

THRIVE

SCHOLARS

BRAND MESSAGING GUIDE

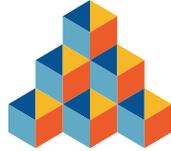


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HOW TO USE THIS DOCUMENT

People who care about Thrive Scholars will always be our best brand ambassadors. Whatever your affiliation with Thrive Scholars, the following messaging can help you better communicate our mission, work, and impact to friends, colleagues, and associates.

Think of this as your tool kit for go-to copy and how to talk about key themes. It is designed to make your communications on behalf of Thrive Scholars simpler. The language will allow you to quickly and consistently tell our story. You can use copy verbatim word-for-word, or you can borrow key phrases to work into your correspondences and communications as necessary.

Thank you for helping us tell our story well.

ELEVATOR PITCH & CONVERSATION STARTERS

We don't always have time or opportunity for a full elevator pitch or a lengthy conversation. But we can still leave people with something to remember. A quick, memorable brag or compelling intro about our impact can go a long way toward generating an appetite for future conversation.

Short conversation starters:

- Our goal is to diversify corporate, civic, and academic leadership and see talented low-income students of color develop the inter-generational wealth and financial security their more privileged peers take for granted.
- Our goal is to see talented low-income Underrepresented students develop the inter-generational wealth and financial security their more privileged peers take for granted, and become the diverse corporate, civic, and academic leaders our country so desperately needs.
- If we really want to support diverse communities, we have to get serious about how we prepare talented and ambitious students of color for success. What our society is doing now doesn't work. But our model, refined over 20 years, does. And the data proves it.
- What if our greatest voices for change and diverse leadership didn't just come from community activists – but from the boardrooms of our most innovative companies? That's the vision of Thrive Scholars. And thanks to our field-leading program, it's happening.
- There is too little diversity in corporate, civic, and academic leadership. One reason: we have set the bar too low for how we support talented Underrepresented students.
- We prepare talented and ambitious young people of color to thrive in college and career -- and become innovative diverse leadership of tomorrow.
- When it comes to our most talented and ambitious students of color, society has set the bar too low. Just graduating from college is not enough. Top schools matter. Grades matter. Majors matter. Career skills matter. And connections matter. Our program targets what really matters -- as a result our Scholars thrive.

ELEVATOR PITCH: Breaking it Down

The elevator pitch helps us tell as much of the story about the work we do and the results that work achieves as quickly as we can. It's not about remembering the pitch word for word. It's about knowing the challenge -- and understanding our solution. And feeling comfortable with our key positioning ideas. Read the pitch over a few times. Practice it. Then make it your own.

30-SECOND ELEVATOR PITCH

At Thrive Scholars, our goal is to see talented low-income students of color develop the inter-generational wealth and financial security their more privileged peers take for granted, and become the diverse corporate, civic, and academic leaders our country so desperately needs.

We have been doing this for 20 years, and our model works. More than 90% of our scholars attend a Top 100 College -- over 40% go to Ivy League schools. 98% graduate. And along the way, they persist more in difficult STEM majors and earn better grades than any other student demographics, including their more privileged peers at their same colleges. Most importantly, they go on to thrive in their careers, and are on the path to becoming the diverse professional, civic, business, and academic leaders of color our country needs.

60-SECOND ELEVATOR PITCH

Thrive Scholars works to provide our most talented and ambitious low-income students of color with the opportunities they need to become tomorrow's diverse leaders -- and develop the inter-generational wealth and financial security their more privileged peers take for granted. We want to see more Black and Latinx people in the C-Suites and corporate boardrooms. In law offices and higher education. In civic institutions and in professional careers like engineers, doctors, and scientists.

Our society has been struggling with this challenge for decades -- and failing. That's because we champion college graduation as the ultimate goal for talented people of color. And that's part of the problem. It's not enough. That bar is set too low. The truth is it takes more than a college degree to get into a top law school or business school. More than a diploma to be a successful engineer, doctor, or scientist. For real success, where you go to college matters. Grades matter. Majors matter. Strong quantitative and writing skills matter. Career skills matter. And, of course, connections matter. Our model, refined over 20 years, aims at thriving not graduation rates.

