



COLLEGE 
BEYOND

TO. THROUGH. TOGETHER.

A Letter from Our

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear Friends,

I hope you and your family are safe and well during this time that I call a "hurricane-demic." No one would have ever thought this would be a phrase. However, I am penning this letter a month after Hurricane Ida devastated Southeast Louisiana and nearly 18 months since the start of the pandemic. In challenging times, there is always the dichotomy between heartbreak and hope. It was heartbreaking to see our neighbors and friends fight to survive in the aftermath of the storm without power, air, food, or shelter. However, in the midst of danger and struggle, we saw hope. We witnessed our communities come together to support one another. We see our region's resilience on full display as we rebuild and move forward.

At College Beyond, we've witnessed the same hope and heartbreak. In August, our students were excited to begin a "normal" semester after months of virtual learning. However, the hurricane interrupted the semester just as students gained their footing. Instead of studying for their first round of exams, our students fought to support themselves and their families during and after the storm, while also trying to regain academic focus. Unfortunately, many of our students were severely impacted by Ida. You can read more about their post-Ida experience on page 10. Yet, our students also gave us hope as we saw them put their peers before themselves, share their gratitude for life, or resolve to return to school even in the midst of severe loss and damage. One student experienced losing her home to natural disasters twice in the past nine years. However, she chose to stay in school and remains committed to succeeding this semester.

Just as our students resolved to push through and pivot, our organization did the same. This fall we celebrated the launch of pilot coaching programs at Southeastern Louisiana University and Northshore Technical Community College. However, the hurricane impeded our recruitment plans, leading us to adapt our strategies. At College Beyond, we see challenges as opportunities; this challenge allowed us the opportunity to show our value immediately to new partners by ensuring their most vulnerable students received our speedy aid in the storm's aftermath.

Bringing on new partners is just one of many things College Beyond is fortunate enough to celebrate. We welcomed three new members to our Board of Directors. You can read more about them on page 17. Most exciting is our 74% retention rate for the 2020 cohort (who completed their first year in a pandemic), which is up 2 points from last year. This shows that College Beyond is effective in the most challenging conditions.

And, in back-to-back surprises, College Beyond's work was recognized at the state and national level when I was honored with the Blue Cross Blue Shield Louisiana Foundation's Angel Award and the National College Attainment Network's Professional of the Year Award of Excellence as a champion for our mission.

None of the work and success this year would have been possible without you, the village that continues to support our students in their commitment to higher education. On behalf of our amazing students, thank you!

To. Through. Together.

Erin R. Wheeler, PhD
Executive Director



Meet Our BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The entire College Beyond team wishes a fond farewell to out-going Board member David Page, to whom we are deeply grateful for his years of service to our students and to our organization as a whole.



Dr. Keisha D. Smith, Chair
FORMER STATE DIRECTOR FOR LOUISIANA, THE EDUCATION TRUST



