BRAVEN

CHICAGO STATE UNIVERSITY

NATIONAL LOUIS UNIVERSITY

Northern Illinois University







2026 Impact Report

2025-2026 SCHOOL YEAR

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.


Chris Joycе

What does this report cover?

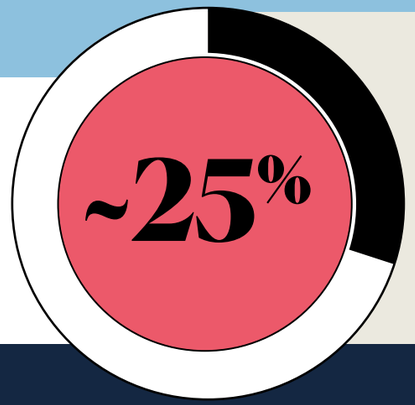
Across the country, Braven and our dedicated partners are turning the promise of economic mobility into reality, one Fellow at a time.

We're on a path to reach 80,000-100,000 students by 2032, at which point we'll welcome 25,000 new Fellows annually into a proven model that builds the career-readiness skills, networks, confidence, and experience that careers are built on.

To date, more than 17,000[1] Fellows have come through Braven's doors, and the momentum is only growing. This report takes a close look at what that momentum means in practice, through the lens of five questions that get to the heart of our work:

1. **Are our Fellows securing quality career outcomes that put them on the path to the American Dream?**
2. **Are we impacting more students while maintaining program quality?**
3. **Are we supporting Fellows to secure internships and complete college?**
4. **Are our Fellows developing the career readiness skills, networks, and confidence needed for success?**
5. **Are we building employer and higher education partnerships with true shared value?**

Why our work matters



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 enroll in graduate school.[2]

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

1.4 million students

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

~400k

GRADUATE & SECURE A STRONG JOB OR GAIN ADMISSION TO GRADUATE SCHOOL

~1 million

ARE NOT ON THE PATH TO THE AMERICAN DREAM





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.

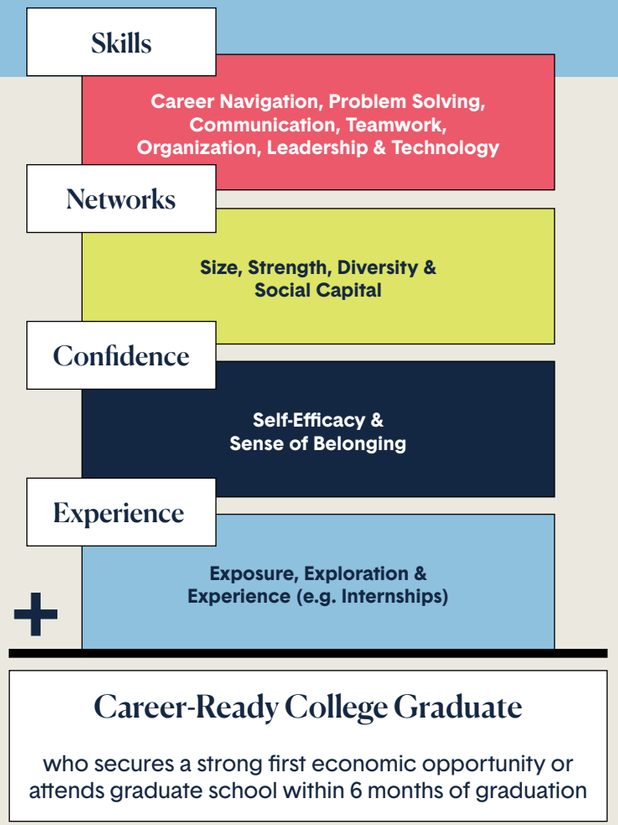
Vision

The next generation of leaders will emerge from everywhere.

