



2026 Jobs Report



SPRING 2023 FELLOW

SPELMAN COLLEGE

SaRee Grimes

Fellow,
Alliance Theatre

Kat Goduco

Together with our higher education and employer partners, we're proving what's possible when you empower the next generation of leaders with the skills, networks, confidence, and experience necessary to launch a strong career.



What does this report cover?

Alongside our dedicated partners, Braven is reigniting the promise of the American Dream.

To date, we have worked with more than 15,500¹ Fellows across the country, and our momentum continues to build. By 2032, we aim to serve 80,000-100,000 students, serving 25,000 new students each year through the Braven course.

FALL 2022 FELLOW

SPELMAN COLLEGE

Naomi Wagner

Voter Education and Outreach Coordinator,
Fulton County Government

 Kat Goduco



In this report, we spotlight the stories of the exceptional undergraduate students we are privileged to serve and examine Braven's impact through two central questions:

1

Are our Fellows securing quality career outcomes that put them on the path to the American Dream?

2

Are we supporting Fellows on the path to internships?

Why our work matters



SPELMAN COLLEGE
Kennedy Hoyt
Public Relations and Research Intern,
The Stories of Us
Kat Goduco

Only about one quarter of the low-income or first-generation college students who enroll in college each year will graduate and secure a strong first job or enter graduate school.²

That's about **one million students** every single year who aren't on the path to the American Dream.



GRADUATE & SECURE
A STRONG JOB OR ENTER
GRADUATE SCHOOL

ARE NOT ON THE PATH TO
THE AMERICAN DREAM

~400k

~1 million

1.4 million

LOW-INCOME OR FIRST-GENERATION COLLEGE STUDENT ENROLLEES EACH YEAR

Mission

In collaboration with our higher education and employer partners, Braven empowers promising college students with the skills, networks, confidence, and experience necessary to transition from college to strong economic opportunities, which lead to meaningful careers and lives of impact.

Vision

The next generation of leaders will emerge from everywhere.



SPRING 2024 FELLOW

SPELMAN COLLEGE

Ryan Bates

Legislative Intern for Representative Lucy McBath,
Congressional Black Caucus Foundation Internship

Kat Goduco



SPRING 2025 FELLOW

SPELMAN COLLEGE

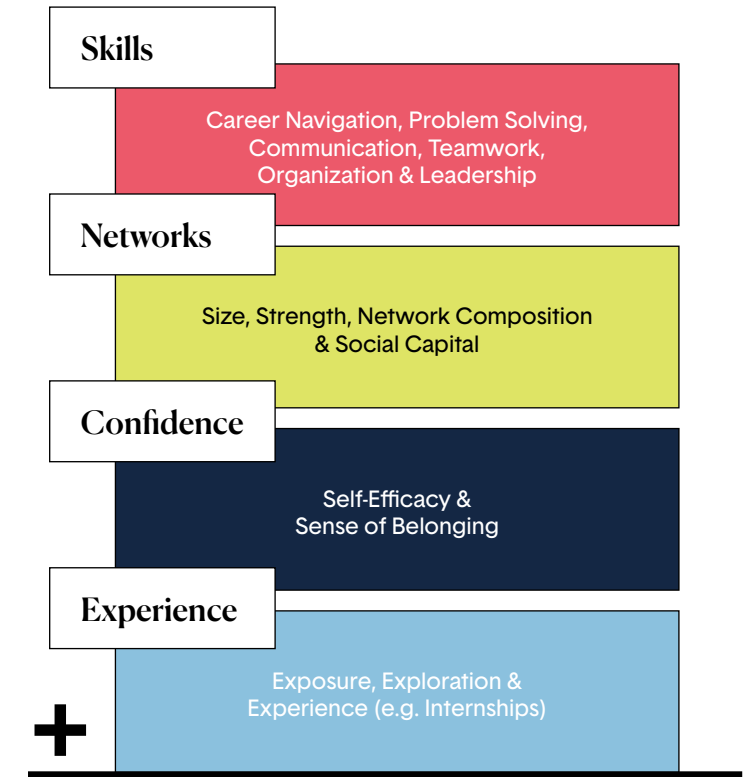
Aubria KingPatient Care Skills Intern,
R&B Therapeutic Services LLC

Kat Goduco

The Braven Equation

Braven provides career readiness for students earning a four-year degree, ensuring students graduate ready to secure a strong first opportunity.

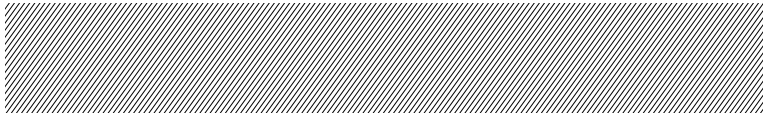
The Braven Equation is the sum of four career-readiness factors—skills, networks, confidence, and experience—which add up to a career-ready college graduate.



Career-Ready College Graduate

who secures a strong first economic opportunity or attends graduate school within 6 months of graduation

The Braven Experience



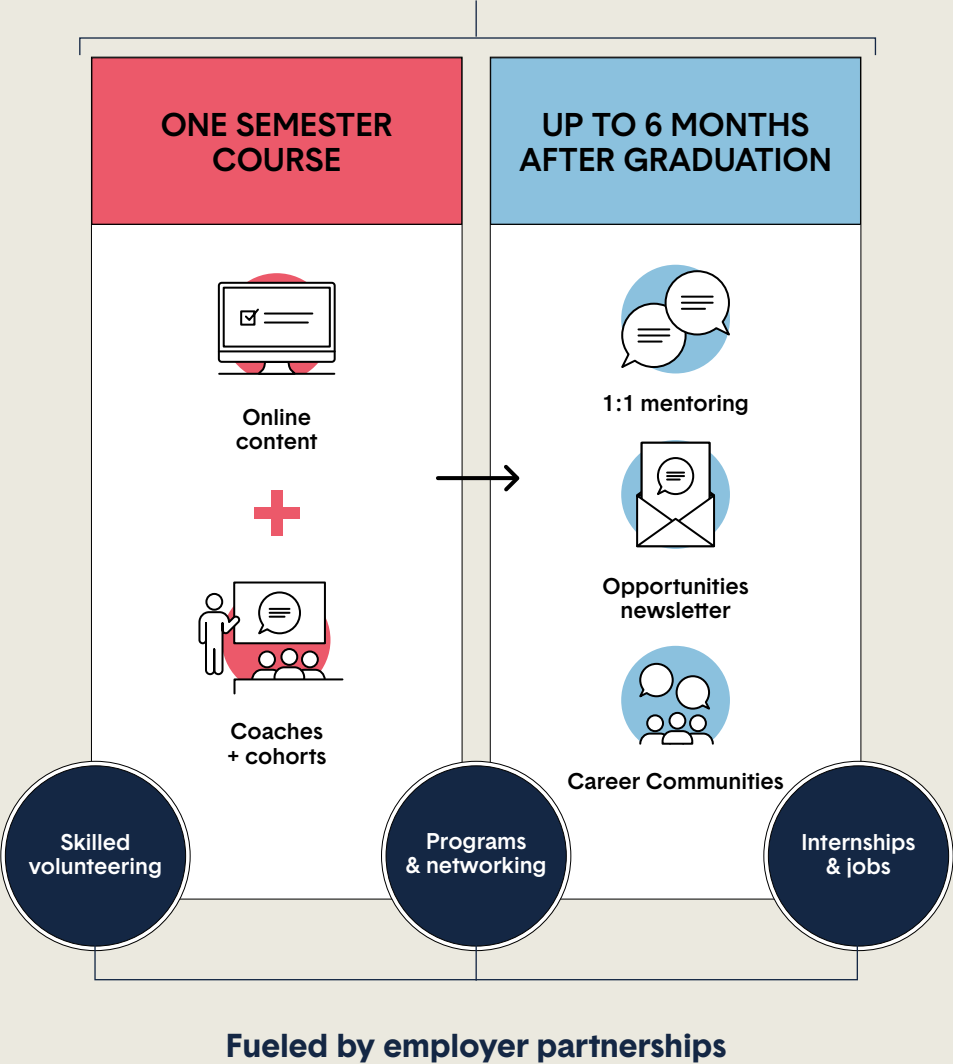
Braven equips promising college students on their paths toward quality economic opportunities through a semester-long, cohort-based course—developed with input from our students, volunteers, and higher education and employer partners—and support that extends beyond the course, continuing through six months after college graduation.

