

SCHOLARMATCH EVALUATION REPORT

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Executive Summary by ScholarMatch

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Program & Study Overview

ScholarMatch was founded in 2010 as a crowdfunding platform for scholarships and has since evolved into a direct-services program with a mission to support low-income, first-generation students to and through college. In 2013, ScholarMatch shifted toward a comprehensive programmatic model that includes individualized college success and career advising, targeted financial support, and ongoing mentorship and emotional support for students.

In March 2020, ScholarMatch allocated resources for an external evaluation of the college success program, intended to further the organization's understanding of the program's performance and outcomes. This report's findings draw on data from the program's database, persistence, and graduation rates from the National Student Clearinghouse, as well as interviews with a sample of staff members across all levels of the organization. The evaluation was designed to compare

student-level outcomes against the program's primary mission to support bachelor's degree attainment within the first five years of enrollment.

The report concludes with a proposed logic model drawn from key themes that emerged in interviews with ScholarMatch's staff. The outcomes presented in the logic model can serve as a potential guide for ScholarMatch as the organization continues its journey under new leadership.

Key Findings



80% of ScholarMatch students who received the full program model (both nonfinancial and financial support) graduated with a bachelor's degree within five years.



ScholarMatch scholars' graduation rate is 22% higher than their peers who graduated at a rate of 58%.



ScholarMatch's success stems from hiring and promoting staff with qualities that are reflective of the communities served and maintaining meaningful and responsive relationships with scholars.



ScholarMatch's adoption of a comprehensive support services model is associated with positive and notably high bachelor's degree attainment rates for first-generation, low-income college students.



The findings presented in this report point to the ScholarMatch program model as a potential exemplar model for college success initiatives that combine both financial and nonfinancial support.

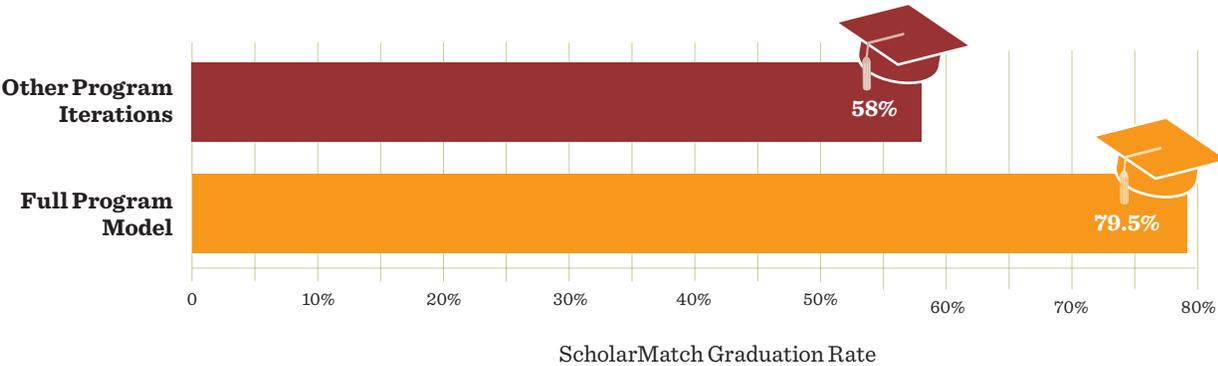
FINDINGS

Our Students Graduate from College

Eighty percent of ScholarMatch students who received the full program model (both financial and nonfinancial support) graduated with a bachelor’s degree within five years.