We have been doing this for 20 years and have developed a model that works. By focusing our investment on key inflection points, we're changing outcomes. More than 90% of our scholars attend a Top 100 College -- over 40% go to Ivy League schools. 98% graduate. And along the way, they persist more in difficult STEM majors and earn better grades than any other student demographics, including their more privileged peers at their same colleges. Most importantly, they go on to thrive in their careers, and are on the path to becoming the diverse professional, civic, business, and academic leaders of color our country needs.

WHY OUR MODEL WORKS

Five Core Pillars Drive Our Success

We have learned there are five key opportunities our Scholars often do not have access to, opportunities their more privileged peers grew up with. These Opportunity gaps prevent our Scholars from graduating college with the skills and degrees they need to succeed. By crafting data-based interventions for those key opportunity gaps, our program makes the difference.

Expert College Advising

- **Opportunity Gap:** Access to college admissions counselors who can support college planning and a pathway to top colleges. As generally first-generation, few Scholars consider out-of-state colleges.
- **Our Solution: Expert College Advising:** In-depth college advising program with selective college admissions experts, one-on-one counseling, and campus visits to target “best fit” elite colleges.
- **Outcome:** Over 90% of our Scholars attend a top 100 college, over 40% an Ivy+.

Academic Preparation

- **Opportunity Gap:** Access to rigorous high school coursework, preparation, support, or the out-of-school academic opportunities more privileged students enjoy.
- **Our Solution: Summer Academy:** Two summers of six-week, residential academic boot camp. Over 350 hours of college-level instruction targeting math, writing, and critical thinking skills.
- **Outcome:** Scholars earn a 3.4 average GPA and 65% persist in difficult STEM majors, outperforming even their more privileged peers.

Social, Emotional & Academic Support

- **Opportunity Gap:** Access to a network of college graduates who can share knowledge about the college experience.
- **Our Solution: Social, Emotional & Academic Support:** One-on-one mentoring from staff and volunteer and peer mentors, and academic support as needed.
- **Outcome:** 98% of our Scholars graduate -- outperforming all student demographics along the way.

Five Core Pillars Drive Our Success cont.

Financial Support

- **Opportunity Gap:** Low-income students cannot afford college or day-to-day expenses at college.
- **Our Solution: Financial Support:** Strategically advise toward no-loan schools. Provide free laptops, travel and logistics support, and annual stipends.
- **Outcome:** Our Scholars graduate with an average college debt of less than \$10,000, far below that of similar students who go to less prestigious colleges.

Career Development

- **Opportunity Gap:** Limited knowledge of post college career paths, exposure to corporate culture, or the professional network that opens doors.
- **Our Solution: Career Development:** 2 years of intensive, personalized career coaching focusing on soft skills. We prepare our Scholars to contribute and thrive from day one.
- **Outcome:** Our Scholars get hired at top companies

OUR IMPACT

Our Scholars Attend Top Schools

Similar Students	Our Scholars
Less than 50% apply to one selective College	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Over 90% of our scholars attend a Top 100 college. Over 80% attend a Top 50 College. Over 40% attend the most elite Ivy League plus schools.

Our Scholars Thrive at Top Colleges

	Similar Students	Our Scholars
Grades	Less than 50% have above a 3.0 GPA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 85% above a 3.0 Average GPA 3.4, up from 3.1 (3 years ago)
STEM Persistence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 18% for Black students 24% for Latinx Students 	65% STEM persistence
Graduation Rate	Less than 50%	98%

Our Scholars outperform their more privileged peers at the same Top 100 Colleges. They are 10% more likely to graduate and 15% more likely to persist in STEM.

