

F<sup>1</sup>RST GRADUATE  
2021-22  
ANNUAL  
REPORT



# FIRST GRADUATE'S MISSION

is to help students become the first generation in their families to graduate from college ready to pursue meaningful careers. First Graduate is a nonprofit in the heart of San Francisco's Mission neighborhood dedicated to SUPPORTING, EMPOWERING, AND ENABLING FIRST GENERATION COLLEGE STUDENTS TO GRADUATE FROM COLLEGE. We are a 12-year free program—recruiting students in 6th grade. Offerings include homework and study support, test prep, school evaluation, field trips and school/university visits, scholarship and internship access, community building, career presentations from industry professionals, and more.

# ABOUT FIRST GRADUATE

Our founder, philanthropist Anne-Eve Hazen, had the vision to seed the creation of a non-profit organization dedicated to making an impact in college access and success for low-income students in San Francisco.

Anaflor (Smith) Graham soon joined her, and in 2002 a new program launched, serving 24 eighth graders from San Francisco middle schools. The challenge was great, but clear — to provide guidance for aspiring first-generation college graduates that would replicate the advantages enjoyed by students with college educated and higher resourced families.

We have built upon this foundation, and now combine high-touch and high-tech solutions to coach our students and communicate with their parents and guardians. Our students'

success rate is outstanding—75% of our students graduate college in 4-6 years, compared the national average of 11% for first-generation college students.

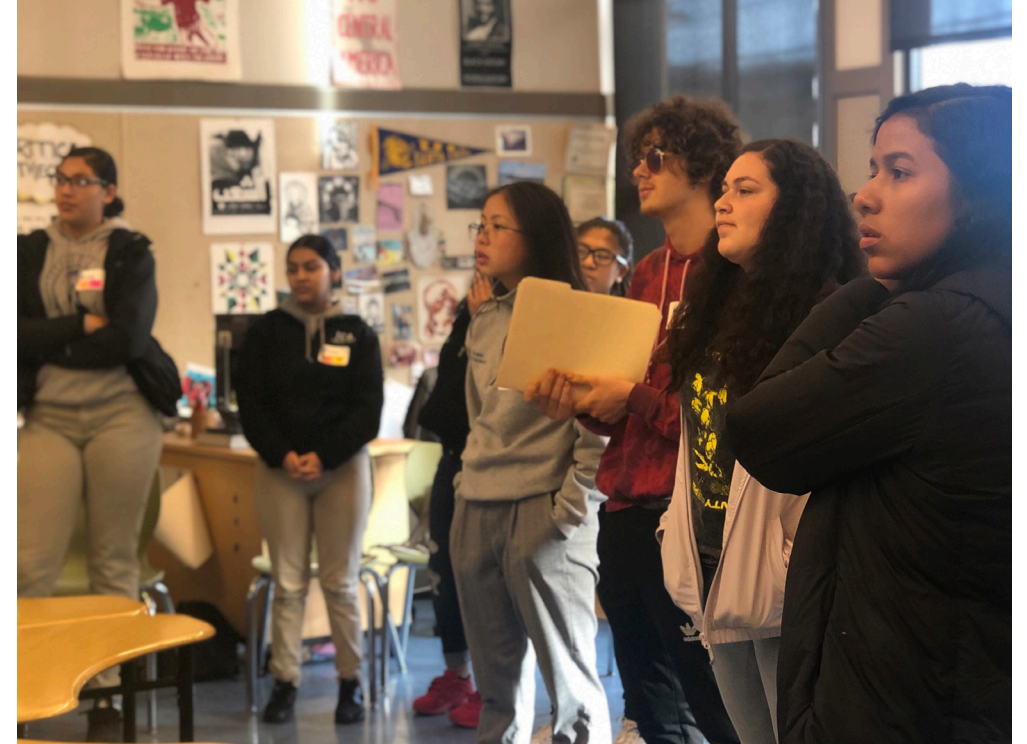
The arc of our program is long—we recruit students in sixth grade (currently from two middle schools: James Denman and Everett) who begin their journey with us during the summer through a partnership with Aim High (an award-winning summer program and collaborating nonprofit). We not only focus on academic success to make our students competitive with their more advantaged peers; we also

expose them to career opportunities from middle school on, through visits to local companies, career speakers, access to paid internships, and more. Our newest program, LaunchPad, provides college seniors and recent alumni with career workshops that include resume building, LinkedIn profile creation, navigating interviews, and negotiating salaries.

