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Client: SCS Noonan Scholars

Project: Key Messaging 2020 - Scholars V2

KEY MESSAGING: SCHOLARS

High-performing, ambitious high school students from underrepresented communities. Targeted key messaging (which will guide a variety of tactical marketing assets) should enable these young people to identify SCS Noonan Scholars as the best, most trusted path to achieving the kind of challenging yet rewarding academic and career success they dream about. They will recognize in the organization a real, authentic community of caring people, and see in other scholars, alumni, mentors, and staff people who look like they do, have similar life experiences and backgrounds, and share their relentless pursuit of excellence.

We prepare high-achieving, underrepresented students for success in college and career.

We recruit the best and brightest for our program -- and prepare these high-achieving, low-income students of color for success wherever their passion and talent leads. When you are accepted into our program, you are part of a select group of young scholars -- the best of the best. You've already earned your place among the top high schoolers in the nation through your own grit and resilience, often overcoming obstacles and taking on responsibilities along the way that your more privileged peers can only imagine. From that place of confidence, we begin our journey together. Starting in your junior year in high school through college and into your early career, we invest six years preparing you to thrive in whatever field you choose. Prior to college, we provide complete college admissions counseling, a free laptop computer, and over 350 hours of rigorous college-level instruction to bolster your skills in high-level math, writing, and critical thinking. During college and early career, we provide targeted academic support, a bridge stipend of up to \$1000 a year to offset living expenses, mentoring, career skills development, one-on-one career coaching, and the kind of professional network building that opens doors to career opportunity. And it works. Our scholars thrive. By *thrive* we mean succeeding on your own terms, in the field you've chosen. We mean getting into a better college, earning a better GPA, and enjoying greater career success because you went through our program. Those aren't just brags. They are proven outcomes. And the data is undeniable.

Questions this answers:

Who can join your program? How do you decide who gets in?

How does it work? What do you do?

What will I get out of your program?

Our six-year program is free for our scholars.

Our program is not only proven to deliver a positive impact on the college and career success of our scholars, it's entirely free. You won't pay a dime for our services. That's because as a nonprofit, our purpose isn't to make money, it's to enable more students like you to get into and graduate from top colleges ready to thrive in your career. Our program is designed to level the playing field for underrepresented students, mobilizing opportunity and reducing obstacles to your success -- including financial obstacles. Worrying about money or having to take on a full-time job to cover expenses is a huge distraction for students. So, to reduce your financial burden and ensure you are able to stay focused on your college education, we provide four-year bridge scholarships to cover the cost of books, dorm fees, travel, and other daily expenses not covered by student financial aid packages. In addition to a stipend of up to \$1000 each year of college, we provide a \$500 stipend and cover the cost of your housing, meals, and travel each summer you attend our Summer Academy. Plus, we give you a free laptop to keep at the end of your second Summer Academy. We know these bridge scholarships and a new laptop won't eliminate every financial concern you may have going to school, but we hope they go a long way to enabling you to eliminate distractions and achieve your best at college.

Questions this answers:

Is your program really free? That sounds too good to be true.

I don't have extra money. How much does your program cost?

Why don't you charge anything?

Our scholars are more likely to get into and graduate from a Top 100 college.

If you have the grades, talent, and ambition of our scholars, simply “going to college” shouldn’t be your benchmark for success. Today, fewer than half of high-achieving, low-income students of color attend a college that is as selective as one they could get into given their high GPAs and test scores. As a result, many end up graduating with lower qualifications and earnings potential and more student debt. Our comprehensive pre-college counseling reverses this trend by targeting each scholar’s best fit, selective college. Our scholars graduate from the nation’s most elite universities, places like Harvard, MIT, Brown, Stanford, and other top learning institutions. Over 90% of our scholars graduate from Top 100 colleges. One third of our scholars attend an Ivy League school, and 80% are in a Top 50 college. Attending a “best fit” selective college is critical for low-income students. Elite colleges offer smaller class sizes, stronger student support services, and better financial aid packages. Our scholars not only go to top colleges, they are graduating with little or no debt. Our program helps students successfully navigate the complex college admissions process. To increase your likelihood of being accepted to a top-tier university, we provide assistance with your college applications and essays. Plus, our college admissions and financial aid experts work with you to customize a plan, helping create your college list, participate in college visits, and complete your college applications and financial aid forms. We cover every detail to make sure you apply to the right colleges with the right skill sets needed to succeed in your chosen major. Others will pay tens of thousands of dollars for this level of expert, targeted college guidance. But you receive it free as a program scholar.

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Questions this answers:

How do I know which college is right for me?

I get great grades, but I’m not sure where I should go to college. Can you help?

There’s a good local college nearby. Why shouldn’t i go there?