Our Scholars Thrive in meaningful careers

Our alumni are hired by the most prestigious companies and institutions in the world. They are:

- Attorneys at Sullivan Cromwell, O'Melveny, and Pillsbury.
- Financial analysts at Goldman, Merrill, and BlackRock.
- Neurosurgeons at Mass General and in cancer research at MD Anderson.
- Engineers and computer scientists at places like Google, Salesforce, Facebook, and Virgin Rocket.
- Professors at Berkeley, USC, and Colorado.
- Consultants at Accenture, Boston Consulting, McKinsey, and Deloitte.

Almost 1/3 go on to advanced degrees, including:

- MBA's at Harvard, Stanford, Duke, and Dartmouth
- Law Schools at Yale, Harvard, Penn, Columbia, and Cornell
- Medical Schools at UCSF, Brown, Harvard, and Stanford
- Masters in Engineering at Brown, Aeronautics at MIT, and Biochemistry at USC
- PhDs in Molecular Biology at UC San Francisco, Biomedical Sciences at Harvard, and Advanced

Mathematics at Rice

TACTICAL MESSAGING – Big Themes That Drive Our Work

If you have a few of minutes, how do you talk about the organization, address major issues, and elaborate on themes introduced in the elevator pitch? Here are some other ways to think about the problem Thrive Scholars works to solve and the impact of our work.

The Problem

We focus on two main problems that we are trying to address

- Corporate, Civic, and Academic Leadership Diversity
- A path out of poverty for our talented and motivated students of color

Leadership Diversity

Black and Latinx individuals make up nearly one third of the population, but represent a fraction of the nation's corporate leadership and advanced workforce:

- Fortune 500 Executives - **1%** Black | **12%** Latinx
- Law Firm Partners - **2%** Black | **3%** Latinx
- Scientists and Engineers - **5%** Black | **6%** Latinx
- Doctors - **6%** Black | **7%** Latinx

Unequal Opportunity Drives Unequal Prosperity

- **Poverty** - 21% of Black Americans and 18% of Hispanic/Latinx Americans live in poverty, compared to 8% of white Americans.
- **Lack of Upward Mobility** - 10% of white Americans born into poverty will ever earn a six-figure salary, compared to only 2.5% of Black Americans and 7.1% of Hispanic/Latinx Americans.
- **Job Quality** - 58% of white workers have jobs that pay family sustaining earnings, compared to 41% of Black workers and 37% of Latinx workers.
- **Wealth** - The financial net worth of a typical white family (\$171,000) is nearly 10X that of the average Black family (\$17,150) and 8x that of the average Hispanic/Latinx family (\$20,720).

OUR FOCUS ON BLACK AND AFRICAN AMERICAN STUDENTS

Our original and Current Focus

- Thrive Scholars was founded nearly 20 years ago, inspired by the challenges faced by Black and African American students in South Central LA
- Black students, and Black males specifically, have been a strategic priority of our organization ever since, and is the only group singled out in our current Strategic Plan.

Why Focus on Black and African American students

- Centuries of systemic racism in this country has had a disproportionately larger impact on African Americans than nearly every other group.
- Though 13% of the population, Black Americans make up only 1% of Fortune 500 CEOs, 2% of law firm equity partners, and 5% of scientists and engineers.
- And they have a smaller chance of lifting themselves out of poverty than almost any other group

EMAIL TEMPLATE -- THRIVE SCHOLARS INTRODUCTION

The following is an email template that you can use to introduce Thrive Scholars to your network. You can modify as appropriate for the situation, the nature of the contact, and the marketing materials you are forwarding.

Dear {Variable Name},

[Short, personalized introduction sample- edit as you see fit:]

I am writing to let you know about an organization I am passionate about, enough so that I am on their board. I really do think you might find our work inspiring.

[Core problem, work, and impact]

At Thrive Scholars, our goal is to see talented low-income students of color develop the inter-generational wealth and financial security their more privileged peers take for granted, and become the diverse corporate, civic, and academic leaders our country needs.

We know that corporate, civic, and academic leadership, as well as professions such as law, medicine, and engineering, do not reflect the diversity of our society. Equally disturbing is the fact Black and Latinx individuals born into poverty in this country have less than a 5% chance of ever earning a six-figure salary.