We seek to expand our footprint in San Francisco by serving more students and parents, developing best practices that can serve students beyond our cohort, increasing our

partnership with local youth-serving organizations, and developing college and career readiness resources that may be utilized by other nonprofits and schools.

As we look forward to a new cohort of college graduates this coming year, we are working to shift the culture in San Francisco to one that encourages every child to think about college as a possible future. The need is greater than ever. As one of our donors and honorees has said, "Every child deserves what you want for a child that you love."



# OUR APPROACH

We use a high-touch method, giving each student free personalized coaching throughout the year. We work with students for 10 to 12 years—from the time they are rising seventh graders through college graduation and into their first careers. We are embedded at Everett Middle School and James Denman Middle School from which we recruit rising seventh graders.



## Academic Support

Each student receives free academic instruction and homework help each year through both school-year and summer academic sessions.



## Career Exploration

Our students participate in career panels and events, resume writing and networking workshops, job shadow days, and mock interviews to gain exposure to career opportunities available to degree holders.



## Coaching & Guidance

Our team tracks progress and works closely with students, families, tutors, mentors, teachers, and partner organizations to make sure that our students are successfully completing each step on the way to becoming college graduates.



## College Support

We communicate with students consistently to ensure they are persisting through college and connecting with resources on campus. We also help our college students find paid summer internships.



## Family Engagement

Students' families learn how they can support their children while they are on the path to become first generation college graduates.



## Mentoring

Students gain insight into college choices and professional careers from college educated volunteers. Younger First Graduate students connect with older students and benefit from peer mentoring.



## School Counseling

We help students with the rigorous H.S. application process and their successful transition into 9th grade. We also provide intensive college counseling, standardized test preparation, college application planning, financial aid workshops, access to summer enrichment programs, college visits, and help with college scholarships.



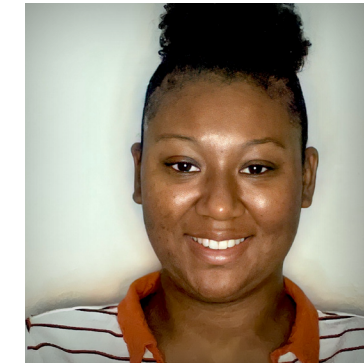
# CLASS OF 2022 COLLEGE GRADUATES SPOTLIGHT



**Adolfo  
Barrales**

UNIVERSITY OF  
SAN FRANCISCO  
MAJOR: Psychology

What are your  
career plans?  
Research in Psychology,  
perhaps pursue a Masters in  
Quantitative Psychology,  
though not right away.



**Brittany  
Woods**

CALIFORNIA STATE  
UNIVERSITY, SACRAMENTO  
MAJOR: Marketing

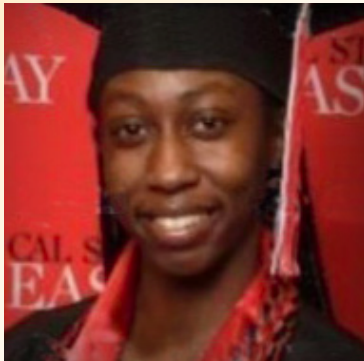
How has FG supported  
you through the years?  
You have helped me stay in the  
path to graduating college.