Bachelor’s Degree Attainment Rates

for ScholarMatch Cohorts 2013–2015



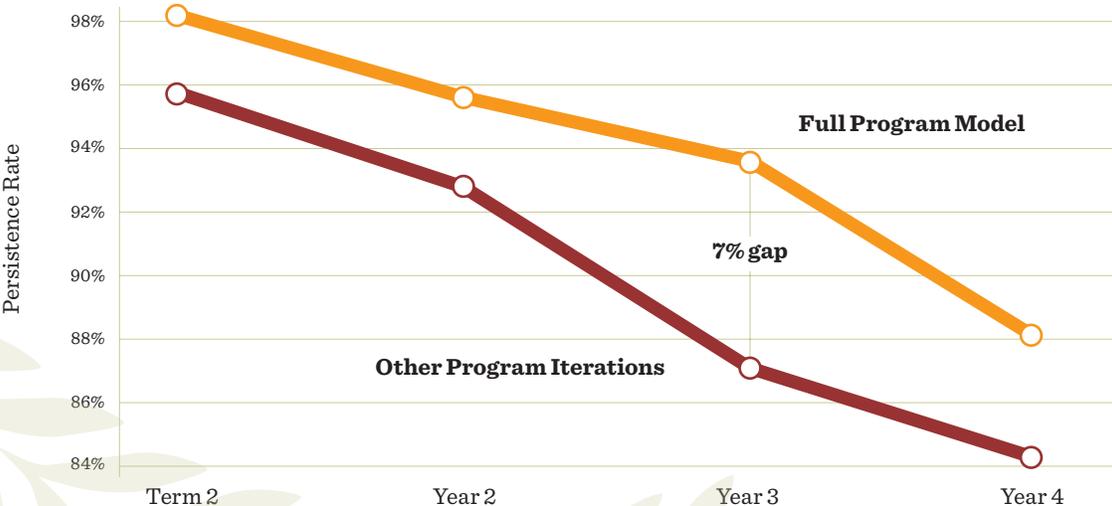
When We Engage Our Scholars, They Succeed

The vast majority of ScholarMatch students persist into their second year of college, regardless of program assignment (96% for students enrolled in the full program model versus 93% of other

ScholarMatch students). Persistence into the third year of college drops to 87% for students who received a single service versus 94% for students in the full program model.

Persistence Rates

for ScholarMatch Cohorts 2013–2020



Institutional Subgroup Analyses

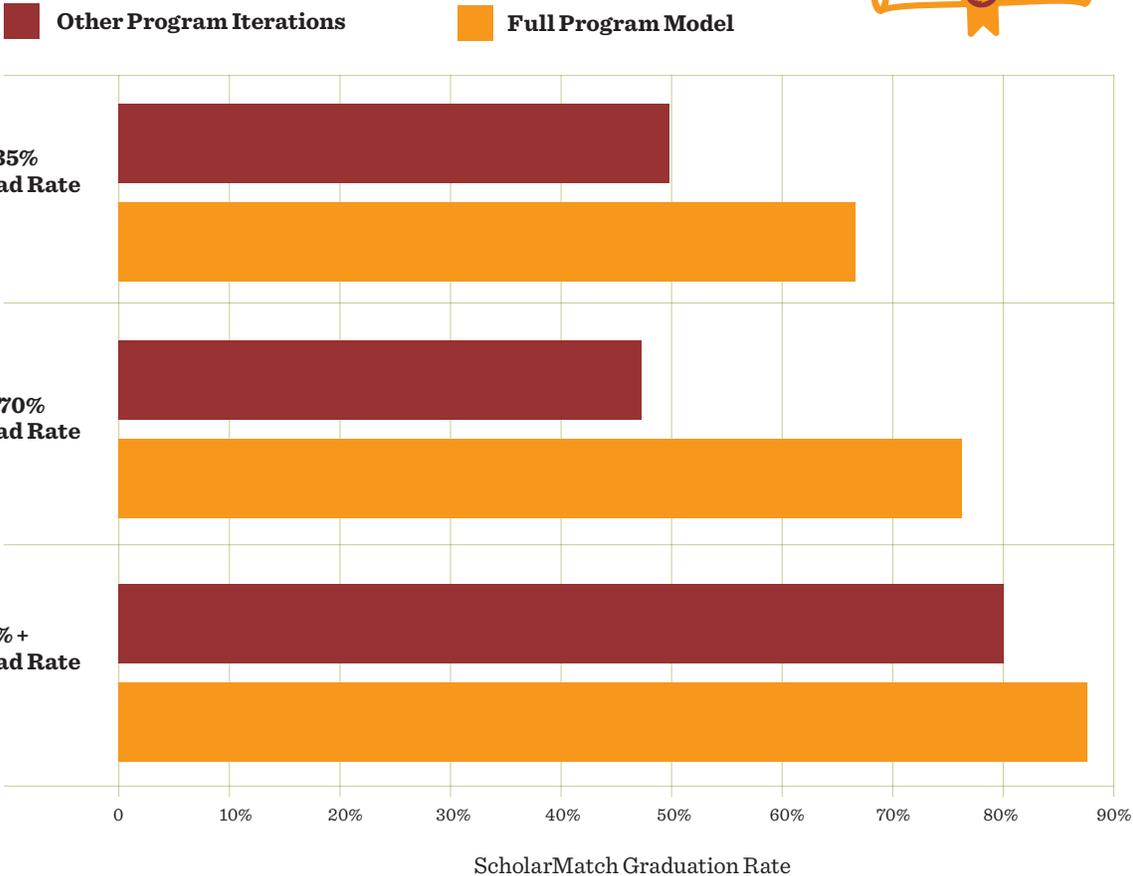
The study also assessed whether degree attainment rates for ScholarMatch students varied across indicators of institutional success. The study conducted subgroup analyses across a proxy measure for institutional success, as measured by Pell student graduation rates reported in College Scorecard data. Institutions were divided into three categories of Pell graduation rates: 0-35%, 36-70%, and 71% and above.