Malana Joseph Mitchell
VP OF PUBLIC RELATIONS, SPEARS GROUP



Leslie Dennis
DIRECTOR OF METER-TO-CASH, ENERGY CORPORATION



Gina Rachel, CPA
TAX DIRECTOR, POSTLETHWAITE & NETTERVILLE



Chantelle George
FOUNDER, CHANTELE GEORGE CONSULTING



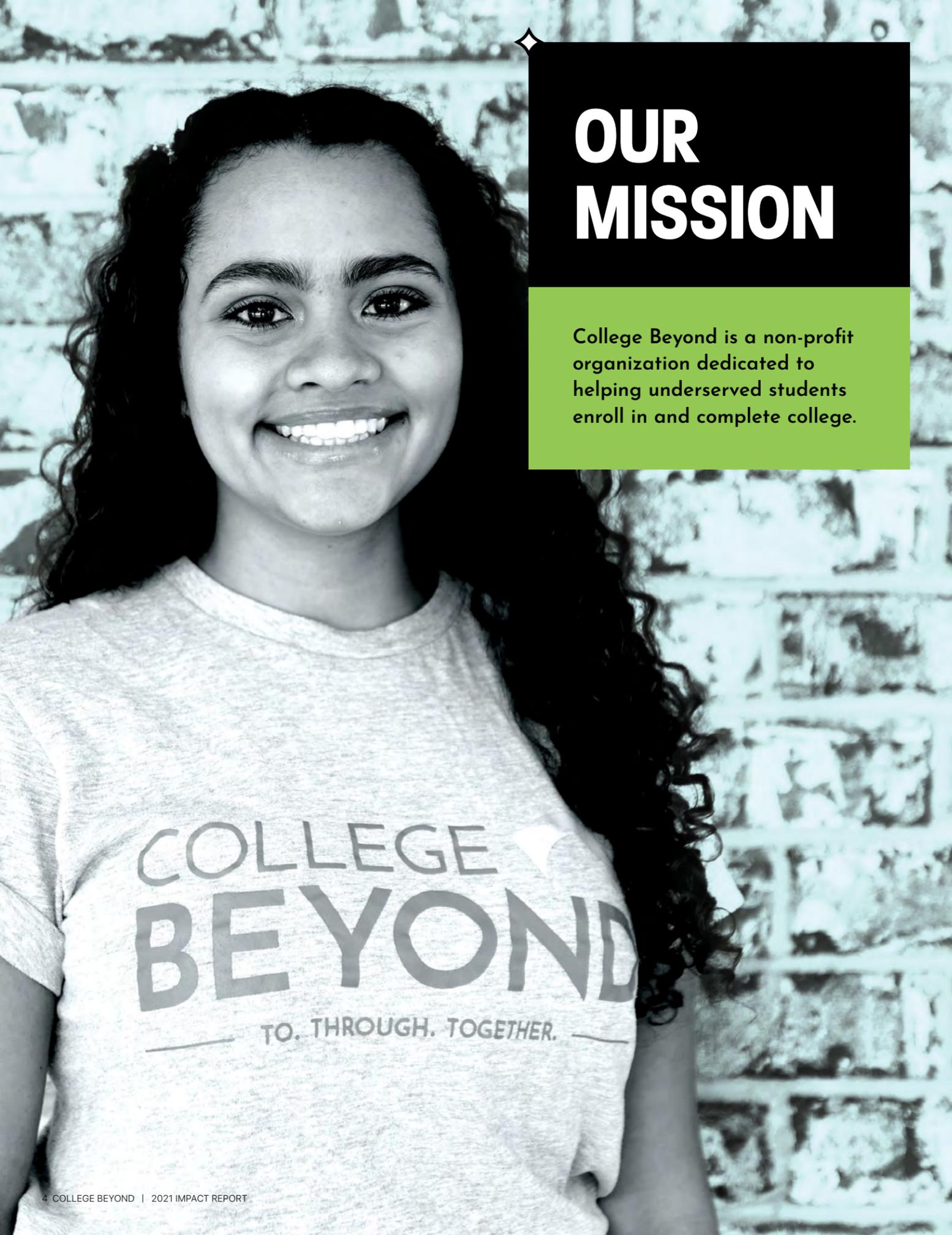
Dr. David W. Robinson-Morris
FOUNDER, REIMAGINELUTION



Phaon Spurlock
OWNER, PROTOTYPE MKTG



Katie Walmsley
CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER, KIPP NEW ORLEANS SCHOOLS



OUR MISSION

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

PREVENT SUMMER MELT

student assistance for completing pre-college checklists & financial aid for successful enrollment

COACH FOR SUCCESS

personalized and student-driven coaching on academics, social-emotional development, & finances