Thrive Scholars has been at this for 20 years, and we know why. Our system is focusing on the wrong solution - college graduation. We need to think bigger. It takes more than a college degree to get into a top law school or business school. More than a diploma to be a successful engineer, doctor, or scientist. Where you go to college matters. Grades matter. Majors matter. Career skills matter. And, of course, connections matter.

Our comprehensive program prepares and supports high-achieving, low-income students of color with over 350 hours of rigorous, college-level instruction, selective college admissions guidance, personal mentoring, hard and soft skills development, career coaching, and a professional network that opens doors to opportunity.

And it works. More than 90% of our scholars attend a Top 100 College -- over 40% go to Ivy League schools. 98% graduate. They are not only outperforming students with similar backgrounds, but significantly outperforming their higher-income peers at same elite colleges. They are 10% more likely to graduate and 15% more likely to persist in STEM. Most importantly, they go on to thrive in their careers, and are on a path to becoming the diverse professional, civic, business, and academic leaders of color our country needs.

[Close and document attachment]

Much more to share, but for now, I am attaching [DOCUMENT NAME OR DESCRIPTION for example: "our Black Scholars THRIVE deck."] It offers more detail about [PURPOSE OF DOC. For example: "our work supporting Black students in college and career success."] Thanks again for taking the time to learn more about Thrive Scholars. I look forward to hearing your thoughts.

Regards,
[Name]

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

With a clear, simple POV on why we do what we do, you can welcome even the toughest questions as an opportunity to win new advocates to our mission. Here are answers to a few of the most common tough questions. You can use these in your conversations or work them into your emails or other communications.

How has COVID-19 impacted your work?

Social distancing presents a unique set of challenges and risks for a high-touch, personalized program model like ours. But, adapting and improving outcomes based on what we learn has been part of our DNA from the start nearly 20 years ago. Whatever the situation demands, our first priority will always be the needs and success of our Scholars.

When the COVID-19 pandemic began, we took decisive action to ensure our Scholars continue to get the support they need during the crisis and beyond.

- We provide one-on-one virtual coaching and counseling to all of our Scholars to help them navigate this unsettling time.
- We built a virtual summer educational and training program to replace our on-site academy typically at USC and Amherst during July and August.
- We collaborate with companies to make available virtual internship experiences where our Scholars can still learn and add value despite working remotely.
- We provide guidance to high school students who get acceptance letters but can't tour colleges with how best to make these important decisions.
- We support Scholars who are no longer able to stay on their college campuses with logistics and travel costs.

Whether it's the ongoing challenge of this pandemic or some new challenge yet to come, Thrive Scholars will always overcome, and our Scholars will always excel. That's because we aren't afraid to pivot and take bold action when new data or new situations demand a new path forward.

Note to Communicators: The primary story for Covid-19 is that Thrive Scholars is willing to adapt and innovate as necessary. You may not need to include the bullets in every instance.

How is Thrive Scholars different from other organizations?

It is about impact and depth of support.

There has been little movement in diversifying corporate, civic, and academic leadership, as well as professions such as law, tech, medicine, and engineering. And it is getting harder for low-income individuals of color born into poverty to climb the social and economic ladder, in fact- they have less than a 5% chance of ever earning a six-figure salary.

Thrive Scholars has been at this for 20 years -- and our data-informed model works. It' starts with understanding the real problem. When it comes to students of color, the trend in our society is to focus on college graduation. And that's part of the problem. We need to think bigger. it takes more than a college degree to get into a top law school or business school. More than a diploma to be a successful engineer, doctor, or scientist. Where you go to college matters. Grades matter. Majors matter. Career skills matter. And, of course, connections matter.

And we have developed a program that provides the supports needed to achieve these ambitious goals- many of which we uniquely provide. We have two summers of a six- week summer academy where students take calculus and writing for six hours a day taught by college professors. We provide two years of one on one career coaching to students in college. No other organization does this. It is why we can claim results no others can. 98% graduate. Over 85% of our Scholars have above B average or above and 65% persist in STEM. No other organization has these results, because no other organization has this depth of programming.

