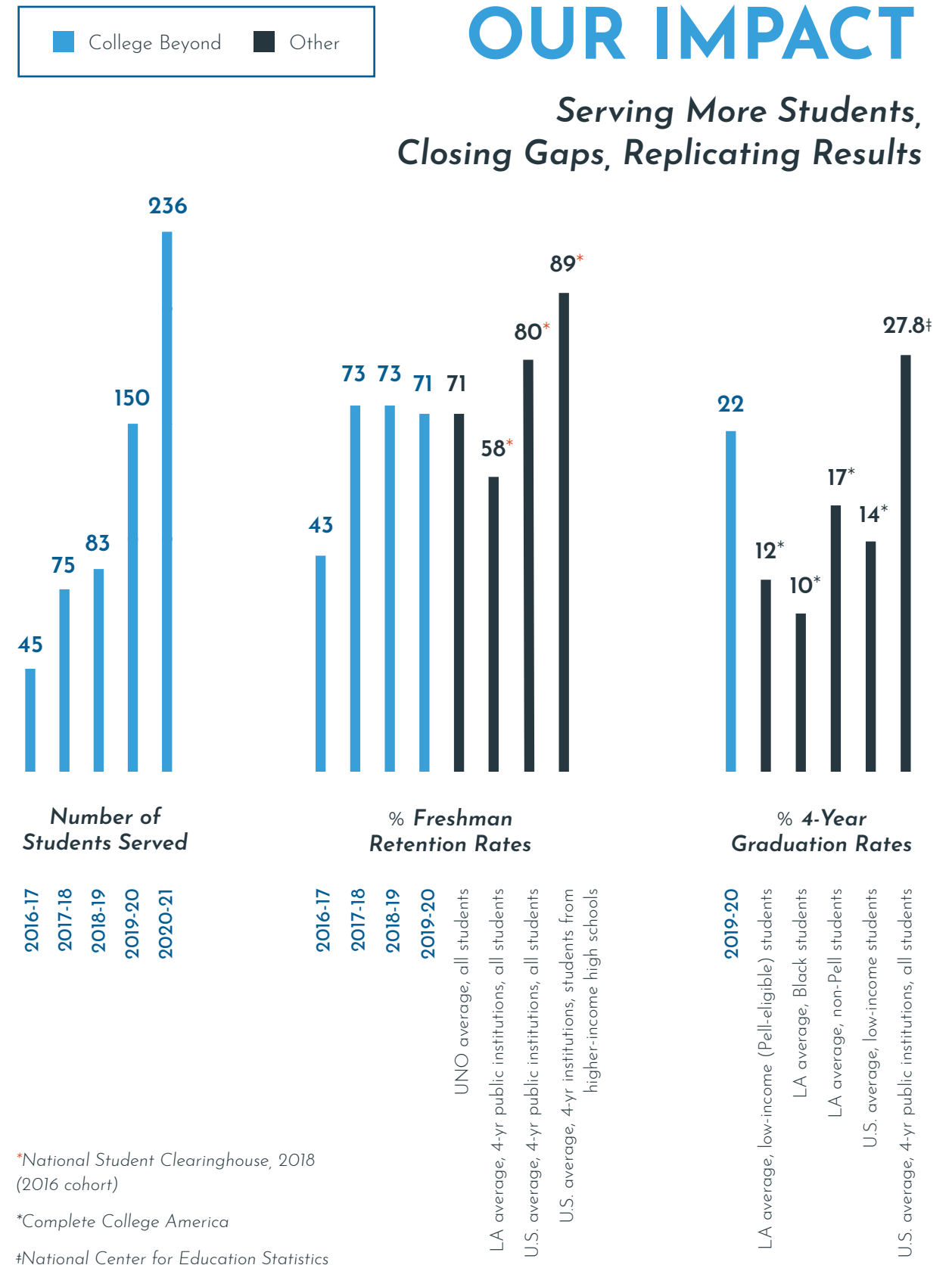
But many of our students were already living with the strain of material uncertainty, which worsened as the pandemic disproportionately affected their communities. Some did not have access to the technology they needed for school, and others lost their jobs or suddenly took on additional responsibilities at home, including caring for sick loved ones. Some faced irreparable personal loss.