AWARD MICROGRANTS

financial support for essentials like food, books, & transportation

COLLEGE-TO-CAREER

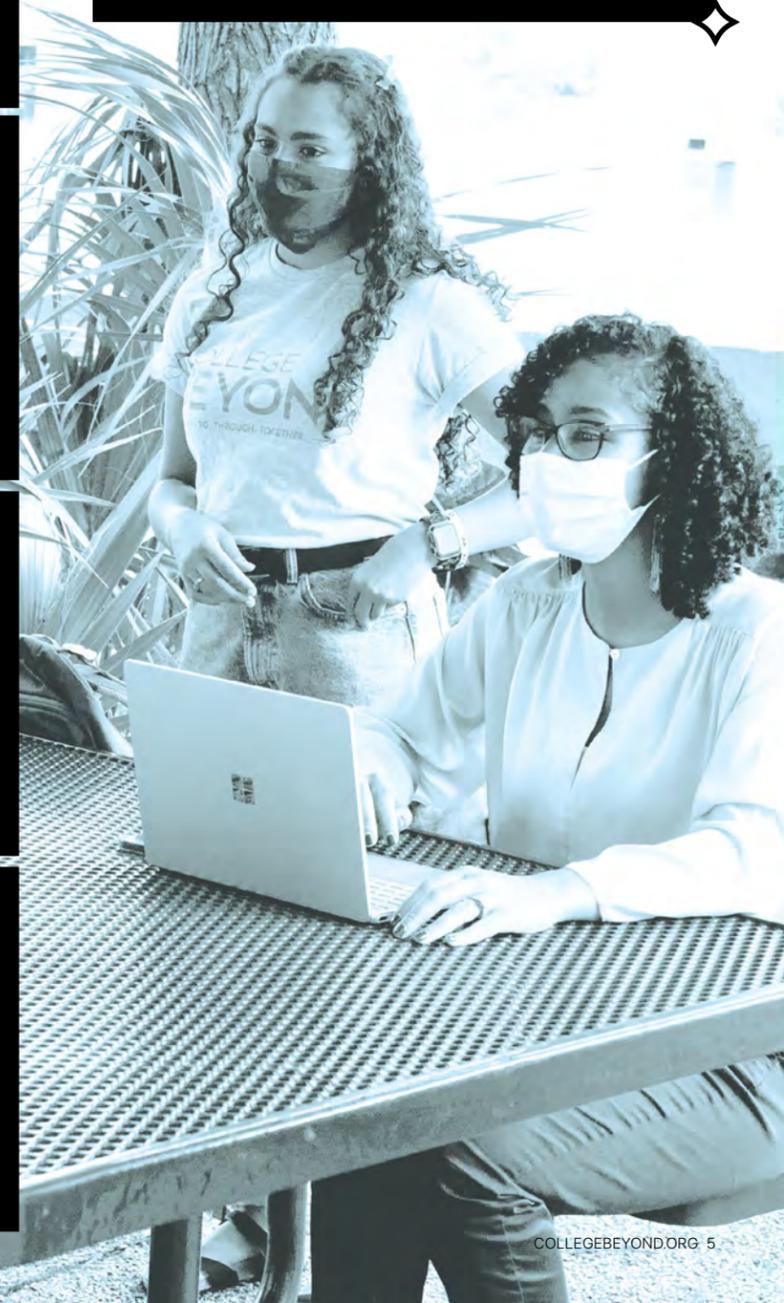
curriculum to build students' social and cultural capital in preparation for the transition to career

CREATE STRONG PARTNERSHIPS

with students, families, and institutions

OUR APPROACH

We create college insiders by walking with students to and through college. Here's what we do.



OUR THEORY OF CHANGE

Social, Cultural, and Economic Capitals

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 strata. 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:

SOCIAL

Trusted and knowledgeable coaches and mentors

Community, professional, board, and donor connections

Valuing networks students already have

ECONOMIC

Financial support for basic needs like books, food, and transportation

Microgrants in emergencies

CULTURAL

Valuing skills students already have, building resilience and self-awareness

Social-emotional skills for classroom, campus, and work

Economic empowerment: exposure to personal finance and entrepreneurship

Support to explore new cultures and experiences

Student college knowledge: policies and processes

Parent college knowledge: college culture & supporting students



WHO WE SERVE

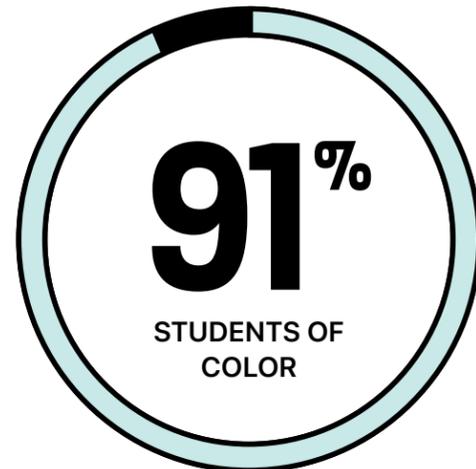
College Beyond is designed for an underserved middle majority of college students: capable youth who have earned admission to college but generally are not eligible for top merit-based financial aid or selective college persistence programs.

We are committed to bringing excellent, holistic resources to students who face the longest odds of college graduation.

OUR ONLY ELIGIBILITY CRITERION IS NEED.

We serve all Pell-eligible first-year students at our partner campuses.