**Christine  
Wong**

UNIVERSITY OF  
CALIFORNIA - IRVINE

CLASS OF 2022 COLLEGE GRADUATES SPOTLIGHT (CONTINUED)



Deandra  
Crawford

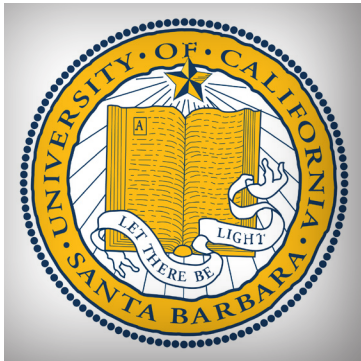
CALIFORNIA  
STATE UNIVERSITY,  
EAST BAY  
MAJOR: Criminal Justice

What are your  
career plans?  
Working with youth.



Donna  
Li

KALAMAZOO COLLEGE



Elaine  
Huang

UNIVERSITY OF  
CALIFORNIA -  
SANTA BARBARA



Ethan  
Romero

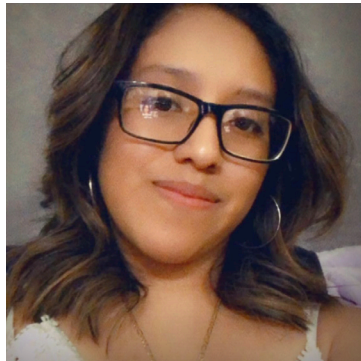
UNIVERSITY OF  
CALIFORNIA - IRVINE



Fountine  
Zhao

UNIVERSITY OF  
CALIFORNIA, IRVINE  
MAJOR: International  
Studies/Drama

What are your  
career plans?  
Dance/ I want to create  
my own company in the  
entertainment industry.



Hilda  
Gonzalez

CALIFORNIA STATE  
UNIVERSITY-  
STANISLAUS STATE  
MAJOR: Psychology  
MINOR: Spanish

What are your  
career plans?  
I want to become a counselor.

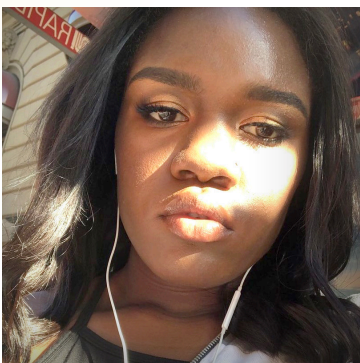
CLASS OF 2022 COLLEGE GRADUATES SPOTLIGHT (CONTINUED)



Jacky Huang

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA  
MAJOR: Physics and Mechanical Engineering

What are your career plans?  
Aerospace industry and/or research.



Jahniece Belton

SONOMA STATE  
MAJOR: Political Science  
MINOR: American Multicultural Studies

What are your career plans?  
Career within Policy or Law.



Jordan Mai

UC - SANTA CRUZ  
MAJOR: Technology Information Management  
MINOR: Computer science

What are your career plans?  
Technology Consultant/  
Software engineer.



Julia Ávila

GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY  
MAJOR: Latin American and Hemispheric Studies  
MINOR: Spanish and Geography

What are your career plans?  
Education.



Julio C. Rodríguez, Jr.

CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY - NORTHRIDGE  
Major: Television Production

What are your career plans?  
I am going to be working with Hammer Creative and hope to work with the Dodgers and/or Fox as a Camera Operator.



Karen Rodriguez

SAN FRANCISCO STATE UNIVERSITY  
MAJOR: Physiology

What are your career plans?  
Physician Assistant.



CLASS OF 2022 COLLEGE GRADUATES SPOTLIGHT (CONTINUED)



**Kidist Benyam**  
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA - SANTA CRUZ



**Luis Colmenares**  
CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, LONG BEACH  
MAJOR: Studio Art

What are your career plans?  
Art education.



**Luorong Lamu**  
SIMMONS COLLEGE  
MAJOR: BS in Nursing

What are your career plans?  
Do humanitarian work as a Nurse Practitioner.



**Marcos Ruiz**  
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA - LOS ANGELES  
MAJOR: Public Affairs  
MINOR: African American Studies and Chicano and Central American Studies

What are your career plans?  
Communications in a Political Organization.