As an organization, College Beyond responded. Our coaches nimbly moved our coaching program online, ensuring that they remained a consistent source of emotional and material support in our students' lives. We pivoted to provide students with financial help in the form of gift cards at local grocery stores (as opposed to on-campus dining facilities), and used our microgrant fund to meet students' real-time needs for computers, printers, and other technology. We built rapport and relationships virtually, recruited new students in a virtual world — and are watching our strategies and techniques hold up in challenging times, as this year's persistence rates attest (see page 7). This fall, we are adjusting again, operating on a hybrid model consistent with our partner campus' plans and our students' needs.

We are humbled by our students' resilience, and proud of our team's response. Amidst the ongoing uncertainty of the pandemic, we are committed to supporting our students to the very best of our ability. As always, we are in this together.

OUR IMPACT

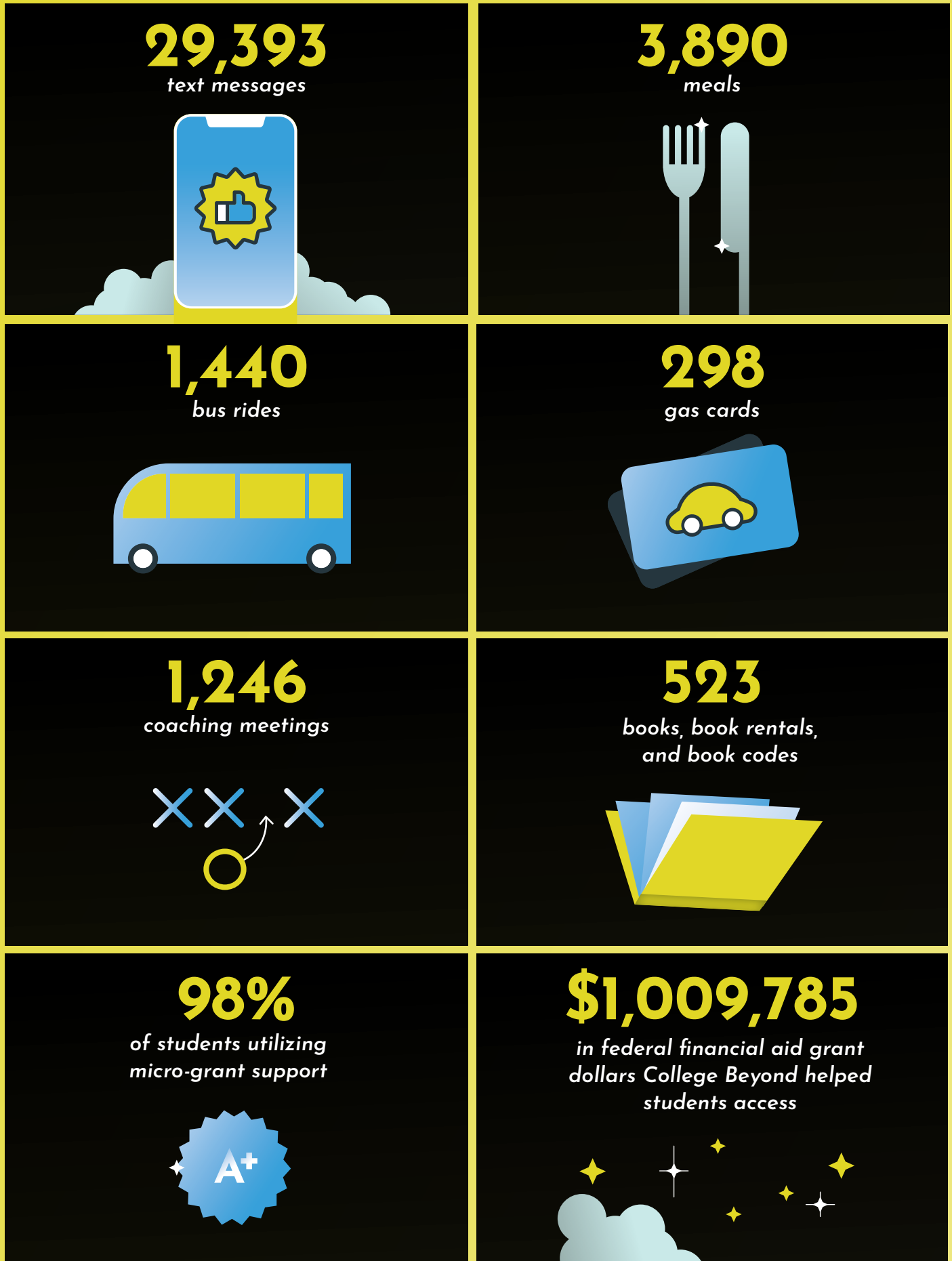
Serving More Students, Closing Gaps, Replicating Results