In our core higher education model, students take the course for credit. Students who come through BravenX via college success organizations receive a financial stipend in lieu of credit.

OUR HIGHER EDUCATION PARTNERS



In partnership with higher education institutions and college success organizations



Are our
Fellows
securing
quality career
outcomes that
put them on
the path to
the American
Dream?

Section

1

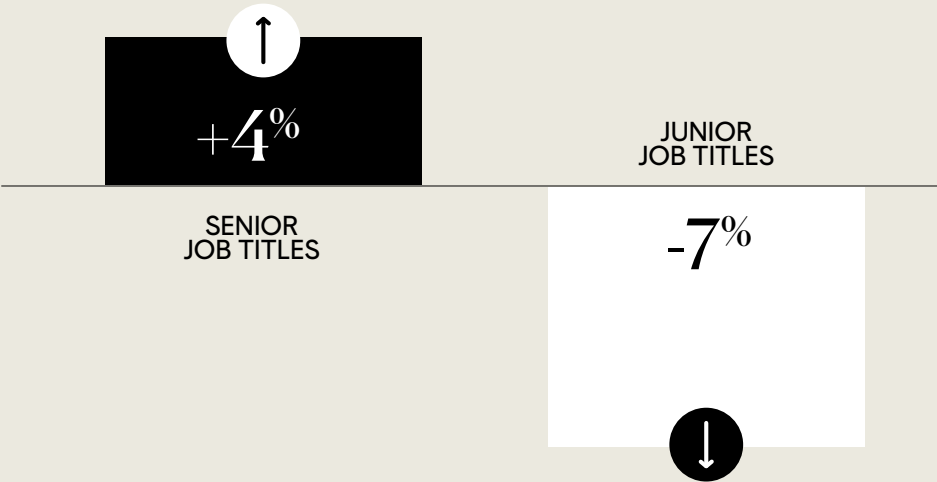




New college graduates are experiencing an especially challenging labor market

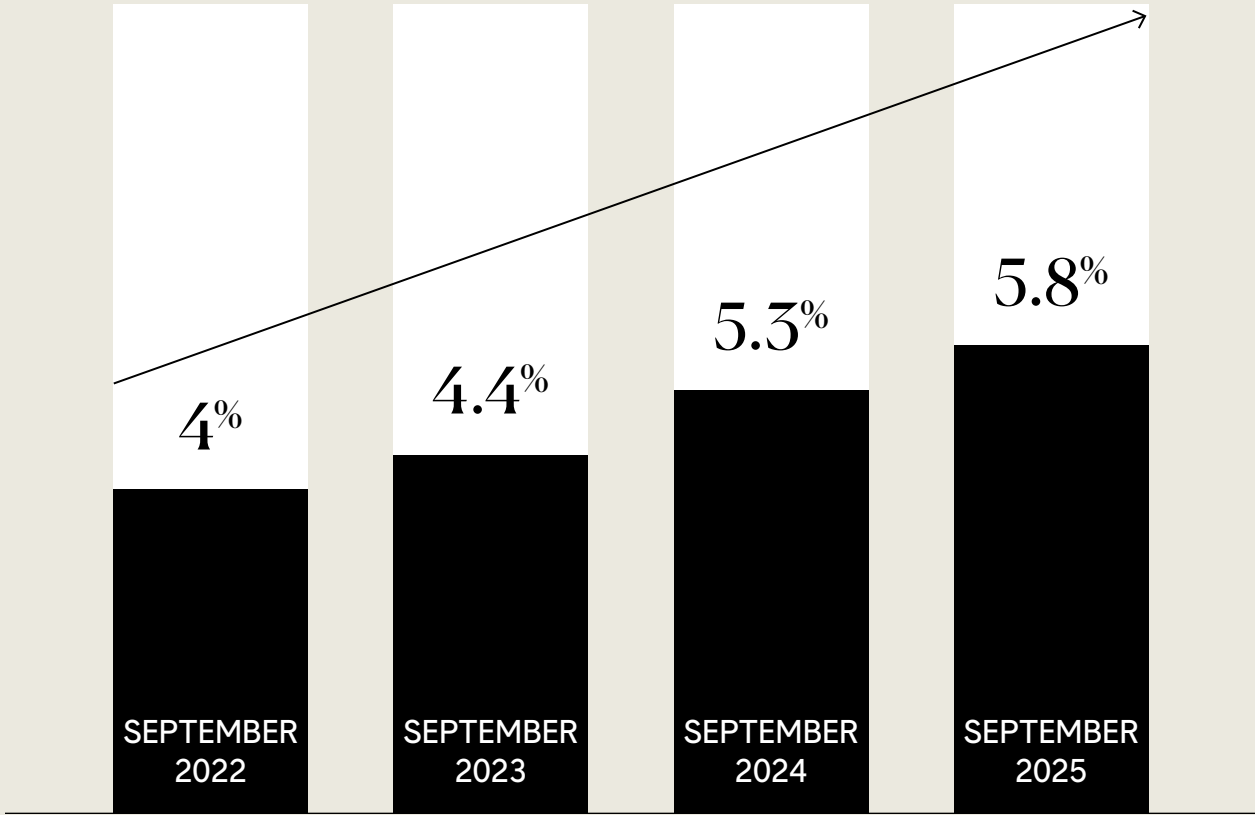
The entry-level market is tight. We have seen stagnation in entry-level job openings which, in part, is driving rising unemployment of recent graduates.

STAGNATION IN ENTRY-LEVEL JOB OPENINGS



Year-over-year, senior job titles are up 4%, while postings for junior titles are down 7%.³