**Melissa Tam**  
CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, LONG BEACH  
MAJOR: Hospitality Management  
MINOR: Business Marketing

What are your career plans?  
Technology - Project Management or Marketing.



**Miguel Yanez**  
WHITTIER COLLEGE  
MAJOR: Biology

What are your career plans?  
Bioinformatics based career.



## CLASS OF 2022 COLLEGE GRADUATES SPOTLIGHT (CONTINUED)



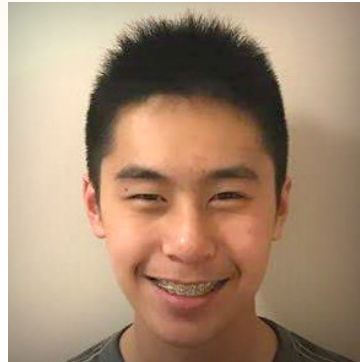
**Nafisa  
Adams**

UNIVERSITY OF  
CALIFORNIA - LOS  
ANGELES

MAJOR: American literature  
and culture  
MINOR: Environmental  
literature

What are your career  
plans?

Non- profit work.



**Raymond  
Ngo**

CARNEGIE MELLON  
UNIVERSITY

MAJOR: Electrical and  
Computer Engineering  
MINOR: CS and Business

What are your career  
plans?

SWE



**Spurgeon  
Wright**

CALIFORNIA STATE  
UNIVERSITY -  
SACRAMENTO



**Tatiana  
Escobar**

MILLS COLLEGE

MAJOR: Public Health

What are your career  
plans?

Medical field



**Tianlan  
Shen**

SAN FRANCISCO  
STATE UNIVERSITY



**Vinny  
Diep**

UNIVERSITY OF  
CALIFORNIA - DAVIS

MAJOR: Political Science/  
Economics

What are your career  
plans?

Looking to go to grad school.

# H.S. GRADUATES AND COLLEGES ATTENDING IN 2022

**AVA AKHIONG**

Ruth Asawa School of the Arts (SOTA)  
BOSTON UNIVERSITY

**NATALY ANZUETO BAMACA**

Mercy High School  
COMMUNITY COLLEGE OF SAN FRANCISCO

**BRIANNA BERLANGA**

Immaculate Conception Academy  
UNIVERSITY OF SAN FRANCISCO

**JOSE ESPINOSA**

Mission High School  
UC - DAVIS

**FRANCESCA ESPINOSA**

Phillip & Sala Burton Academic High School  
UC - DAVIS

**KAELANI FAITUALA**

Leadership Charter High School  
COMMUNITY COLLEGE OF SAN FRANCISCO

**LARISA GRIGORYAN**

Gateway High School  
UC - MERCED

**MAX HERRERA**

City Arts & Tech High School  
UC - MERCED

**KYAN HUANG**

Mission High School  
UC - DAVIS

**ELIANA JIMENEZ**

Leadership Charter High School  
SAN JOSE STATE UNIVERSITY

**ANNIE LU**

Phillip & Sala Burton Academic High School  
UC - SANTA CRUZ

**STEPHANIE MARTINEZ**

Raoul Wallenberg Traditional High School

**ZAIHRA MENA**

Abraham Lincoln High School (SF)  
COMMUNITY COLLEGE OF SAN FRANCISCO

**MIRIAM MOLINDA VALDIRA**

Phillip & Sala Burton Academic High School  
COMMUNITY COLLEGE OF SAN FRANCISCO

**JESUS MONTOYA PEREZ**

Leadership Charter High School  
UNIVERSAL TECHNICAL INSTITUTE

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KIPP San Francisco College Preparatory  
SAN JOSE STATE UNIVERSITY