*National Student Clearinghouse, 2018 (2016 cohort)

*Complete College America

†National Center for Education Statistics



MELANIE ROS



"College Beyond is the best decision I ever made. Being in College Beyond has made me much more comfortable in [the] transition from high school to college. The staff has been there encouraging me and helping me change my old habits, so I can succeed. I am so happy to be a part of an uplifting community."

*College Beyond 2020 Cohort
University of New Orleans*

PEYTON FOTI, 2020 COHORT

"College Beyond has helped me both financially and emotionally. My one-on-one meetings each month have given me the encouragement and advice I need to be successful during my first year of college. Despite these strange times, I always know I'm not alone."

TU-QUYEN TRAN, 2017 COHORT

"College Beyond was a great help to me! I was worried about not being able to pay for all the supplies I needed for class, but this program allowed me to purchase everything I needed so it definitely lifted some of the weight off my shoulders. Not only did the monetary aid help, but the advisors/counselors of the program genuinely care about you and your well-being. I felt comfortable discussing anything that was giving me a hard time and they took the time to listen. I was so happy to be a part of this amazing program!"

ANGELO LEONE, 2019 COHORT

"College Beyond will be able to help you even when at times you feel no one will."

SANDRA LANG, 2019 PARENT

"College Beyond really helped [my daughter] navigate her first year at UNO. They helped her stay on track with their support, suggestions, and contacts. She made the president's list for grades her first two semesters! Thanks, College Beyond!"

CEDRIC DENT, 2015 COHORT

"College Beyond goes above and beyond to serve their students. They eliminate the financial hardships one may face, provide excellent career and personal support, and curate an environment where students are supported through college and still connected after they graduate."

RACHEL OAKLEY, 2019 COHORT

"College Beyond is an amazing program that I'm happy to be a part of. Everyone is so caring and considerate of others. Ms. Mia has always been there for me even for the littlest things. She always takes the time to really look at your situation and help you in every way possible. Not only has College Beyond helped me with emotional support, but they have also made it easier on us students to buy our books and even gas. It's such a blessing to have this opportunity to participate in such a great program like College Beyond. I am very grateful for the help it has given me with growing into a responsible adult."

MADISON JACOB, 2020 COHORT

"College Beyond has taught me better time management and how to prioritize as a freshman."

TINA WILSON, 2020 PARENT

"College Beyond has definitely made a powerful impact on my son's first year of higher education. This year could have potentially been the worst for him, with missing prom and senior end-of-year events, a COVID-limited 18th birthday, and a watered-down graduation. Thankfully, College Beyond stepped in and redirected his attention to the possibilities of still moving forward and making moves in spite of setback. This made all the difference in the world. Thank you."

CELEBRATING 5 YEARS



It is an exciting time at College Beyond.

This year marks our 5th anniversary of helping New Orleans area students enter and persist in college. Since 2015, we have experienced consistent growth and made significant strides toward our vision of increasing the number of college graduates in our region. We have narrowed our objectives, honed our target population, established partnerships, and refined our coaching model.

And as we have evolved, we have produced meaningful results.

Our early pilot interventions helped to close the retention gap between our participants and their wealthier peers at the University of New Orleans. As we deepened our partnership with the University of New Orleans, we have been able to not only increase the number of students we have served, but, **for three consecutive years, we have ensured that our Pell-eligible freshmen persist to their second year of college at a rate greater than or equal to their more affluent peers.**

And, with our first graduates earning their diplomas in May 2020, **we also celebrate the fact that College Beyond's four-year graduation rate is nearly double that of Pell-eligible students in Louisiana**, and well above the state average four-year graduation rate for all students at four-year colleges and universities (see page 7). These results show that our approach works.