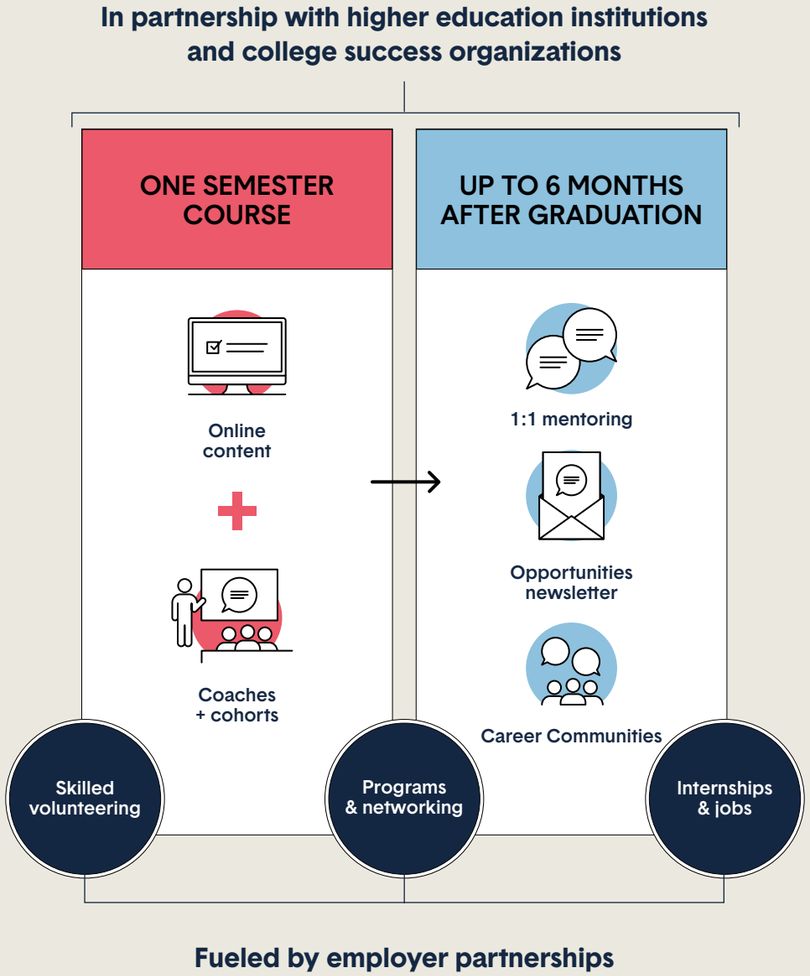
The Braven Equation

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

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







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 higher education partners and faculty, employer partners, volunteers, and students—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

- Chicago State University
- The City College of New York
- DSU
- Illinois Tech — *Launched Fall 2026*
- Kean — *Launched Fall 2026*
- National Louis University
- Northern Illinois University
- Rutgers Newark
- San Francisco State University
- SJSU San José State University
- Spelman College — *A Choice to Change the World*
- UMass Lowell
- University of Mount Saint Vincent — *Launched Fall 2026*
- UNT University of North Texas



1

SECTION 1

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

National Statistics

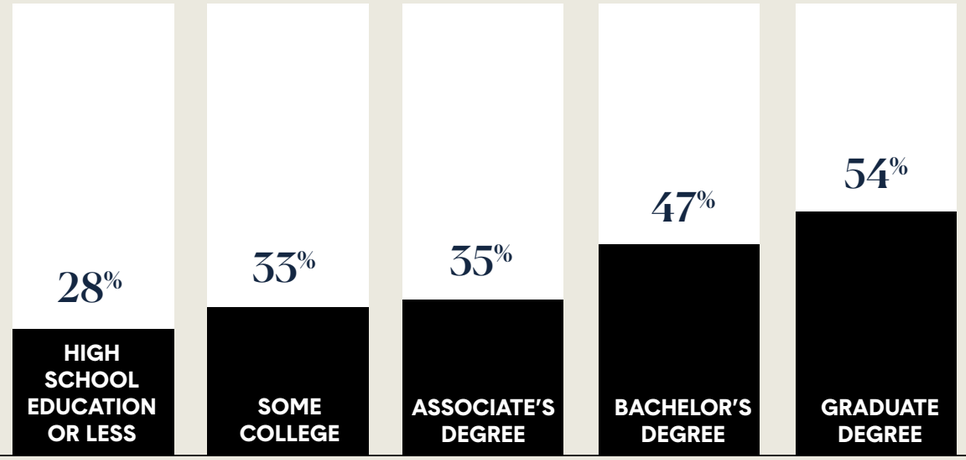
Pursuing the bachelor's degree is still the surest path to economic mobility

A bachelor's degree holder is still employed at a higher rate, has greater job security once employed, and earns more than workers with a high school diploma alone.

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

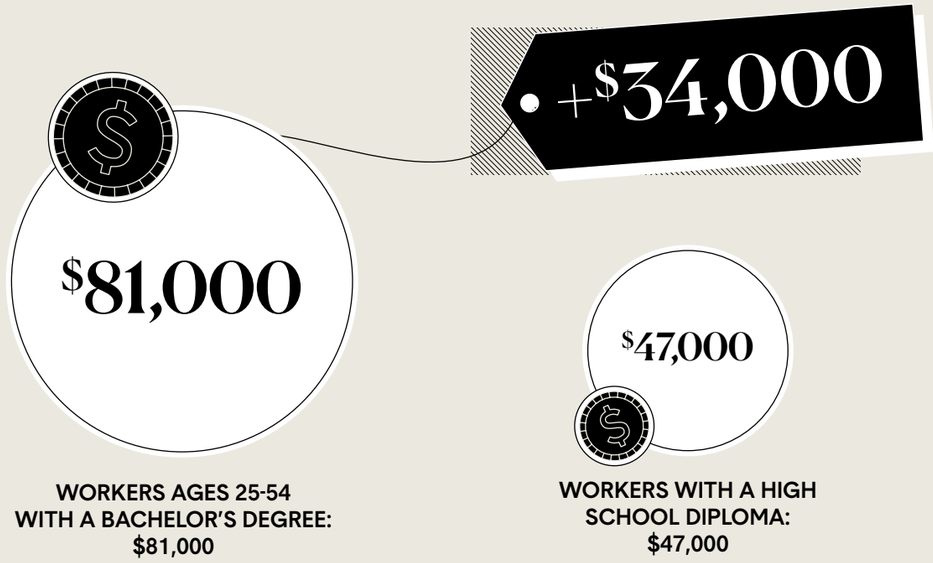
Employees with a bachelor's or graduate degree are more likely to have quality jobs than those with an associate's degree, some college, or a high school education or less.[3]

PERCENTAGE OF DEGREE COMPLETERS IN QUALITY JOBS



Workers with a four-year degree earn 72% more than workers with a high school diploma alone.