**BLANCA PEREZ**

Immaculate Conception Academy  
UNIVERSITY OF SAN FRANCISCO

**PAOLA QUEZADA**

Raoul Wallenberg Traditional High School  
COMMUNITY COLLEGE OF SAN FRANCISCO

**GABRIELA REAL**

Immaculate Conception Academy  
UNIVERSITY OF SAN FRANCISCO

**MAYRA ROMERO CORTEZ**

Raoul Wallenberg Traditional High School  
COMMUNITY COLLEGE OF SAN FRANCISCO

**MAYRA ROMERO HUYNH**

Lowell High School  
COMMUNITY COLLEGE OF SAN FRANCISCO

**INDELISA ROMO**

Lowell High School  
SAN FRANCISCO STATE UNIVERSITY

**MARIA SANCHEZ**

Lowell High School  
UC - DAVIS

# FG COLLEGE STUDENTS AND COLLEGES ATTENDING

**Javier Acosta Rivera**  
Dominican University

**Jaymar Agtang**  
St. Olaf College

**Joiilah Aleman**  
UC - San Diego

**Afrah Ali**  
Community College  
of San Francisco

**April Alonso**  
Community College  
of San Francisco

**Mariela Andrade**  
Dominican University

**Marlon Araujo**  
CC - Los Medanos

**Itzy Arroyo**  
UC Merced

**Laura Barbosa**  
UC - Merced

**Esmeralda Barrios**  
UC Santa Cruz

**Raissa Brito**  
San Francisco  
State University

**Lizbeth Cardenas**  
San Francisco  
State University

**Noemi Cardenas**  
San Francisco  
State University

**Randy (Leonardo)  
Cazarez**  
San Francisco  
State University

**Pablo Chacon**  
San Francisco  
State University

**Lizandro Chan**  
UCLA

**Tatyana Chapman**  
Puget Sound

**Consuelo Chavez**  
College of the  
Redwoods

**Eric Chen**  
Community College  
of San Francisco

**Eric Chen**  
San Jose State  
University

**Wynee Chen**  
UC - Santa Barbara

**Selena Contreras**  
Community College  
of San Francisco

**Antonio Diaz**  
San Francisco  
State University

**Vinny Diep**  
UC - Davis

**Jahaira Escobar**  
San Jose State  
University

**Anthony Esguerra**  
San Jose State  
University

**Sesika Feiloakitau**  
UC Irvine

**Dalia Garcia**  
San Francisco  
State University

**Gillian Garcia**  
San Francisco  
State University

**Juan Garcia-Escalante**  
Univeristy of South  
Florida

**Jennifer Gee**  
San Francisco State  
University

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Kalamazoo College

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Fuentes**  
San Francisco  
State University

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UC San Diego

**Elias Guzman**  
UC - Irvine

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Community College  
of San Francisco

**Edin Haddis**  
Community College  
of San Francisco

**Joanna Hernandez**  
Community College  
of San Francisco

**Yessenia Hernandez**  
Community College  
of San Francisco

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San Francisco  
State University

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Skyline College

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San Jose State  
University

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University of Hawaii  
at Mānoa

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UC - Davis

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UC - Santa Barbara

**Andy Huang**  
UC - Santa Cruz

**Edward Humphrey**  
CSU Dominguez Hills

**Milton Jeronimo**  
Community College  
of San Francisco

**Danny Jeronimo**  
San Francisco  
State University

**Dennys Juan De Leon**  
UC Merced

**Amy Jia Yi Li**  
San Francisco  
State University

**Xinglin Li**  
UC Irvine

**Alex Li**  
University of  
the Pacific

**Hazel Loa**  
San Francisco  
State University

**Emilio Lopez**  
CIA - NY  
Culinary School

**Belinda Lopez**  
San Francisco  
State University

**Andrez Lopez**  
Skyline College

**Lessly Lopez**  
UC - Davis

**Aldo Macedo**  
Pratt MWP College  
of Art & Design

**Luis Maldonado**  
Community College  
of San Francisco

**Jonathan Mancia**  
UC - Santa Cruz

**Jonathan Marquez**  
UC - Merced

**Melanie Martinez**  
Community College  
of San Francisco

**Victor Martinez**  
CSU Chico

**Estefany Martinez**  
San Francisco  
State University

**Daniela Martinez**  
UC Merced

**Katerine Martinez**  
UC Santa Cruz

**Marta Mendoza**  
San Francisco  
State University

**Maria (Isabel)  
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Community College  
of San Francisco

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Community College  
of San Francisco