Capitalizing on our early impact with first-year students, in the past year we increased our service capacity, expanded our coaching team, and piloted a third-year program. Continuing to expand our program is a natural next step toward our larger mission. The next three years will be dedicated to **expanding our program and solidifying our business model for long-term sustainability.**



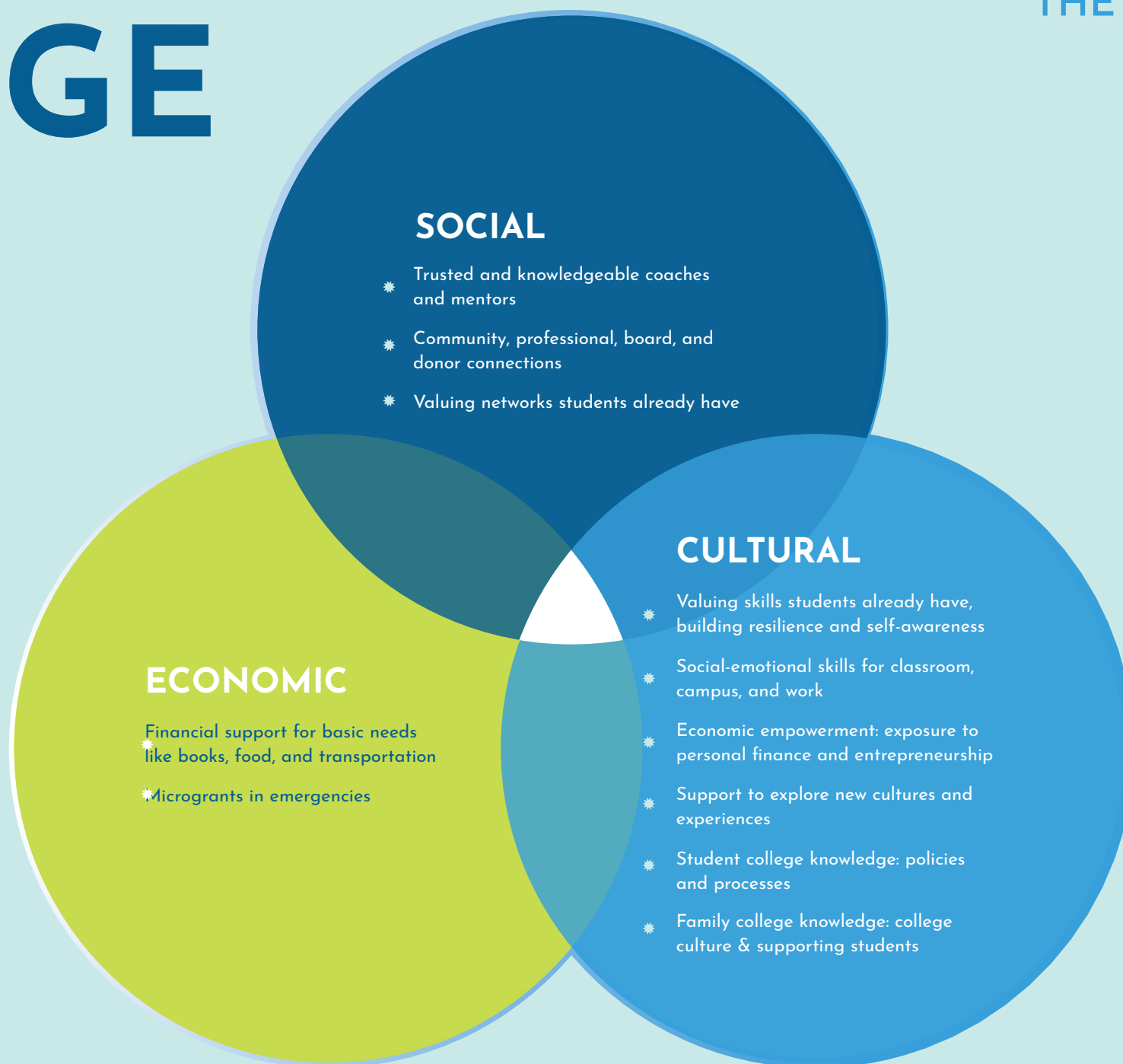
College Beyond was delighted to welcome Karaline Zeigler, LCSW, to our team in July 2020. A former classroom teacher and school-based mental health professional serving schools in New Orleans, Karaline is passionate about using trauma-informed approaches to support college students in New Orleans to define and achieve their goals. She will be coaching College Beyond's incoming freshmen cohort through the 2020-2021 academic year and beyond.