Our scholars thrive in college, earning higher GPAs and persisting better in their chosen majors because of our program.

Less than a quarter of low-income, students of color who want to pursue a STEM or other rigorous major in college reach that goal. Even those at the top of their high school class are often left academically unprepared entering college. To keep scholarships, these underrepresented students end up switching to less demanding, and for them, less satisfying majors. We're putting a stop to this trend. Our scholars are 3x more likely than their similar peers to excel at college and graduate in the major of their choice. The cornerstone of their preparation is our residential Summer Academy program. Taught by professors from Amherst, MIT, USC, and other elite colleges, these six-week, academic boot camps target high-level math, writing, and critical thinking skills with over 350 hours of rigorous college-level instruction and one-on-one college counseling. Clearly, all the hard work pays off. Our Scholars earn better grades in college, including in STEM, pre-Med and Pre-Law. In fact, Summer Academy scholars are 50% more likely to earn an A in college calculus than non-participants (who are 60% more likely to get a D or F). In addition to academic prep, we connect scholars to on-campus resources, provide coaching, and give extra support should scholars struggle academically or socially. Today, over 75% of our scholars graduate from a top college with a B average or better. If they want to major in STEM, a full 65% graduate with a STEM degree. And, after graduation, nearly a third of our scholars go on to earn advanced degrees. Not only do our scholars outperform students with similar backgrounds, they're significantly outperforming their higher-income peers at Top 100 Colleges -- 10% more likely to graduate and 15% more likely to persist in STEM.

Questions this answers:

Do you give academic support or just mentoring?

How can I make sure I do as well in college as I've done in high school?

What's so special about the Summer Academy? Why does it matter?

Our scholars earn internships and get hired at the world's best companies.

Bring your talent. Bring your ambition. And we'll prepare you to thrive in college and career. That's the promise of SCS Noonan Scholars. But getting into a top college. Thriving at that college. Persisting in your chosen major. Getting better grades. That's just the start. Nearly a third of our programming is aimed at what happens *after* you graduate. And it works. Year after year, our scholars earn internships across business sectors -- and get hired by the best companies in the world. Google. Morgan Stanley. Lockheed Martin. Disney. Goldman Sachs. And on and on. Other scholars (28%) pursue research or post-graduate work at MIT, Yale, Stanford, and other top institutions. Our program is designed to ensure you reach your highest potential and fullest career ambition. Through workshops, webinars, conferences, and one-to-one skills development, our Career Development program will allow you to explore how your personal interests and skills apply to a variety of high-paying careers. Through our career coaches you'll learn to build an effective resume, write high-impact cover letters, prepare for interviews, and develop the valuable hard and soft career skills businesses demand. You'll partner with a professional mentor who will provide you with one-on-one support and guidance related to career exploration and professional skills development. You'll gain exposure to high-paying career options like medicine and law, but also research, finance, technology, computer science and other in-demand fields that might inspire you. Most importantly, you'll gain access to a professional network that leads to internships and top-tier jobs across sectors, including medicine, the life sciences, law, engineering, and finance.

Questions this answers:

I love math, but I'm not sure what I want to do as a career. Is that OK?

Can you help me get an internship or a job?

My family doesn't have big corporate connections. Won't that set me back?

Discover a thriving community of diverse and gifted young people who, like you, have the ambition and talent to do great things.

When you join SCS Noonan Scholars you not only find a program that equips you to thrive at college and in your career -- you find community. A family. It starts with our six-week Summer Academy where you live, learn, and connect with high-achieving, ambitious students like yourself. Some are first-generation. Most are people of color. All are from low-income communities. And seeing that representation matters to our scholars. It sparks and energizes them. Suddenly collaboration, not competition is the mantra. Working through serious, challenging coursework with students who have similar backgrounds and interests, who share many of the same stories and experiences. That's often new for our scholars. And it can be transformative. As one scholar described his first day: "It was obvious this was a bunch of highly gifted individuals. But they were also just having fun. I wanted right then to make bonds that will last a lifetime, and I think that's exactly what happened." Along with great friendships and important new connections, you'll gain new-found confidence. Like you, our scholars are resourceful and determined. Self-possessed. If they get knocked down. They get up again. But knowing someone has your back -- no matter what -- that's game changing. For all of us. With SCS Noonan, you are never alone. Our team and supporters will always be there. Your mentors and coaches will always be there. Most importantly, our scholars, your brilliant peers, will be there to challenge, inspire, and support you wherever your ambition leads.

Questions this answers:

Sometimes being in a STEM program with nothing but rich kids is exhausting.

I feel like I'm doing it alone. How is this different?

I want to be part of something bigger. Is this just one more math class?