UNEMPLOYMENT RATES FOR NEW GRADUATES (AGED 22-27) ON THE RISE⁴



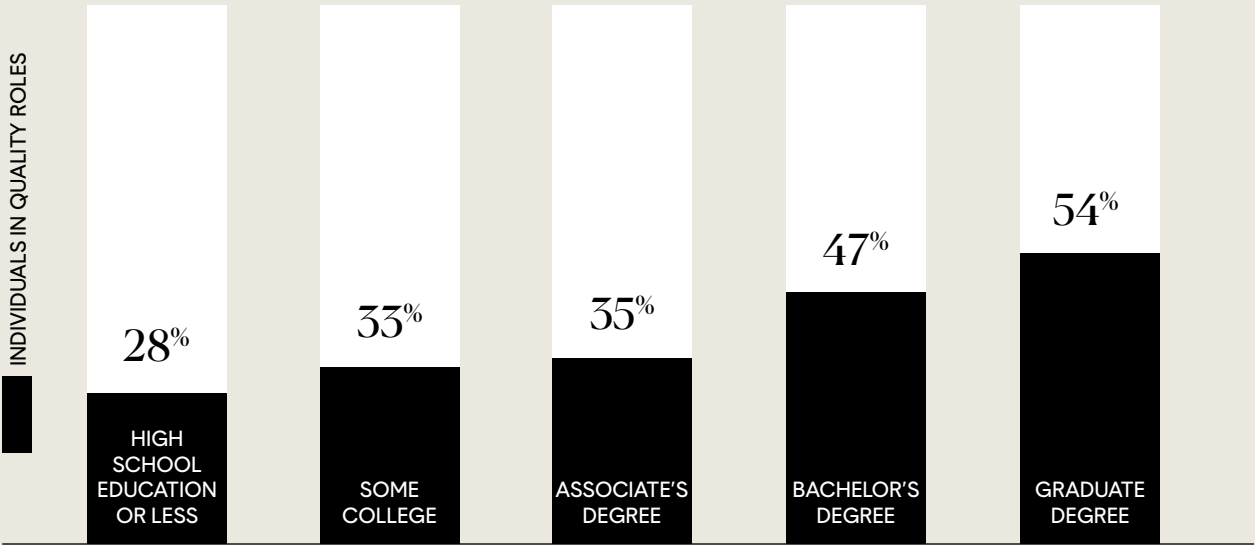


Pursuing the bachelor's degree is still the surest path to economic mobility

Compared to high school graduates, bachelor's degree holders have higher employment rates, greater job security, and earn more over their lifetime.

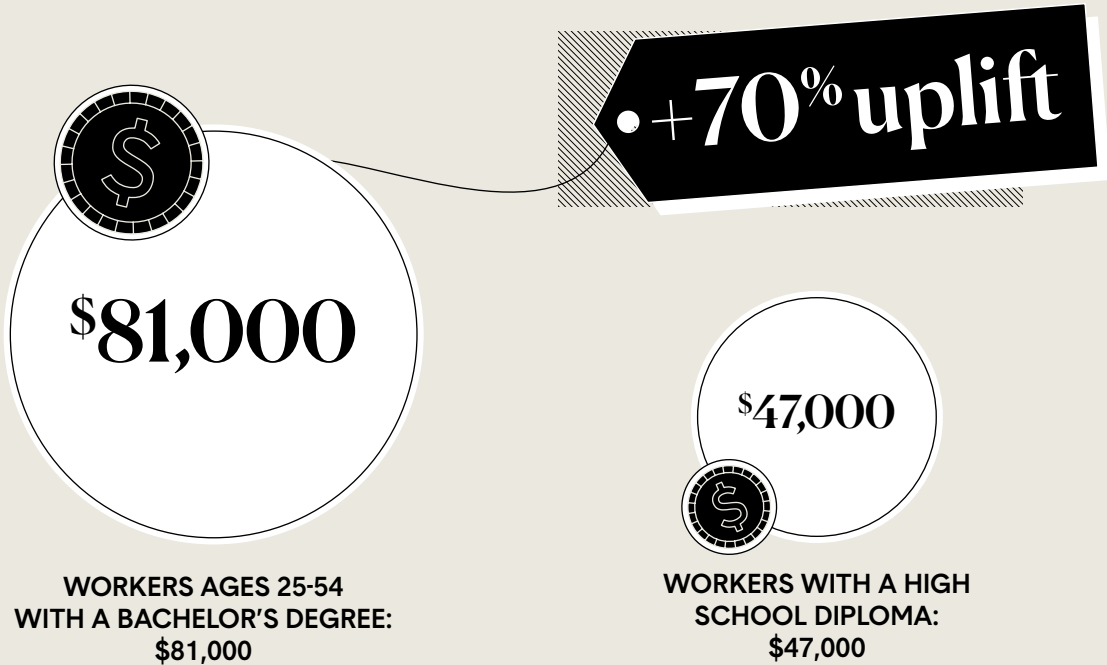
The bachelor's degree remains a strong predictor of job quality

According to The American Job Quality Study, employees with a bachelor's or graduate degree are more likely to have strong job quality than those with an associate's degree, some college, or a high school education or less.⁵



Employees with a four-year degree earn 70% more than workers with a high school diploma alone.

MEDIAN ECONOMIC OUTCOMES
FOR WORKERS AGED 25-54 WITH A BACHELOR'S DEGREE⁶





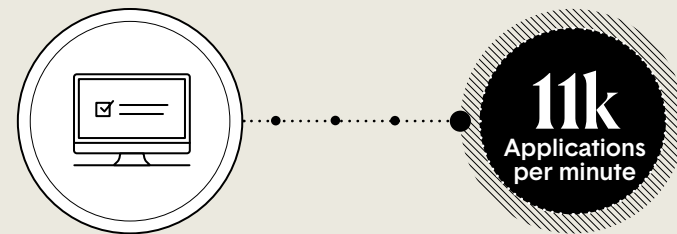
AI reshapes expectations for early-career talent

The challenge today is not the value of the degree itself, but ensuring students can successfully translate the skills they develop in college into the skills needed in entry-level positions.

Although the long-term effects of AI on job availability are still emerging, its influence on the job search experience and hiring practices is already evident.

Increase in job applications

AI is making it easier to apply to jobs. In June 2025, LinkedIn reported that the number of job applications surged more than 45% year-over-year, and the platform is clocking an average of **11,000 applications per minute**.⁷

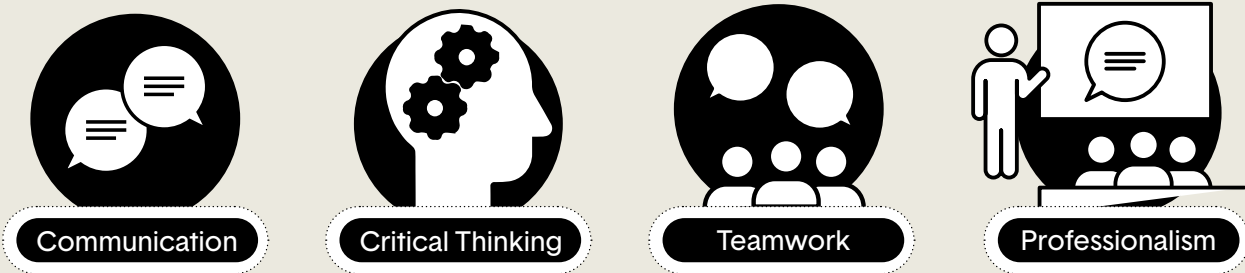


AI's impact on job hunting

Twenty-six percent of candidates say AI has made it harder to stand out due to increased competition. Among Gen Z, that number jumps to 45%.⁷

Employers are prioritizing human skill competencies to distinguish the strongest entry-level candidates in an increasingly competitive applicant pool.

These include:⁸



These are closely aligned with the six career-readiness skills Braven helps students develop in the Accelerator course:

- Career navigation
- Leadership
- Organization
- Communication
- Teamwork
- Problem solving

In 2025, 535
Braven Fellows
graduated from
Spelman College.

SPRING 2025 FELLOW

SPELMAN COLLEGE

Tashyra Lyles

Teaching Fellow,
Breakthrough Atlanta

 Kat Goduco

Spelman Braven Fellows secured quality opportunities after college

+20
This new class is outpacing
their peers nationally in
quality outcome attainment⁹
by 20 percentage points
(65%¹⁰ vs 45%¹⁰) within six
months of graduation.