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San Francisco  
State University

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San Francisco  
State University

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Mills College

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of San Francisco

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University of Denver

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Community College  
of San Francisco

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UCSC

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**Harrick Wu**  
Trinity College

**Fanny Xu**  
Embry-Riddle  
Aeronautical  
University

**Wynnie Xu**  
University of Arizona

**Betty Yang**  
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Cal Poly SLO



# GRATITUDE WALL

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Tony Zanze  
Cynthia Zhao

# STUDENT SPOTLIGHT



## STEPHANIE WENNERSTROM, FG14 STUDENT

I REMEMBER THE LATE NIGHTS AT THE FIRST GRADUATE OFFICE working on college applications and feeling both excitement and fear for the future. There were so many things that I had to juggle, but I always knew that First Graduate was there to help me. They guided me through so many important milestones in my life: applying to high school, giving me my first job, and becoming the first in my family on the path to graduate college.

NINE TENTHS OF EDUCATION  
IS ENCOURAGEMENT. -ANATOLE FRANCE

My time with First Graduate first started in 6th grade when I filled out a short application at my local after-school program. I remember being hesitant to apply because it meant that I had to do after-school tutoring and I wanted to hang out with my friends, but little did I know that joining would completely change my life path. The next several years would be spent meeting new people and creating connections that put me into the very spot I am in today. I'm currently at San Jose State University, which would not have happened if my First Graduate mentors didn't recommend researching it and applying. Taking their advice is the best decision I have ever made.

I am incredibly grateful for all the support and help that First Graduate has given me throughout the years. Every day they are changing lives and helping other first-generation students like me accomplish the dreams of our parents, and our own.



# STUDENT SPOTLIGHT



## J. RUIZ

**A QUOTE THAT'S IN THE BACK OF MY HEAD?** "Cast your bread upon the waters, for after many days you will find it again." A second one? "A society grows great when old men plant trees in whose shade they shall never sit."

Three years, and then four, and then four more. It all started in 2010. It then ended in 2012, and then again in 2016, and then again 2020. It's now 2022, and it's still here. Not the old office, of course. How many times have they moved now? I don't remember. And the same people? No. So what remained? Am I traveling on a modern Ship of Theseus? Is it the same program if literally, everything about it has changed?

CHILDREN ARE APT TO LIVE  
UP TO WHAT YOU BELIEVE  
OF THEM. -LADY BIRD JOHNSON

Well... the name is consistent. And with it, its purpose.

First Graduate. It's an interesting name, isn't it? It's almost bland with how straightforward it is. Well, I did it: I fulfilled the mission statement of the slogan. I graduated from middle school. I graduated from high school. I graduated from college. And that was it.

... But then, I noticed something about the slogan: there's a number one where and "i" should be. It honestly should have been obvious all these years. Maybe it was, but it didn't mean anything to me until I held my diploma. A piece of cardstock that I haven't hung, but left collecting dust in my closet.

One. A. A piece of paper that's a conversation starter. A piece of paper that gets me a job. A piece of paper that's proof that I paid and worked hard on a specific subject. A piece of paper that my parents never got... THE piece of paper then.

Does that mean my kids will something similar? They will be able to do or become a ONE, or an A, of THE, of something?

Is that the question First Graduate asks, all the people and their ONE mission statement? That's what I remember, all those years of new voices telling me that I can. Ha, so many voices, and yet at the end they all sounded the same when they said the one thing: "YOU have to. YOU can." Me. I. Yo. A single. A single formed from the words of many who don't enjoy the fruits of their labor, only see it.