OUR STUDENTS ARE



(1% DACA)

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

KATHERINE DICHARRY

UNIVERSITY OF NEW ORLEANS
CLASS OF 2023



"I was failing in my Biology major last year. I was unhappy and overly stressed trying to understand the concepts. After attending a career workshop that College Beyond held, I realized that I had no idea what I wanted to do in my career or why I was even majoring in Biology. I switched my major to Business and I have been able to bring my GPA up tremendously. Without College Beyond I probably would've lost TOPS and failed out of UNO. College Beyond has definitely changed my life and I will be forever grateful for what they have done, especially Mrs. Mia!"

KATHERINE DICHARRY

100

HURRICANE IDA RECOVERY SUPPORT

In the immediate aftermath of Ida, we conducted a full needs assessment of our students and created a plan to provide financial support above our normal microgrants. Even before seeing the results, we knew our students would need us now more than ever. Many of our students were struggling financially before the storm, but still remained excited to start a new semester. The expenses associated with evacuating, returning home, and replacing food had left a majority of our students in financial distress. Many students used all they had to either contribute to their families' needs or to independently support themselves.

While we were able to connect students with all available resources (FEMA, DSNAP, etc.), many do not qualify directly. Moreover, with campus closures, financial aid refunds were delayed, and work-study was not available. This left many students in a predicament since they count on their refunds and work-study stipends to pay their rent and support basic needs.

We worked quickly to provide students with emergency Walmart gift cards, gas cards to help with returning to their homes, and grocery store gift cards to help replenish food.

While we knew that students who struggled to secure the most basic needs before the storm would need the most support, the words that they shared with us spoke volumes:



"I spent most of my bill money on evacuation (hotel & food) and now it's time to pay my bills. Also, I had to replace a lot of my things due to the storm. I am trying to work to get another car because it is difficult trying to get me and my kids around, no public transportation runs near my home. Daycare is closed so I haven't been able to work."



"You all are helping me so much thank you!"