our THEORY of CHANGE

College Beyond is built around the insight that the college completion gap stems not just from inequalities in economic capital (money), but from inequalities in social and cultural capital as well.

Among affluent students, it is not only wealth itself that enhances a student's chances of college success. The social and cultural capital associated with wealth also makes a difference: through traditions, policies, and processes, higher education explicitly and implicitly values the cultural and social know-how associated with higher socioeconomic status. This can leave students from marginalized groups feeling unsupported, disconnected, and undervalued.

College Beyond acts on this theory of interlocking economic, social, and cultural capital with interlocking supports:



EQUITY

THE HEART OF OUR MISSION

Systemic inequities in income, wealth, and education have existed since our country's founding. However, the Covid-19 pandemic and recent social unrest surrounding racial injustice have aimed a spotlight on cracks in the interconnected systems of education, economy, and health. While expanding college access has long been a priority in the work of educational equity, college completion rates have remained stagnant for decades and income inequality continues to grow.

We need new strategies and new investments to change the status quo for marginalized Americans. Each year that we do not provide adequate support to students represents another cohort that is likely to remain in cycle poverty. In New Orleans, more students than ever are applying to college, but we must build on that momentum by ensuring students have the optimal support to enter and complete college, too.

Higher education is evolving – but this change is not swift enough for our students. We urgently need interventions that can both serve students' immediate needs and help system leaders learn about effective strategies for change in the long run.

College Beyond is up to that challenge. We invite you to partner with us to fight educational inequity and become part of the village that stands in the gap for promising students who are seeking a better life through higher education.

THE PATH AHEAD

College Beyond has identified a holistic solution with a high potential for scaling and replication. While our early success has taught us a great deal about college persistence, we are excited to grow and explore in our quest to contribute an effective and efficient solution to improve college completion rates for underserved students.

In an effort to codify, validate, and scale our solution, we must expand the number of students we serve and reach a critical mass for robust data outcomes. Therefore, we are devoting the next three years to strategic growth and in-depth evaluation in order to create a data-informed plan to effectively scale our impact by 2024.

GOAL 1 EXPAND OUR IMPACT BY SERVING AT LEAST 500 PELL-ELIGIBLE STUDENTS PER YEAR BY 2023.

OBJECTIVES

1. By 2022, expand our First-Year Program to a second institution
2. Continue support for Year 3 and Year 4 for 2018, 2019, and 2020 cohorts at UNO
3. Codify and pilot train-the-trainer model on one campus
4. Evaluate the impact of:
 - Four-year direct service model on graduation rates and employability at UNO
 - One-year direct model expansion to a second institution
 - Delivering in-direct services through training programs for higher education faculty and staff

GOAL 2 ESTABLISH A LONG-TERM BUSINESS MODEL FOR EXPANSION & SUSTAINABILITY BY 2023.

OBJECTIVES

1. Diversify revenue streams by increasing earned revenue by 15%
 - Codify and pilot train-the-trainer model on one campus
 - Test full fee-for-service model
2. Secure multi-year, scale-up funding
3. Better understand ROI and our unique value proposition

TO MEET THESE GOALS, WE SEEK \$3 MILLION IN INVESTMENTS OVER THE NEXT THREE YEARS.

To learn more, please reach out to contact@collegebeyond.org.



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+

- Baptist Community Ministries
- EdLoC Boulder Fund
- Entergy Charitable Foundation
- GPOA Foundation

\$50,000 to \$99,000

- Kresge Foundation
- 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

COLLEGE BEYOND

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.

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.

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

Special thanks to Heartsleeve for designing this report and to Dane Bachman, Jonathan Bachman, and the Kresge Foundation for photography.