65%

2025 SPELMAN
BRAVEN GRADUATES

45%

GRADUATES WITH A BACHELOR'S
DEGREE FROM PEER INSTITUTIONS
WITH A SIMILAR CONCENTRATION
OF PELL GRANT RECIPIENTS¹¹

49%

GRADUATES NATIONALLY WITH A
BACHELOR'S DEGREE¹²

+20
Percentage
Points

SPELMAN BRAVEN CLASS OF 2025 DEMOGRAPHICS

47%

students from
low-income
backgrounds¹³

21%

first-generation
college
students¹⁴

Of the 535
Spelman Braven
Fellows who
graduated from
college in 2025,

74%

are employed or
enrolled in graduate
school

72%

secured quality
or pathway outcomes

FALL 2022 FELLOW

SPELMAN COLLEGE

Sydney Taylor

Master of Public Health,
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

Kat Goduco

The strength of roles our 2025 Spelman Braven graduates secured

2025 SPELMAN BRAVEN GRADUATES

HOW WE DEFINE QUALITY ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES:

QUALITY OUTCOME

a full-time role that requires a bachelor's degree and includes some combination of promotion pathways, employee benefits, and a market-competitive starting salary, or enrollment in graduate school

PATHWAY OUTCOME

a role that does not require a bachelor's degree but helps students' financial sustainability, is aligned with career interests, and will likely lead to more career-accelerating possibilities through skill development

NON-QUALITY OUTCOME

a role that does not require a bachelor's degree, offers limited runway to additional career-accelerating opportunities, and is not aligned with students' career interests

65%
QUALITY
ROLES OR
GRADUATE
SCHOOL

7%

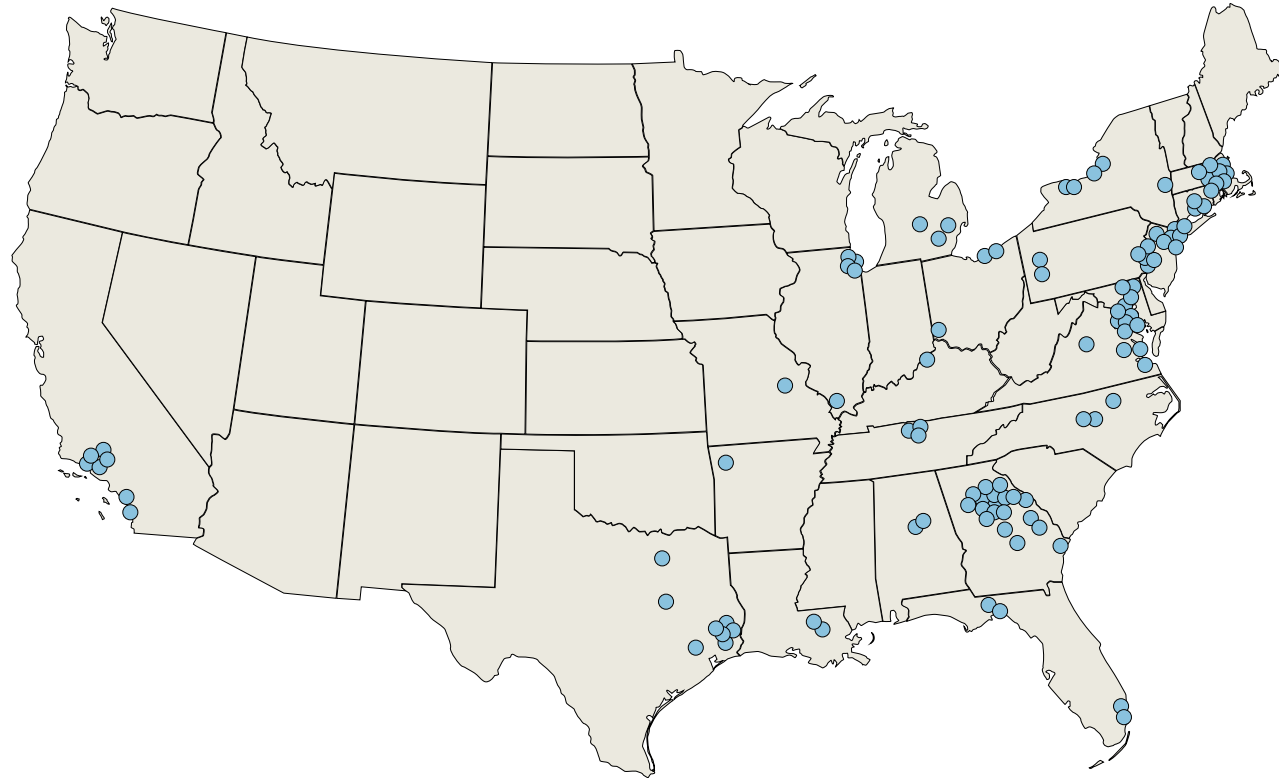
PATHWAY
ROLES

2%

NON-QUALITY

26%
UNEMPLOYED

Spelman Fellow enrollment in graduate school



Enrollment in graduate school is one of the ways Braven defines a quality outcome.

42%

42% of Spelman College's Fellows went on to graduate schools within six months of graduation.¹⁵

1. Agnes Scott College
2. Augusta State University
3. Barry University
4. Baylor University
5. Boston University
6. Boston University School of Medicine
7. Brown University
8. California State University, Long Beach
9. Carnegie Mellon University
10. Case Western Reserve University
11. Case Western Reserve University School of Law
12. Central Georgia Technical College
13. City University of New York
14. Clark Atlanta University
15. Columbia University
16. DePaul University
17. Drexel University
18. Duke University
19. Emory Healthcare
20. Emory University
21. Emory University Laney Graduate School
22. Emory University Nell Hodgson Woodruff School of Nursing
23. Emory University Rollins School of Public Health
24. Emory University School of Medicine
25. Faulkner University
26. Fisk University
27. Florida A&M University
28. Florida State University
29. Georgetown University
30. Georgetown University Law Center
31. Georgia College & State University
32. Georgia Institute of Technology
33. Georgia State University
34. Harvard University
35. Howard University School of Law
36. Howard University
37. Hult International Business School
38. Johns Hopkins Medicine
39. Johns Hopkins University
40. Kennesaw State University
41. La Sierra University
42. Lamar University
43. Louisiana State University
44. Loyola University Chicago
45. Meharry Medical College
46. Mercer University
47. Michigan State University
48. Massachusetts Institute of Technology
49. Montclair State University
50. Morehouse School of Medicine
51. Morgan State University
52. National Louis University
53. New York University
54. New Jersey Institute of Technology
55. Northwestern University
56. New York University Tisch School of the Arts
57. Old Dominion University
58. Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine
59. Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute
60. Rice University
61. Saint Joseph's University
62. Saint Joseph's University Philadelphia College of Pharmacy
63. San Diego State University
64. Savannah College of Art & Design
65. Sotheby's Institute of Art
66. Southern Illinois University, Carbondale
67. Southern University Law Center
68. Spalding University
69. State University of New York, Syracuse
70. Syracuse University
71. Temple University
72. Texas Southern University
73. The George Washington University
74. The University of Alabama at Birmingham
75. The University of Michigan School of Public Health
76. The University of North Carolina Adams School of Dentistry
77. The University of Texas, Dallas
78. Tufts University School of Medicine
79. Tufts University
80. Tulane University
81. University of California, Irvine
82. University of California, Los Angeles
83. University of California, San Diego
84. University of Cincinnati
85. University of Georgia
86. University of Houston Law Center
87. University of Houston-Downtown
88. University of Maryland, College Park
89. University of Massachusetts, Boston
90. University of Miami
91. University of Michigan - Ann Arbor
92. University of Missouri
93. University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
94. University of Pennsylvania
95. University of Pittsburgh
96. University of Rochester
97. University of Rochester School of Medicine and Dentistry
98. University of Southern California
99. University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston
100. University of the District of Columbia
101. University of Virginia
102. Vanderbilt University
103. Virginia Commonwealth University
104. William and Mary
105. Yale School of Public Health
106. Yale University
107. Yale Law School

INTERNATIONAL SCHOOLS

108. Alliance Manchester Business School
109. Imperial College
110. King's College
111. McGill University
112. Nanjing University
113. St. Matthew's University
114. University of Manchester
115. University of Oxford

Building career wealth & health



SPRING 2023 FELLOW

SPELMAN COLLEGE

ShaDasia Reynolds

Trainer,
POSSE Foundation

 Kat Goduco

A high quality first job helps individuals build long-term wealth and health. Braven defines a strong first job as one that requires a bachelor's degree and is full-time, and also includes some combination of promotion pathways, employee benefits, and a market-competitive starting salary.