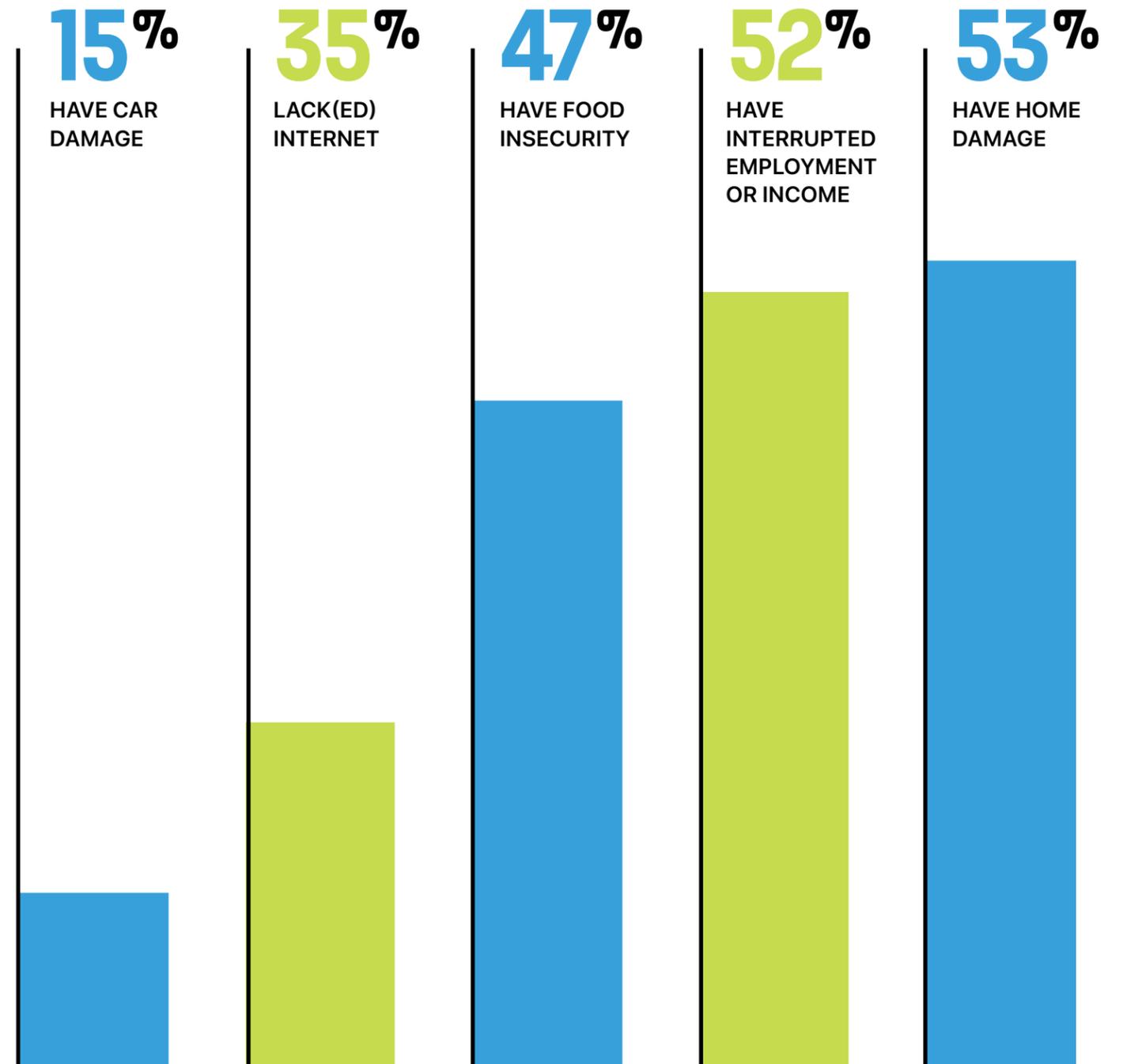


"I am in need of trying to find somewhere to move to. My home took damage and my landlord is not of the highest quality."



"I deliver DoorDash orders due to its flexibility being a full-time student and helping my mother care for my grandmother. I'm low on funds at the moment and my car is back home. I'm not certain when I'll ever be able to get back to doing deliveries."

FROM **OVER 240 STUDENTS** WHO WERE ABLE TO RESPOND TO OUR INITIAL SURVEY, WE LEARNED:



GRADUATE SPOTLIGHT

JONATHAN BULNES

GRADUATE OF THE
UNIVERSITY OF NEW ORLEANS
CLASS OF 2021

A business major at UNO, Jonathan is currently working on a Master's degree in Finance, which he will receive in December of 2021, just 6 months after receiving his undergraduate degree. He is currently a Credit Risk Analyst at OnPath Federal Credit Union in Harahan, LA.



"College Beyond has impacted me in many ways! Everyone in the program works hard to make sure I have all the materials needed to succeed in college. However, it doesn't stop there - College Beyond is there to help in my personal life as well. I am forever grateful for Mrs. Mia Washington who has helped me evolve into a better person and professional during my time at College Beyond. Thank you, College Beyond, for making an impact in my life, and for helping me fulfill my dream of becoming the first college graduate in my family!"

JONATHAN BULNES



WHAT IT TAKES

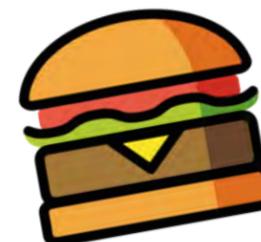
In the past year, College Beyond supported our students with...