Why do you support just high-achieving students?

There is a movement in this country to get more students to go to and graduate from college. It is where philanthropy and most non-profits in this space are focused. As a result, people think our highest achieving low-income students of color are going to be fine because they are going to graduate from college.

This assumption is misplaced. Over 50% of our highest achieving low-income students of color do not graduate college. And if they do, they are not graduating with the grades, major persistence, or career skills they need for the careers they should have. As a result, even our most talented Black and Latinx students are not finding paths into leadership positions or professional careers that bring financial security. In fact, a young person of color born into poverty has less than a 5% chance of ever earning a six-figure salary.

At the root of all of this is opportunity. Low-income students of color don't receive the same support, attention, and preparation as their higher-income peers. But there is also something else at play -- a hidden bigotry of low expectations. When you get as close to this issue and the data as we have over the past 20 years, it becomes clear that our system champions the wrong goals for these students. Celebrates the wrong outcomes. We have set the bar too low, allowing "graduating from college" to become our measure for success and equity. It's neither. Not by a long shot. It takes more than a college degree to get into a top law school or business school. More than a diploma to be a successful engineer, doctor, or scientist. Where you go to college matters. Grades matter. Majors matter. Career skills matter. And, of course, connections matter.

When our most talented and ambitious low-income students of color aren't thriving in college and career -- we all lose. If we truly want to address the issues of race and class in our society, we must set the bar for support as high as possible. We must demand that the best and brightest young people from communities of color are given the opportunity -- and equipped with the skills and connections -- to bring real change. We must insist our most talented low-income students of color go to elite colleges, get great grades, persist in tough STEM majors, and graduate with the career skills needed for success in high-impact careers.

That's why we focus on high achievers. Thrive Scholars' mission isn't just to see exceptional students from underrepresented communities get by -- it's to see them thrive. In college, career, and life.

Why is your cost-per-student so high?

No other organization offers the depth and breadth of Thrive Scholars' programming. Some may last as long as our six years of support from junior in high school to early career. But they don't offer our one-on-one career development and coaching over two years or the rigorous, college-level instruction of our Summer Academy. Others may provide mentoring. But not both during college and after graduation like us. And others may offer internship opportunities, but they fail to prepare their students with the necessary level of hard and soft professional skills development our data analysis has proven is necessary for low-income graduates of color to thrive in corporate environments.

But setting aside that we simply offer more, we'd argue that the critical metric isn't cost-per-student but return on investment. What's actually working?

Thrive Scholars provides an amazing return on investment. Not only does our high-touch, depth of programming yield field-leading outcomes, it's highly efficient in doing so. The average wealthy family will spend \$1.3 million on education, tutors, coaching, cultural experiences, and other extracurriculars during their students' formative years to put them in a place to get into an elite college. The average middle-class family will spend \$500,000 for those same privileges. But over a comprehensive, 6-year engagement, our program costs less than \$50,000 per Scholar.

By analyzing the data and focusing our investment -- in time and money -- on key inflection points, we are able to close the opportunity gap between our scholars and their more privileged peers. That's why a significant portion of our investment is in academic success -- over 350 hours of college-level classes bolstering skills in high-level math, writing, and critical thinking. A critical component that no other organization provides.

And we know our program works. Our Scholars don't just graduate, they thrive -- at college and in their careers. Our Scholars outperform their higher-income peers at the same Top 100 colleges. They are 10% more likely to graduate and 15% more likely to persist in STEM. Post grad, 28% go on to earn advanced degrees, and our alumni are hired at the most innovative and successful companies across sectors.

We could cut our Summer Academy and our two years of personalized career coaching tomorrow and have a cost-per student similar to or below other organizations, but then our Scholars would graduate college, but without the grades, STEM persistence, and career skills they need to become the corporate, academic, and civic leaders our country so desperately needs.