Six months post-graduation, Spelman Braven Fellows in the class of 2025 are outearning the national average salary for early college graduates.

\$56,956

Mean salary of **employed** 2025 Spelman Braven graduates in the first 6 months after college graduation^{16,18}

Compared to a national average of \$43,018 of recent college graduates aged 23-24 who were employed in 2024

+\$13.9k

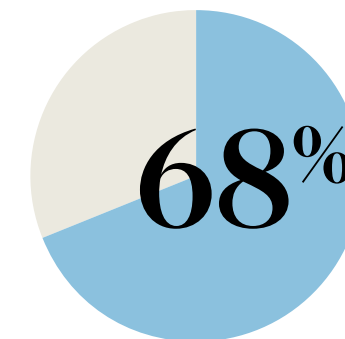
\$63,053

Mean salary of **full-time employed** 2025 Spelman Braven graduates in the first 6 months after college graduation^{17,18}

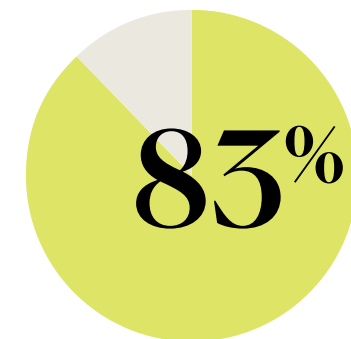
Compared to a national average of \$50,476 of recent college graduates aged 23-24 who worked full-time in 2024

+\$12.6k

RECENT BRAVEN GRADUATES NATIONALLY



ARE IN ROLES
ALIGNED WITH
THEIR LONG-TERM
CAREER INTEREST¹⁹



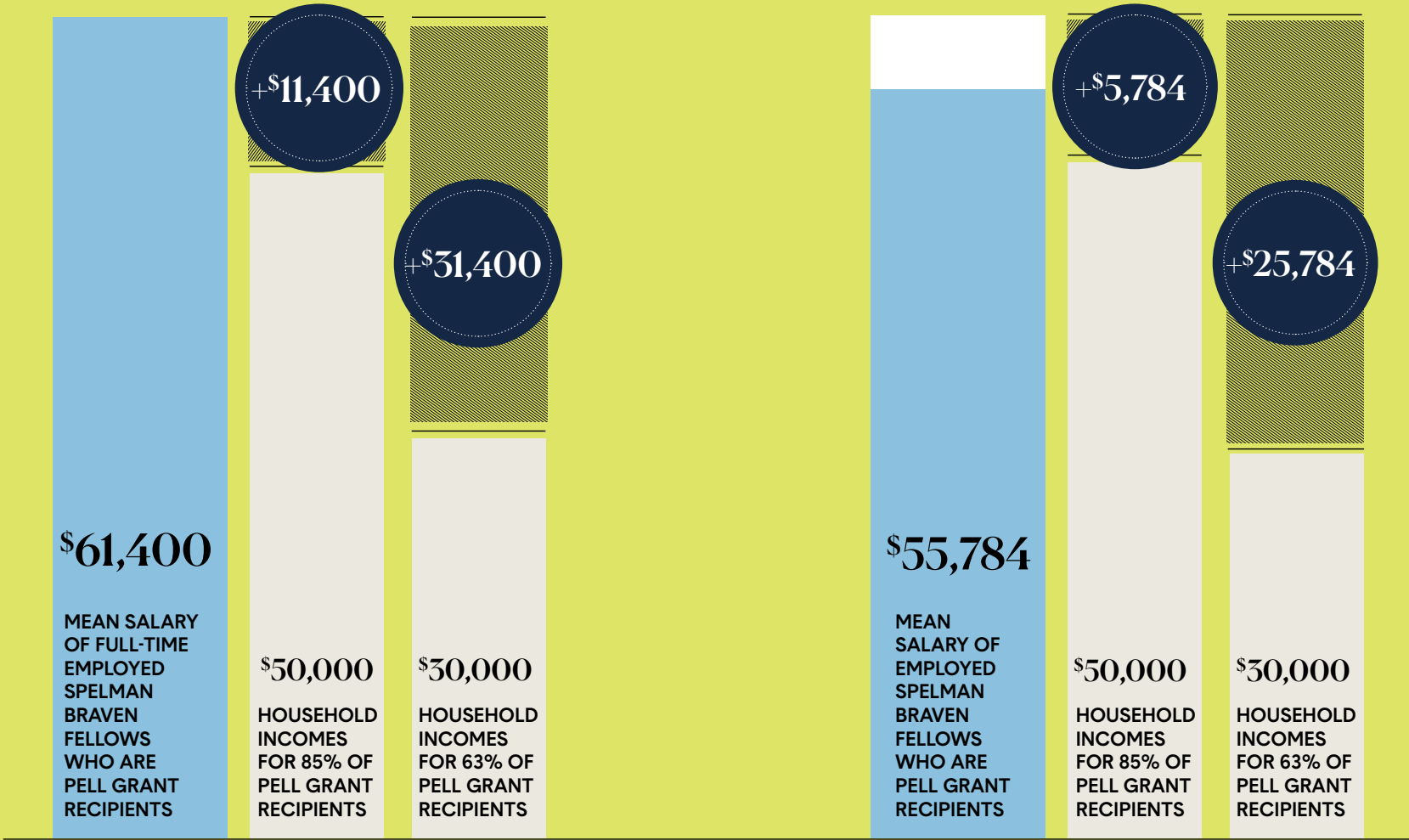
HAVE A JOB
WITH EMPLOYER
PROVIDED
BENEFITS¹⁹

The American Dream in action

Nationally, 63% of Pell Grant recipients come from families with annual incomes below \$30,000, and 85% come from families earning less than \$50,000 annually.²⁰

In their first job out of college, Spelman Braven Fellows are individually outearning most families who receive the Pell Grant.