35,715
TEXT MESSAGES



1,176
COACHING MEETINGS



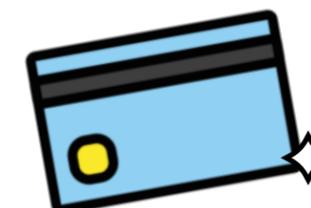
1,052
MEALS



\$21,180
BOOKS, BOOK RENTALS,
AND BOOK CODES



2,100
BUS RIDES



154
GAS CARDS



74%
OF STUDENTS
UTILIZING MICRO-
GRANT SUPPORT

\$1,218,240

IN FEDERAL FINANCIAL AID GRANT
DOLLARS COLLEGE BEYOND
HELPED STUDENTS ACCESS

OUR IMPACT

Serving more students, closing gaps, replicating results

4-YEAR GRADUATION RATES

3X HIGHER THAN
LA Average, low-income (Pell-eligible) students

2X HIGHER THAN
LA Average, all students

3X HIGHER THAN
LA Average, Black students

2.5X HIGHER THAN
U.S. average, low-income students

1= EQUAL TO
LA Average, White students

*Complete College America

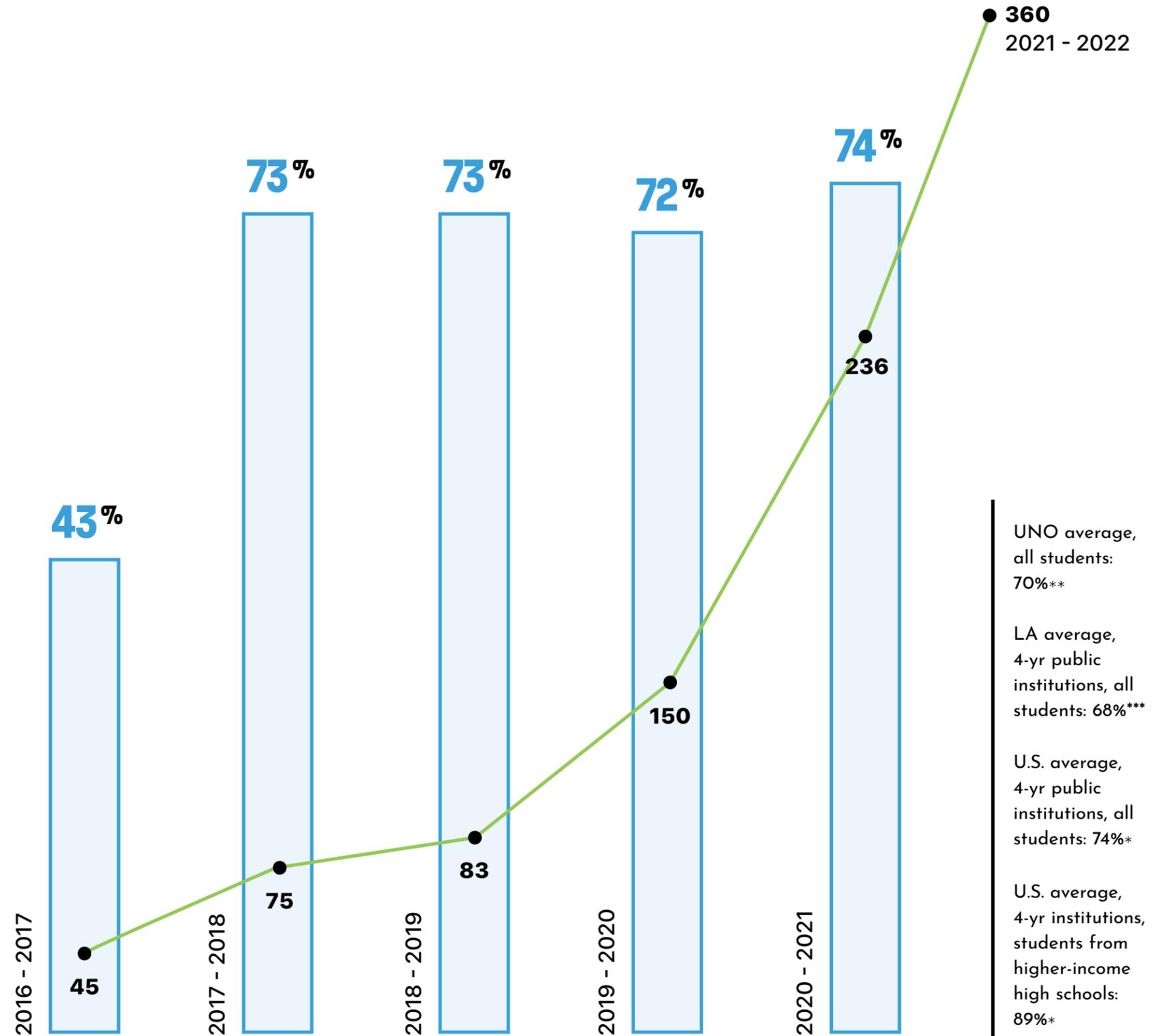
*National Center for Education Statistics



FRESHMAN RETENTION RATES



NUMBER OF STUDENTS SERVED



UNO average, all students: 70%**

LA average, 4-yr public institutions, all students: 68%***

U.S. average, 4-yr public institutions, all students: 74%*

U.S. average, 4-yr institutions, students from higher-income high schools: 89%*

*National Student Clearinghouse, 2018 (2016 cohort)

**University of New Orleans

***Louisiana Board of Regents

WHAT OUR STUDENTS ARE SAYING



In the very beginning, College Beyond really helped me get settled in. It's really important to have people help you navigate through those first few years of college as it's such a brand new feeling. College Beyond has also helped me by keeping me updated and recommending resources if I need them. They've really helped make this experience a lot easier for me.

