



# College Track

John Madden Foundation Report  
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## Thank you

The talented educators at College Track know the secret to optimism amidst global uncertainty: the most talented and resilient leaders of tomorrow are already in the classrooms of today. We are so grateful to the John Madden Foundation for your support in our 10-year promise to our Oakland scholars, supporting them in their journeys to and through college, and cheering them on to lives of opportunity, choice, purpose, and power. We could not do this work without partners like you.

## College Track Oakland Updates

### OUR STUDENTS

With your support this year, College Track Oakland has served 271 scholars in high school, 295 in college, and 387 program alumni. Of our current scholars, 99% identify as people of color, 95% will be first-generation college graduates, and 90% come from low-income households. We have distributed the remaining \$30,000 in John Madden Foundation scholarships through our Bank Book program to 38 scholars, updates for some of whom are included in the next report section.

Program Outcomes
<b>91%</b> of high school juniors earned a 3.0+ GPA, making them UC competitive
<b>100%</b> of high school class of 2025 seniors were accepted to a 2- or 4-year college
<b>100%</b> of high school class of 2024 seniors matriculated to a 2- or 4- year college
<b>98%</b> of college freshmen persisted to a second year

In April 2025, we hosted a weeklong local college tour event for our scholars, all expenses paid. We took scholars to visit UC Santa Cruz, San Jose State University, UC Davis, Sac State, San Francisco State University, and CSU East Bay. In July, we took four juniors on a tour of central coast colleges, including Cal Poly. With an average of 13 college applications each, 66 seniors graduated in May and two of them committed to Cal Poly. We celebrated our scholars and their families at our annual Launch to College event at Mills College.



We are also sending our largest cohort of scholars to our formal university partnership schools. At the conclusion of our semester, we hosted our annual showcase event, where more than 200 scholars and families participated in this event at our downtown Oakland office. Our scholars' work was highlighted throughout the office, and all of our seniors made their college decisions.

Our rising seniors, class of 2026, also participated in our writing institute to prepare them for their college applications. They attended a 3-day session to work with staff and volunteers to advance on their personal statements.

Unlike other college access and completion programs, there are no academic minimums to joining College Track. Instead, our student application process screens for scholars' motivation to earn a bachelor's degree, allowing us to reach the students with the greatest potential for long-term success. These numbers demonstrate the impact of our work during the grant period; as you'll see, College Track scholars continue to exceed expectations across the board.

## Bay Area Partnerships

In Oakland, we have partnerships with mission-aligned local nonprofits who support our scholars with wraparound needs and services. This multi-level approach to meeting the needs of our scholars and their families necessitates strong interdependence with local organizations whose expertise includes legal aid, housing support, mental health services, and food insecurity.

In addition to many other schools and nonprofits, College Track Oakland has strong partnerships with La Clinica de la Raza (mental health support), Restorative Justice for Oakland (mental health resources and activism for Black youth), Oakland Promise (scholarships), and Family Paths (mental health services).

## John Madden Scholar Snapshots

College Track Oakland scholars who received support from the John Madden Foundation this year included the following scholars, who are following their passions, building their skills, and thriving in their college environments.

### **Jazzmyn, class of 2024 | U.C. Merced | Major: Biology | Career Aspiration: Obstetrics**

"The workload is intense, but I've found that college is much more lenient than high school. Also, I recently found out that UC Merced has many resources, opportunities, clubs, and extracurriculars, which have been a great way to balance the stress through community and get involved on campus."

### **Annie, class of 2024 | U.C. Davis | Major: Neurobiology, Physiology, and Behavior | Career Aspiration: Respiratory Therapist, Pediatrician, or Neuroradiologist**

"I am participating in a program for low-income and first-generation students called STEP (Special Transitional Enrichment Program) at UC Davis, where I am living in dorms and attending classes, which include intermediate algebra, a first year seminar, and a workload class. The best experiences so far have been meeting new people and enrolling in a math course to strengthen my algebra skills. The challenges have definitely been finding independence and a home away from home."

## Organization Wide Updates

College Track is excited to report that our scholars **graduate at four times the rate of their peers**. Moreover, 33% of our graduates do so without debt, and 89% find immediate employment or go to grad school. Full-time employed College Track alumni age 30+ earn over \$91,000 per year (\$20,000 higher than the national median). 92% of employed alumni earn enough to save each month, a strong indicator of upward social mobility.

**SEMESTER ZERO:** In July, 464 rising juniors (56 from Oakland) participated in Semester Zero, College Track's week-long college immersion experience at Northern Arizona University Flagstaff, provided to scholars free of charge. For many scholars, Semester Zero was the first time they boarded a plane or left home - an experience that prepares both scholars and their families for college life. Once on campus, scholars lived in dorms, attended classes, and solidified their college-going aspirations.



Pre- and post-surveys from Semester Zero last year reported that participating scholars had a **140% increase in their understanding of college life, a 100% increase in their knowledge of college courses, and a 63% reduction in anxiety** about living with roommates. Many scholars returned home with increased optimism in college enrollment and made connections with other scholars nationwide. We look forward to sharing the results of this year's survey once they become available.

**COLLEGE & UNIVERSITY PARTNERSHIPS:** We partner with a select group of colleges and universities that commit to College Track by offering cohort-based admissions of our scholars, full financial packaging, on-campus supports, access to student data, and a cabinet-level liaison at each partnering institution. **We have signed partnership agreements with 18 institutions of higher education** that share our commitment to educational equity and offer a diversity of experiences and career pathways to our scholars. Annually, the agreements provide 153 dedicated spaces for College Track scholars nationwide and an available \$5.3M in direct financial support to scholars. We look forward to formally announcing the addition of several new partnerships later in 2025. The newest partner institutions established during our last fiscal year are shown below.



**PROGRAM FIDELITY:** Rudy aims to focus on program fidelity as we enter Fiscal Year 2026, ensuring the implementation of mission-aligned, scholar-centered programming that is replicable across all College Track sites. This initiative aims to enhance program quality by incorporating the latest best practices, emphasizing scholar identity, and reorienting our high school program as a college readiness initiative. Direct program observation and improvements in how we track and utilize data will support the continuous improvement of our programming as it shifts to meet the evolving needs of our scholars, while creating an opportunity to report longer-term observations of our program and its impact on our scholars.



**"Together, we will change the narrative – not about the 'lucky few', but about an unstoppable collective lifting each other toward a future where every story is celebrated, every potential realized, and every scholar empowered to lead."**

– Rudy Elizondo, College Track Chief of Education

**RESPONSIBLE AI INTEGRATION:** As generative AI technologies proliferate, scholars from under-resourced schools are at a disadvantage in higher education without concerted efforts to introduce the technology earlier. Preparing our scholars to succeed in this rapidly changing world is critical to their success in college and in their careers. As part of our program fidelity work, College Track will continue to address the digital divide by observing and improving our STEAM Pathway and tech-based educational offerings for scholars, while integrating large-scale AI initiatives into our programmatic framework. We look forward to keeping our scholars on the technological forefront by developing partnerships with industry leaders.



## Thank You



College Track deeply appreciates and values the John Madden Foundation’s long-standing partnership. Your continued generosity enables us to provide hundreds of Oakland youth with the tools they need to thrive in college and beyond. Together, we are affirming the future of work in America and equipping the young people who will be making decisions in the global economy.

With gratitude,



Jillian Lyles  
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College Track