42%
of Spelman Braven 2025 graduates are Pell Grant recipients



MOST POPULAR INDUSTRIES FOR SPELMAN BRAVEN FELLOWS



EDUCATION



BANKING & FINANCE



HEALTH



NONPROFIT

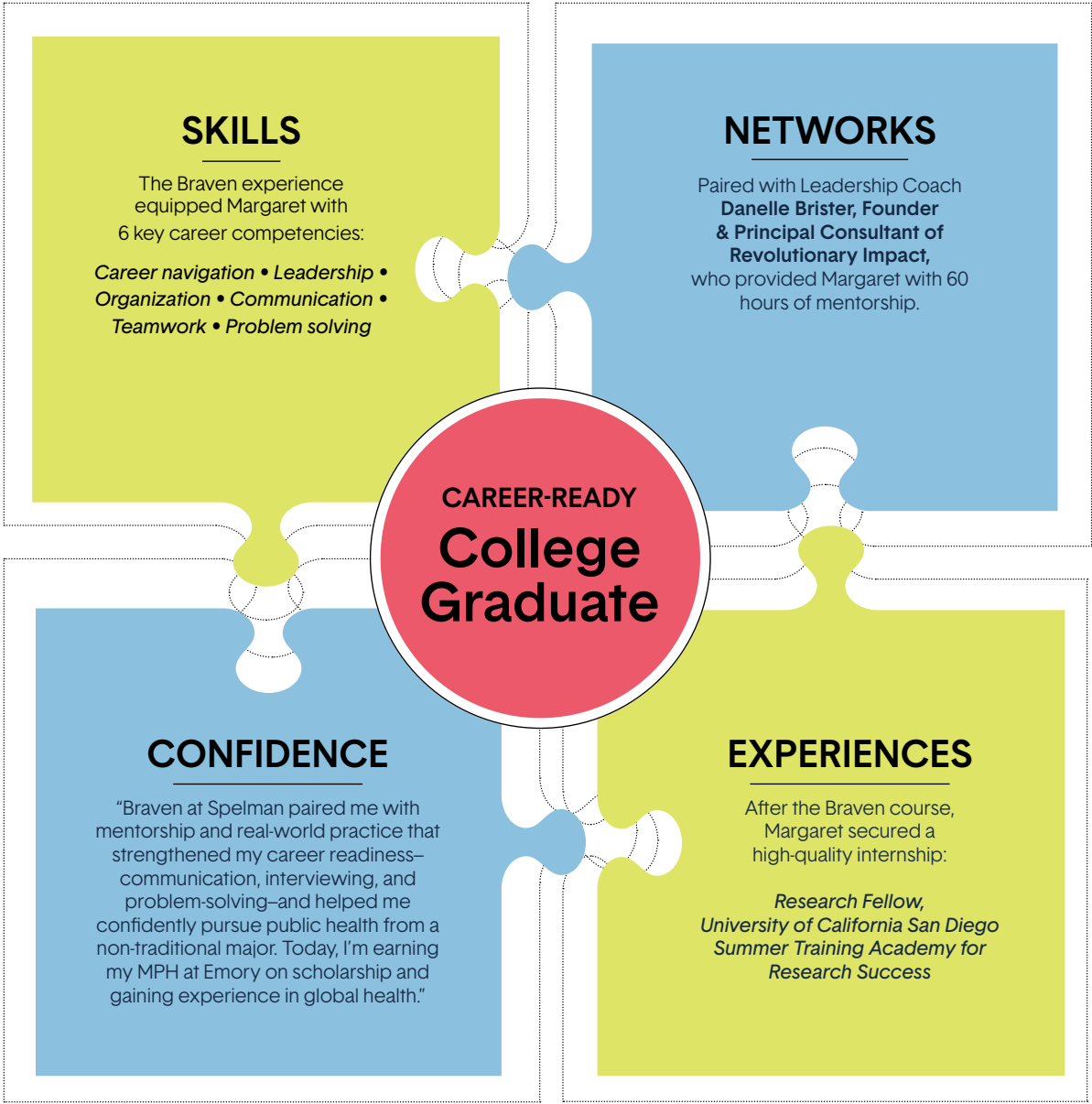


LAW



CONSULTING

With Braven’s help, Margaret Harris built the foundation to get on the path to the American Dream.



The Braven Equation in action

SPRING 2023 FELLOW

SPELMAN COLLEGE
Margaret Harris
Graduate Student, Master in Public Health,
Emory University
 Kat Goduco



Are we
supporting
Fellows on
the path to
internships?

Section
2a

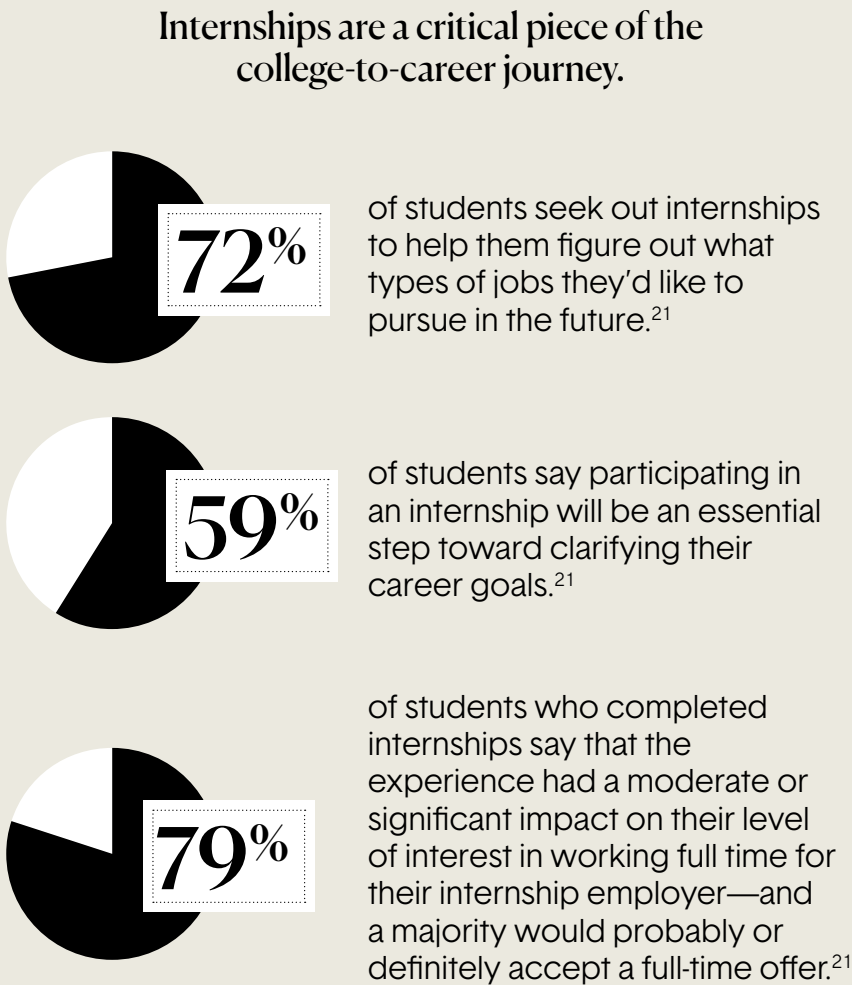




Students are facing greater competition for internships

Internships help students chart their futures, but fewer opportunities and rising competition make them harder to secure.