ScholarMatch students in cohorts 2013-2015 who were enrolled in institutions with the lowest Pell

degree attainment rates (i.e., 0-35%) graduated at a rate of 67% compared to their peers in a single-service program model who graduated at a rate of 50%. The percentage point difference widens in the second institutional category (i.e., 35-70%) across these two groups of students. Here, we observe a notable 18 percentage point difference. ScholarMatch students enrolled in the full program model graduated at a rate of 76.3% versus 47.6% for students who received a single service (see figure below).

Bachelor's Degree Attainment Rates

for ScholarMatch Students Across Institution Categories



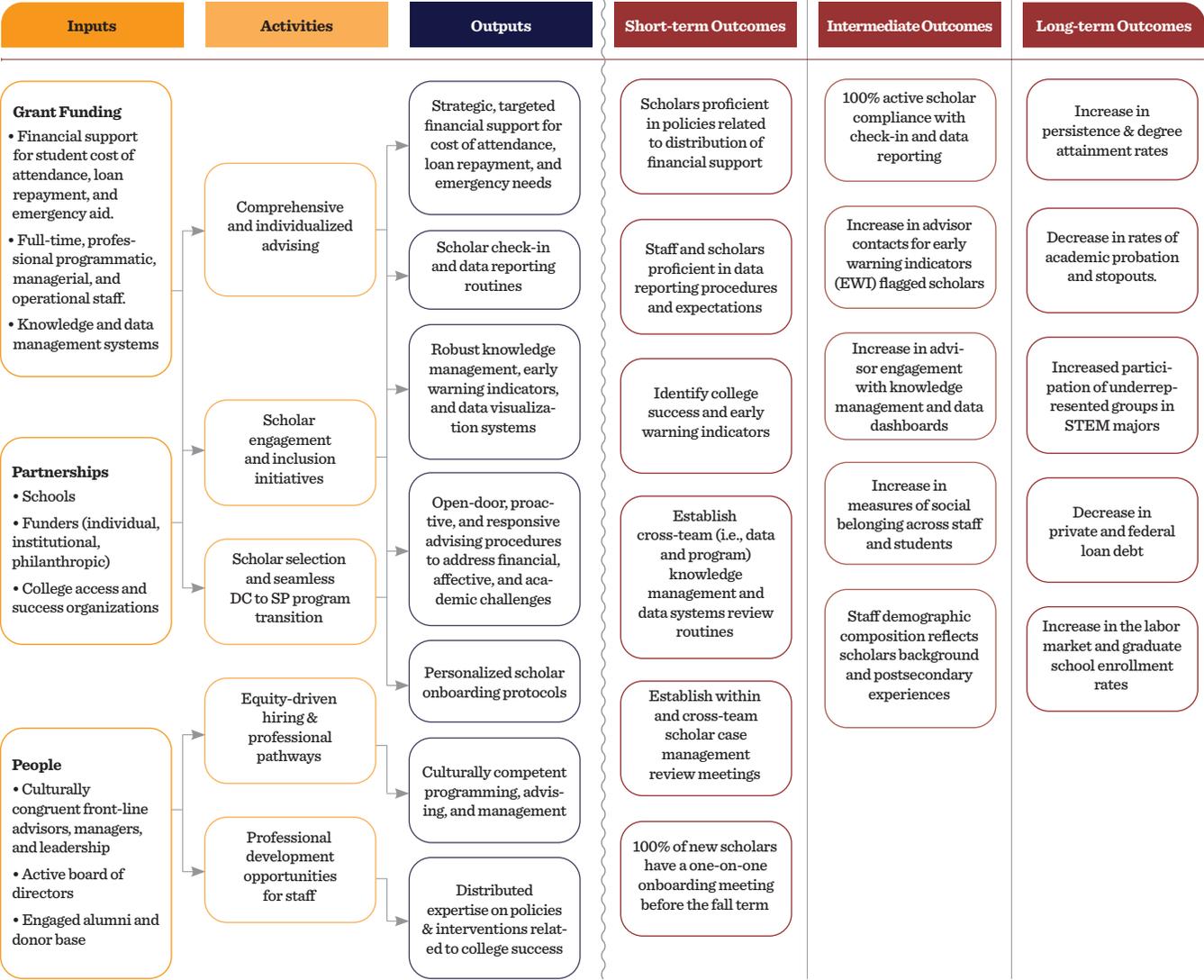
Graduation Rate x Institutional Pell Grad Rate; x = average 150% graduation rate for institutions associated with ScholarMatch sample

These findings are consistent with a growing evidence base showing that comprehensive support programs have substantially larger impacts on degree attainment rates for students enrolled in less selective,

resource-strapped institutions compared to peers enrolled in more selective postsecondary institutions that are, on average, better equipped to offer more robust financial aid and advising services.

Logic Model

The logic model below represents an attempt to document the organizational priorities and programmatic components that bolster the success of ScholarMatch students.



Data Sources & Analytic Sample Sizes