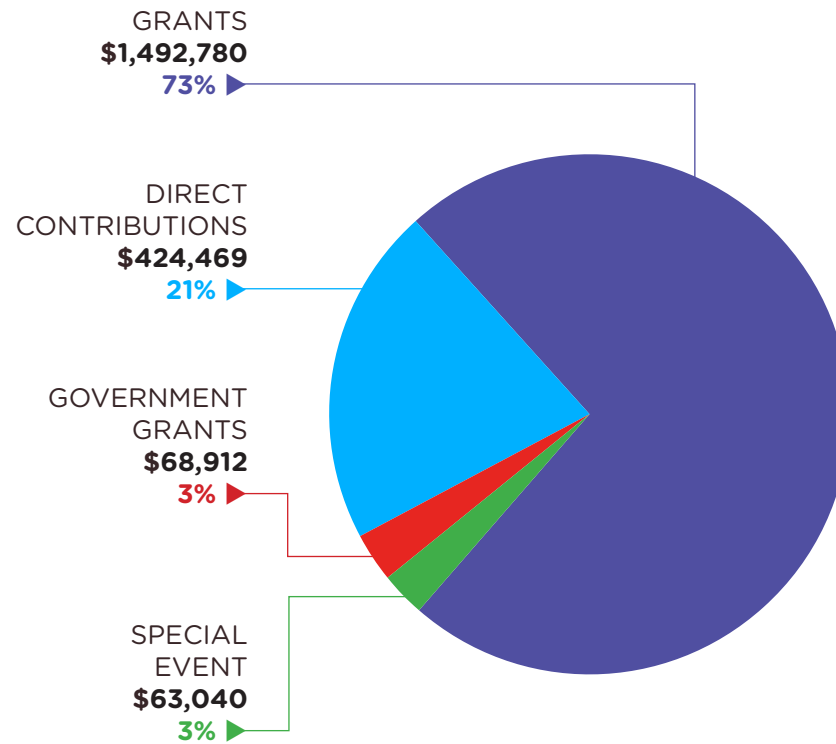
It's now 2022, and still here, albeit, farther than when I started. Thanks to the many who took the pseudonym of One... there's something interesting about that ship, isn't there? I mean, it has to keep rowing. Is it the same one I rode on when I was little? No. But it has the one name to it still. And after all, I have to be a One.

# 2021-2022 FINANCIALS

(JUNE 2022, YEAR END)