According to Handshake's Internship Index 2025:

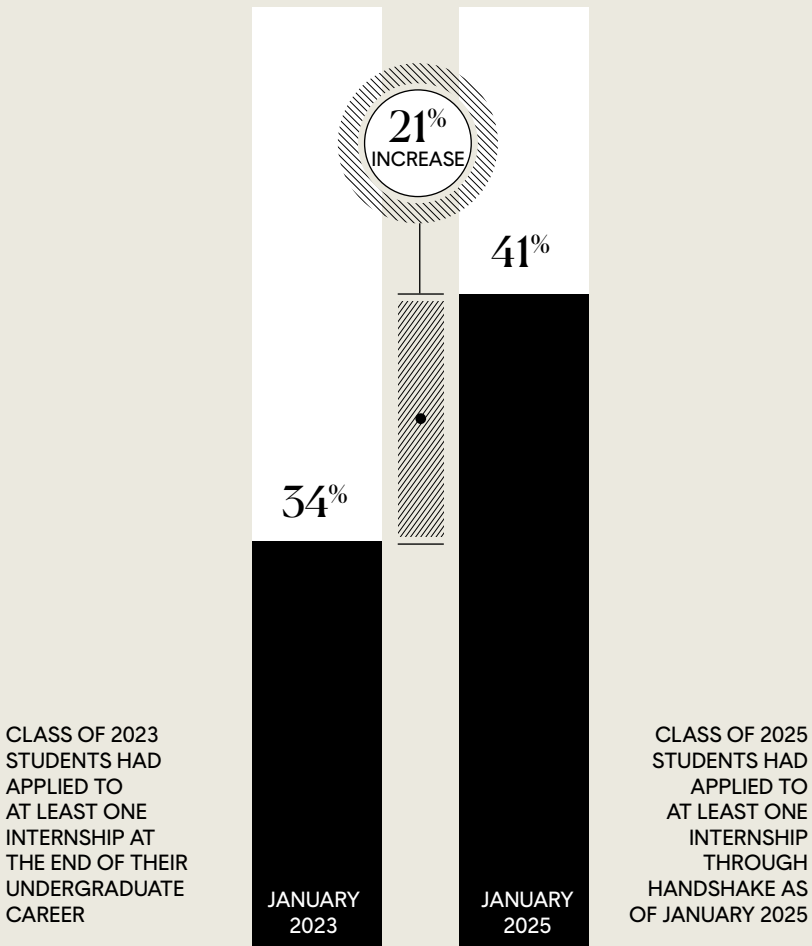


Internship demand is outpacing availability.

Internship postings declined more than 15% between January 2023 and January 2025. Meanwhile, internship applications surged.



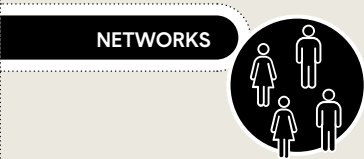
INCREASE IN INTERNSHIP APPLICATIONS SUBMITTED²¹



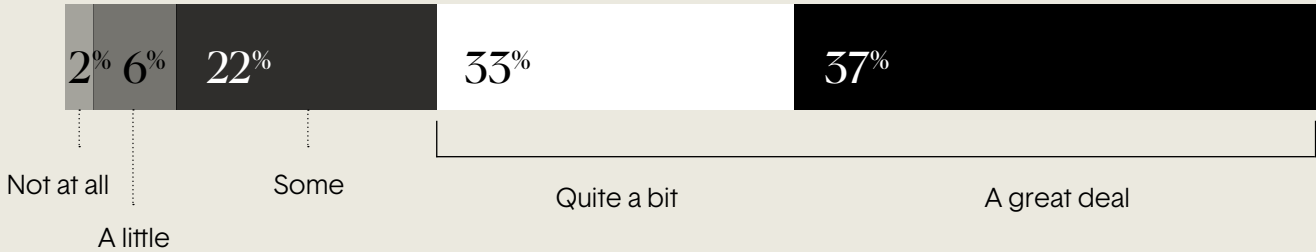


Paid internships increase networks & mentorship

The National Survey of Work-Based Learning from Strada Education Foundation and the Center for College Workforce Transitions found that paid internships have positive career value in several domains including social capital and mentorship.



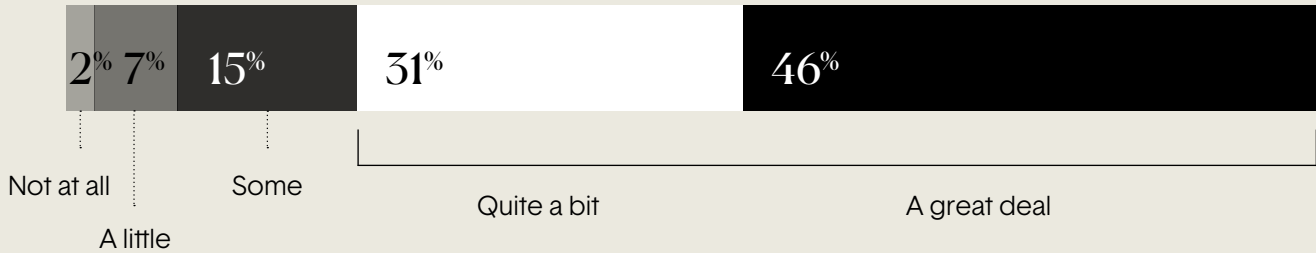
To what extent do you think your experience expanded your professional network?



Seven in 10 students reported that paid internships substantially expanded their professional networks²²



To what extent did your supervisor provide mentorship to support your career goals?



More than three-quarters of students reported high levels of career-focused mentorship²²

Encouraging levels of internship attainment for Spelman Braven Fellows



SPRING 2024 FELLOW

SPELMAN COLLEGE

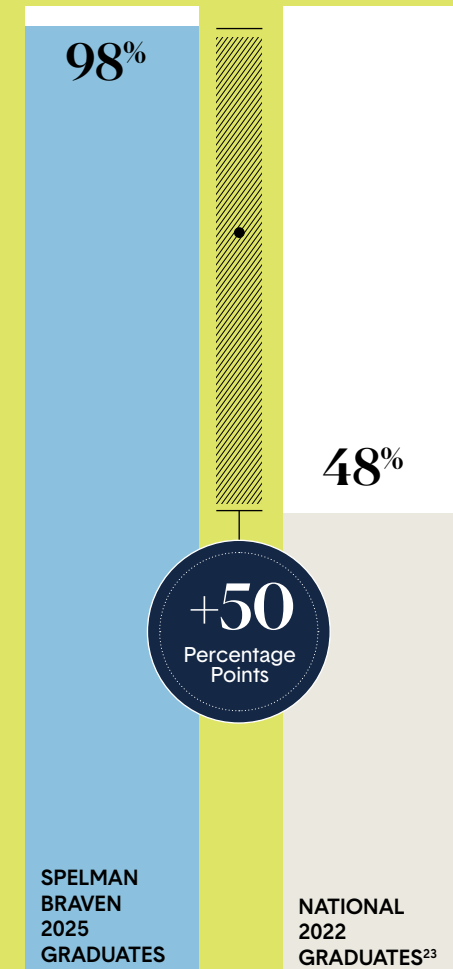
Khaleah Tyler

Membership Development Intern,
World 50 Group

Kat Goduco

For college students, internships serve as critical proof points of experience that open professional doors.

Compared with graduates nationally, Spelman Braven 2025 graduates were 50 percentage points more likely to have at least one internship during their college experience.



HIGHER EDUCATION PARTNERS & EMPLOYER PARTNERS

Higher Education Partners

Chicago State University (BravenX)
The City College of New York
Delaware State University
National Louis University
Northern Illinois University
Rutgers University - Newark
San Francisco State University (launched Fall 2024)
San José State University
Spelman College
University of Massachusetts Lowell (launched Spring 2026)
University of North Texas (launched Spring 2026)

BravenX Partners

5 Strong Scholars Foundation
Achieve Atlanta
Arkansas Commitment
Ascend Public Schools
Associated Colleges of Illinois
Augustana College

Breakthrough Kent Denver
Carmen Schools of Science & Technology
Chicago Scholars
Chicago State University
City Year Chicago
Coney Island Prep Public Schools
Cooperman College Scholars
Coral Academy of Science Las Vegas
Cristo Rey Network
DREAM Charter School
DSST Public Schools
Evanston Scholars
Excel Academy Charter School
Excellence Community Schools
Freedom Preparatory Academy Charter Schools
IDEA Public Schools
Judson University
KIPP Metro Atlanta
KIPP Forward
KIPP NJ
Lehman College
LISA Academy
National Association for Urban Debate Leagues
Newark Youth Career