JUSTIN LEWIS



I don't think I would've survived college without College Beyond. I enrolled for UNO extremely late. UNO offered me full compensation so I applied and College Beyond reached out to me. Not only did I receive financial assistance as a low-income college student in areas I needed such as food and gas, but I also received guidance on my path in college. I received helpful advice and directions to take in my endeavors whether it be relocation and rent options or study abroad and further learning opportunities.

SUHAYLA CHIRDON



It has given me the opportunity to focus on school work and not finances.

JAZMYN MACKIE



The gift cards are a huge help for my family to buy groceries. Also, their invested time in us gives me a reason to be a responsible student.

AHMAD ABDELLATIF



I love College Beyond! They have helped guide Laurence as he transitioned from high school. They keep us posted on changes and issues throughout the year. They send reminders and offer support. My son is having surgery today and he has been very worried about it so he's been struggling a little these past weeks, but he was able to reach out to his mentor for support. I really appreciate College Beyond.

TRENESE JONES-DOLLIOLE, 20-21



Wow! College Beyond has helped keep me accountable in order to keep my son accountable. Thanks College Beyond.

MIKE DALEY, 20-21

CONNECTING WITH FAMILIES

IS AN IMPORTANT PART OF OUR WORK. HERE'S WHAT SOME OF OUR STUDENTS' FAMILY MEMBERS HAVE SAID ABOUT COLLEGE BEYOND:

NEW PARTNERSHIPS

"Northshore Technical Community College (NTCC) serves a wide variety of students with various challenges that impact student success. Over the years, we have placed much effort into providing adequate academic support to the student body, however, we recognize that our students are faced with obstacles outside of the classroom setting that we cannot always provide resources for. We are thrilled about our partnership with College Beyond because through this program, we are equipped to take a more holistic approach to student success through financial support, community resource engagement, and mentorship. NTCC is confident that the College Beyond program will have a transformative impact on many of our students."

WILLIAM S. WAINWRIGHT, PHD
Chancellor, Northshore Technical Community College



"College Beyond has a demonstrated record of helping students succeed. We look forward to working with the organization and anticipate positive results for Southeastern students."

DR. KAY MAURIN
Chief Enrollment Management Officer
Southeastern Louisiana University



NEW BOARD MEMBERS

WE RECENTLY WELCOMED THREE NEW MEMBERS TO THE COLLEGE BEYOND BOARD OF DIRECTORS.

LESLIE DENNIS, DIRECTOR OF METER-TO-CASH ORGANIZATION AT ENTERGY CORPORATION
She has over 20+ years in finance and strategic planning experience with proven results working with various organizations to reduce cost and increase revenue through the use of technology and continuous improvements.

CHANTELLE GEORGE, FOUNDER AND LEAD CONSULTANT OF CHANTELLE GEORGE CONSULTING
Chantelle brings more than 10 years of college access and success experience in the areas of higher education, K-12 college and career readiness, and nonprofit leadership.

PHAON SPURLOCK, OWNER OF BKLYN LEAGUE, LUXURIOUSPROTOTYPE, AND PROTOTYPE MKTG
His 15 years of experience in marketing has led him to work across several different industries, including finance, non-profit and entertainment/media.

STRATEGIC PLAN

PROGRESS REPORT

College Beyond has identified a holistic, high-impact solution with strong 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 and analysis. As a result, 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 model and grow our impact by 2024. **To meet these goals, we seek \$3 million in investments over the next three years.**

THIS YEAR WE MADE SIGNIFICANT STRIDES TOWARD ACCOMPLISHING OUR GOALS:

- ▶ We replicated our unprecedented freshman retention rates while also scaling to serve more students.
- ▶ We grew our scale and are on track to serve 500 students by 2023. In 2021-2022, we are serving 360 students across three campuses (University of New Orleans, Southeastern Louisiana University, and Northshore Technical College), an increase of 150 students from the previous academic year.
- ▶ We renewed our contract with the University of New Orleans to continue to serve new and continuing students until 2024.
- ▶ We engaged in fruitful discussions with two additional institutions to bring our services to their campuses in 2022-2023.
- ▶ We implemented a College to Career Curriculum to build a bridge to life after college for students nearing graduation.
- ▶ We secured a data consultant to aid in the preparation for external evaluation.

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
Energy 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
City Fund
Boeing
Singer Family Foundation

JOIN OUR MISSION

BY SUPPORTING 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.

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, Cedric Dent Jr., and the Kresge Foundation for photography. Cedric Dent Jr. is a College Beyond alumnus who is completing his Masters in Social Work at Louisiana State University.