



## **What is Student U?**

*The mission of Student U is to empower students in the Durham Public Schools to own their education by developing the academic skills and personal well-being necessary to succeed in college and beyond.*

*Student U is a college-access organization that believes all students in Durham have the ability to succeed. In order to make this dream a reality, Student U creates a pipeline of services to support students through middle school, high school and college. By providing direct services during out of school time in the summer and after-school, and advocating for students and families within schools, we ensure that our students develop the academic skills and personal well-being needed to beat the statistics and succeed in college. We believe our students are powerful, and that this power will help us realize a Durham where all students can succeed.*

## **Why We Exist**

*As a result of structural racism, poverty and other systemic injustices, first generation college-bound students face significant personal and institutional obstacles to educational success. This situation prevents our community from reaching its full potential.*

## **Who Are Our Students**

Approximately 90% of Student U students qualify for free-or reduced-price lunch, and nearly 70% will be the first in their families to attend college. Roughly 60% of Student U students identify as African-American, and 40% identify as Hispanic or Latinx.

## **Quick Overview of Our Programming**

- **Middle School:** 5-week Summer Academy; Monday-Thursday afterschool academic support and enrichment during school year
- **High School:** Summer Academy for 9th and 10th graders; summer internships for 11th and 12th graders; biweekly tutoring, ACT/SAT and College Prep workshops during the school year
- **College:** in-person campus visits; biannual retreats; parent workshops

## **Quick Facts:**

Nationally, 66% of Latinx students and 71% of African American students will graduate from high school and 11% of low-income, first-generation college students are expected to graduate from college within 6 years. Student U students beat these statistics as a result of their tireless work and commitment.

- 100% High School Graduation Rate
- 92% Enrolled in Post-Secondary Education
- 71% Persist through Post-Secondary Education



Additionally, an external researcher from Duke University's Sanford School of Public Policy has completed an evaluation of Student U's impact on the academic and non-academic outcomes of Student U students. Utilizing a control group created by Student U's admissions lottery, the researcher concluded causal impact on short- and medium-term student outcomes, including:

- Increase in probability that students are identified as academically/intellectually gifted in middle school
- Decrease in likelihood of committing violent infractions in sixth grade
- Accumulation of more overall course credits by tenth grade
- More likely to be advanced or on-grade level in math by tenth grade
- More likely to have enrolled in at least one course with an Honors designation

The research concludes that "high-quality, intensive college-going interventions offer the potential to improve academic and non-academic skills."

#### **Key messages:**

*Our students are brilliant.* Our students' brilliance is made up of their passion and their potential, their skills and their strength, their power. Our students are whole human beings that have the ability to learn what they need to learn to navigate the systems around them. Our job is help our students figure out how to use all of the brilliance they possess to navigate these systems and succeed through college, with the desire and ability to make it a little easier for future generations to succeed as well. **Student U does not exist to provide a service to its students but to empower its students to provide a service to their community.**

*We do not label our students.* We do not refer to our students as at-risk youth, minorities, or any other disparaging names. Our students are not empty cups needing to be filled. Rather, they are full, cups overflowing with brilliance, living in a world surrounded by systems that are poking holes at those cups, leading to wasted brilliance pouring to the ground.

*Students do not participate in Student U, they are Student U.* Student U students and family built Student U and continue to actively create our community. Therefore, Student U belongs to students. It is not defined by a certain program or activity, but rather by a culture and a way of operating within the world that evolves with the brilliance of each new student that is shared. Student U is always a part of students, regardless of where they are or what they are doing.

*One day all students in Durham can succeed:* Every decision made, every conversation that takes place, is completed with this core truth in mind. All actions taken by our community are in service of this ultimate vision.