• Data from the National Student Clearinghouse (NSC) for all ScholarMatch participants who enrolled in the program between 2006 and 2020 (n = 812). The NSC record matching rate (that is, the proportion of students who were found in the NSC database) was 82% (n = 667).

• Socio-demographic data on students in the analytic samples were provided by the ScholarMatch data team and pulled from the program's database.

• Analyses of graduation rates were restricted to a sample of ScholarMatch students that 1) were selected into the 2013-2015 cohorts in our analyses of graduation rates (n = 164), for whom five-year graduation data are available; and 2) were linked with an NSC record (the NSC match rate for this analytic sample was 78%). The analytic sample for graduation rates was n = 128.

• The analytic sample for outcomes related to persistence was expanded to include students selected into cohorts 2013-2019 (n = 558). The NSC match rate for the students in these cohorts was 87%, therefore yielding an analytic sample size of n = 486.

• The demographic composition of the degree attainment analytic sample was 54% Hispanic/Latino, 26% Asian/Asian Indian/Pacific Islander, and 11% Black. The remaining 9% of this sample were either combinations of the above-mentioned categories or did not self-identify into a race/ethnicity category. The analytic sample for persistence outcomes (i.e., students in cohorts 2013-2019) was 56% Hispanic/Latino, 19% Asian/AI/PI, and 17% Black.

• Quantitative data were cleaned and analyzed using Python and visualized on Tableau. Institutional quality indicator data were pulled from the most recent publicly available College Scorecard data from the U.S. Department of Education.