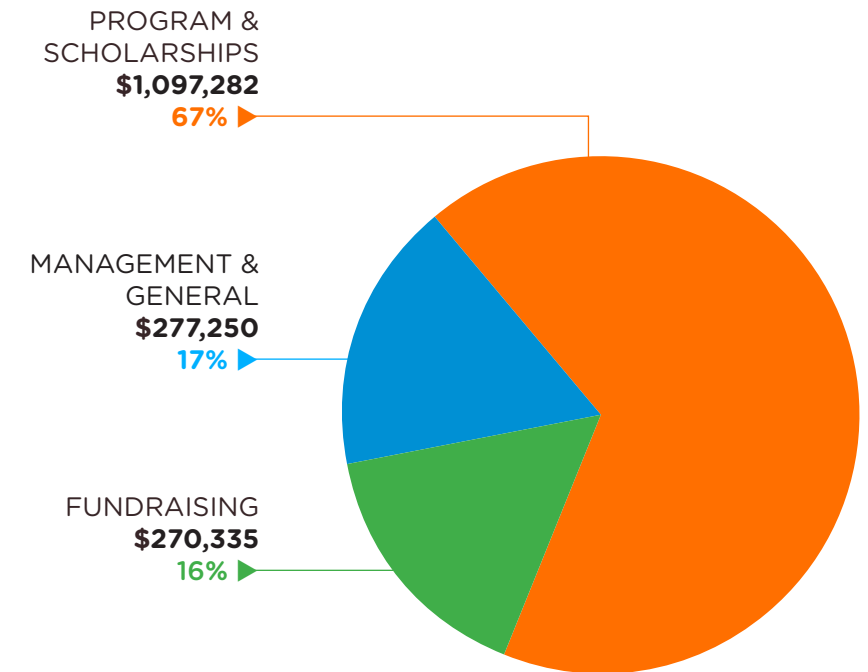
## FY 2022 REVENUE

TOTAL REVENUE: \$2,049,201



## FY 2022 EXPENSES

TOTAL EXPENSES: \$1,644,967



# VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT



## REBECCA ADAMS (FG VOLUNTEER)

WITH A MOTHER IN ACADEMIA, Rebecca Adams grew up in a home that stressed the importance of school in providing personal growth and a promising future. As an adult, she is committed to leveraging a life of learning by opening doors to educational opportunities for underprivileged youth. Her volunteer work at First Graduate guides students to be the first college graduates in their families. In her two years there, she has been a mock interviewer for students applying to private high schools and a college application essay coach.

TREAT PEOPLE AS IF  
THEY WERE WHAT THEY  
OUGHT TO BE, AND  
YOU HELP THEM TO  
BECOME WHAT THEY  
ARE CAPABLE OF  
BECOMING. -GOETHE

“My parents both attended colleges, and they both advised me. Not everyone has that, so it’s a real disadvantage. The system is not fair. And if I can provide a little practical support to someone to help them get into college and start to close that gap, I want to do that,” says Rebecca.

Learning about students is what Rebecca likes best about volunteering; their challenges enable her to put her own life into perspective: “A lot of them have experienced a lot of hardship and they are so resilient, talented, and motivated. So they really inspire me.” Even a conversation in which a student has a different idea for a college application essay warrants its rewards. As both share their thoughts, she steers the discussion toward an agreement, and ultimately mentor and student connect.



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Middle School Advising Intern

**Juliana Molina**  
High School Advising Intern

# FIRST GRADUATE'S 3 YEAR PLAN

Over the next three years, the top-level key results we are driving toward include:

1

Increase the college  
graduation rate for students  
from 75% in six years to 85%

2

Increase the percentage  
of college graduates who  
are hired into their  
fields of choice,  
or have started graduate school, by 15%

3

Secure the resources  
needed to carry out  
First Graduate's goals  
while maintaining a healthy  
reserve by increasing revenue to \$3.5 million/year  
by June 30, 2024

4

Support at least  
500 students/year by 2023,  
and grow to support  
800 students/year by 2026.

# OUR VISION

Imagine a city where every child has an equal opportunity for college access and success. Imagine that First Graduate provides the means by which this can happen. This is our vision—to establish a college-going tradition for every family in San Francisco, for those children who seek to pursue that path.

While we have come far as an organization in 20 years, we have not yet scaled to the point where we can fulfill this long-term vision, and we are not likely to in the next three to five years. However, this Strategic Plan will lay the foundation necessary to make this vision a reality in the future by strengthening our position as a mature, growing organization. In the longer term, our vision includes:

- Coaching 2000 students per year
- Having a full-fledged career component that would help our students/alumni find next careers after their first jobs
- Taking our students on college visits to Southern California every year
- Visiting our college students on their campuses yearly
- Hosting thank-you events for donors and volunteers
- Paying staff at the top of the wage scale so that they can continue to work and live in San Francisco and the Bay Area
- Restoring our matching contribution to our 403(b) plan
- Giving staff year-end bonuses and raises
- Earning income by training District faculty to help first-gen students get to college successfully
- Initiating a program for parents of first generation students who want to go back to school themselves
- Having a business model and mindset that enables us to elevate constraints into leverage
- Having a staff, board, and associate board that reflects our student population and community

One lesson learned since 2019 is that the future is unpredictable. Our job is to be resilient, to anticipate possibilities, be responsive to opportunities, and focus on our strengths so that we can outperform expectations.







FIRST GRADUATE

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[firstgraduate.org](http://firstgraduate.org)