Pathways Program
North Central College
Noble Schools
Rivet School
SEEDS
The Academy Charter School
The Wight Foundation
Uncommon Schools
Uplift Education
UtmostU

Employer Partners LEAD

(\$250K+ and programmatic support)
Adobe
Barclays
Blackstone Charitable Foundation
Deloitte
JPMorgan Chase Foundation
LinkedIn
Morgan Stanley
NBA Foundation

ANCHOR

(\$100K+ and programmatic support)
CIBC Foundation
Cognizant US Foundation
The College Board
Salesforce

KEYSTONE

(\$25K+ and programmatic support)
Audible
Berkshire Hathaway Specialty Insurance
Blackbaud
Nerdwallet
Pathward N. A.
Silver Lake
Taco Bell Foundation
UBS
United Airlines

IMPACT

(\$5K+ and/or programmatic support)
Bain and Company
Brown Advisory
Catalina
Cisco
Micron Technology, Inc.
National Black Arts Festival
National Coalition of 100 Black Women
Staffmark
Teach For America
The Clorox Company
Unacast
Vanguard
Visa
Wells Fargo

PHILANTHROPIC SUPPORTERS (\$1K+)

Anonymous
Cynthia Bowman
Deloitte Foundation
Harriet Watkins
LuLuMa Foundation
New Profit, Inc.
Prosper Road Foundation
Susan Grant

A big thank you to our Atlanta Board of Directors:

Susan Grant
Daniel Gordon
Jerry Parrish

1. 15,563 Fellows have completed the Braven Accelerator course to date; this includes core sites (City College of New York, Delaware State University, Northern Illinois University, Rutgers University-Newark, San José State University, and Spelman College) and non-core sites (BravenX, San Francisco State University, Lehman College, and National Louis University).
2. The percentage of students not on the path to the American Dream is an estimate of the percentage of Pell-Grant or first-generation students who have graduated but have not secured a quality job post college. This cohort is based on the latest data available and is the total fall 2022 enrollment of first-time degree/certificate-seeking students in degree-granting postsecondary institutions (NCES 2023 Digest of Education Statistics table 305.10) and the total fall 2021 enrollment of 2YR > 4YR transfers (NSC Research Center Fall 2023 Transfer and Progress Report). Based on this cohort, the percent of students not on path to the American Dream is calculated leveraging the following sources: "Percentage of Undergraduates Receiving Pell Grant in 2022-2023" NCES 2023 IPEDS Trends Generator; "Number of Full-Time, First-Time Degree/Certificate-Seeking Undergraduate Students... by Type of Aid Received" NCES 2020 IPEDS Data Explorer table 20; "Total Undergraduate Fall Enrollment in Degree-Granting Postsecondary Institutions, by Attendance Status, Sex of Student, and Control and Level of Institution: Selected Years, 1970 through 2031" NCES 2023 Digest of Education Statistics table 303.70; Trends in First-Generation Students: College Access, Persistence, and Postbachelor's Outcomes NCES 2018 First Generation Students Report; Trends in Pell Grant Receipt and the Characteristics of Pell Grant Recipients: Selected Years, 2003–2004, 2015–2016 NCES 2019 IPEDS Trends Generator; NACE 2025 First Destination Survey and September 2025 Federal Reserve Bank of New York Underemployment Rate.
3. "The Labor Market for Recent College Graduates: Unemployment Rates for Recent College Graduates versus Other Groups." Federal Reserve Bank of New York, 2024, www.newyorkfed.org/research/college-labor-market#:~:explore=unemployment. Accessed 24 Feb. 2025.
4. Shrivastava, Allison. "September 2025 Labor Market Update: The Squeeze on New Entrants Mirrors a Marketwide Decline." Hiring Lab, 25 Sept. 2025, www.hiringlab.org/2025/09/25/september-labor-market-squeeze-on-new-entrants/. Accessed 24 Feb. 2026.
5. Blankenship, Molly, et al. The American Job Quality Study: 2025 State of the U.S. Labor Force. Jobs for the Future / Families and Workers Fund / Gallup, Oct. 2025, www.jff.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/10/AmericanJobQualityReport_Final_10142025.pdf. Accessed 24 Feb. 2026. For the accompanying graph, a quality job is defined as one that allows workers to meet their basic financial needs, feel safe and respected, grow their skills, have a voice in decisions that affect them, and exercise some control over their time and work.
6. Morris, Catherine, et al. The Major Payoff: Evaluating Earnings and Employment Outcomes Across Bachelor's Degrees. Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce, 2025, cew.georgetown.edu/major-payoff. Accessed 24 Feb. 2026.
7. Kessler, Sarah. "The Rise of the Robot Job Seeker." The New York Times, 21 June 2025, www.nytimes.com/2025/06/21/business/dealbook/ai-job-applications.html. Accessed 24 Feb. 2026.
8. Job Outlook 2025. National Association of Colleges and Employers, Jan. 2025, naceweb.org/docs/default-source/default-document-library/2025/publication/research-report/2025-nace-job-outlook-jan-2025.pdf. Accessed 24 Feb. 2026.
9. Braven defines quality outcome attainment using the following methodology:
 - a. Quality outcome: Fellow enrolls in graduate school or secures a job that requires a BA/BS, is full-time, and is paid.
 - b. Part-quality outcome: Fellow secures a job that is paid, aligns with long-term career interests, and meets at least one of the criteria below:
 - i. Requires a bachelor's degree
 - ii. Is full-time
 - iii. Offers employer-provided benefits
 - iv. Earns >35k per year
 - v. Builds record of achievement/resume
 - vi. Builds transferable skills, especially within career interests
 - c. Not quality: Fellow secures a job that is paid, but does not meet the criteria of a part-quality or quality job.
 - d. Unemployed: Fellow is unemployed.
10. 65% is the percentage of Spelman Fellows who secured a quality job or enrolled in graduate school. All outcome percentages are based on Fellows for which their post-graduation outcome is known (94% or 505 out of the total 535 Spelman College Fellows' outcome is known).
11. Braven's 45% peer benchmark is calculated by taking the NACE 2024 full-time employment rate for students at institutions with a high concentration of Pell Grant recipients (40-60%) from the NACE 2025 First Destination Survey, adjusting it for underemployment (using Federal Reserve of New York and U.S. Census data), and adding the percentage of students pursuing graduate school education.
12. Braven's 49% national benchmark is calculated by taking the NACE 2024 full-time employment rate from the NACE 2025 First Destination Survey, adjusting it for underemployment (using Federal Reserve of New York and U.S. Census data), and adding the percentage of students pursuing graduate school education.
13. Low-income means the Braven Fellow identifies as low-income or a Pell Grant recipient.
14. First-generation means the Braven Fellow identifies as a student who is the first in their immediate family to attend or graduate from a four-year college or university.
15. 42% is the percentage of Spelman Fellows who enrolled in graduate school. This percentage is based on Fellows for which their post-graduation outcome is known (94% or 505 out of the total 535 Spelman College Fellows' outcome is known).
16. Braven employed salary average is the approximated salary average for Class of 2025 Braven Spelman Fellows at core sites who secured any job (quality, part-quality, or not quality).
17. Braven full-time employed salary average is the approximated salary average for Class of 2025 Braven Spelman Fellows at core sites who secured a full-time job.
18. U.S. Census Bureau. American Community Survey. Data filtered by age (AGEP 23-24), income (PINCP > \$1), hours worked (WKHP > 35 or WKHP > 0), employment status (ESR Civilian employed, at work), and educational attainment (SCHL Bachelor's degree). U.S. Census Bureau, <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs>.
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