MEDIAN ECONOMIC OUTCOMES
FOR WORKERS AGES 25-54 WITH A BACHELOR'S DEGREE[4]



WORKERS AGES 25-54 WITH A BACHELOR'S DEGREE: $81,000

WORKERS WITH A HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA: $47,000



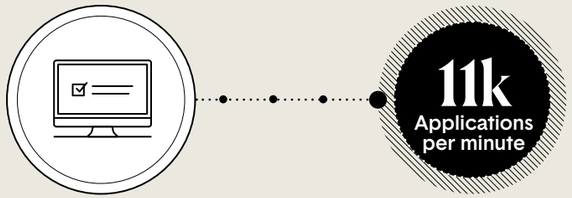
The opportunity: Translating degrees into career-launching opportunities

The challenge today is not the value of the degree itself, but ensuring students can successfully translate it into career-launching opportunities.

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

In June 2025, LinkedIn reported that the number of job applications increased by more than 45%, and the platform is clocking an average of 11,000 applications per minute. [5]

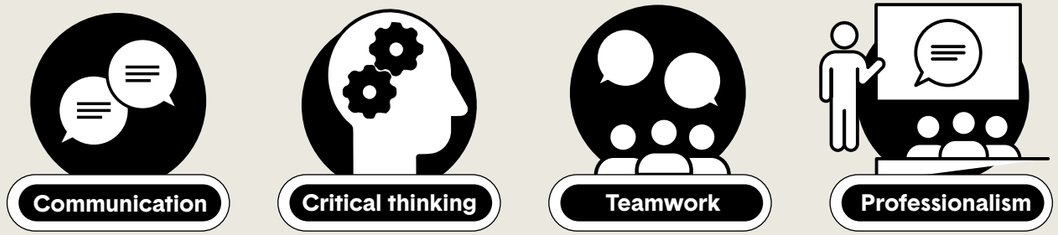


AI's impact on job hunting

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%. [5]

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

These include: [6]



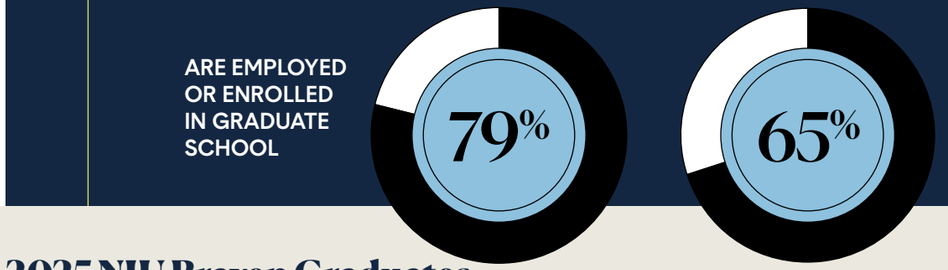
These are closely aligned with the seven career-readiness skills Braven helps students develop in the Accelerator course:

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



The strength of roles that NIU Braven 2025 graduates secured

Of the 192 Braven Fellows who graduated from Northern Illinois University in 2025,



2025 NIU Braven Graduates



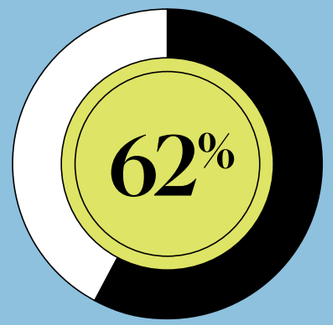
HOW WE DEFINE QUALITY ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES [8]

Quality role: 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 role: 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 role: 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

The American Dream in action for NIU students



NIU BRAVEN 2025 GRADUATES ARE PELL GRANT RECIPIENTS



Nationally, 85% of Pell Grant recipients come from families with annual incomes below $50,000 annually, and 63% of those come from families earning less than $30,000 annually. [9]

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

The Braven Equation in action

With Braven's help, Kailah Stewart built the foundation to get on the path to the American Dream.

Skills

The Braven experience equipped Kailah with 7 key career competencies: **career navigation • leadership • organization • communication • teamwork • problem solving • technology**

Networks

Leadership Coach **Cassie Del Valle, Senior Data Analyst II, Allstate,** provided Kailah with **60 hours of mentorship.**

Confidence

"Northern Illinois University, in partnership with Braven, helped prepare me for real-world success by equipping me with the skills, knowledge, and confidence needed to navigate my career journey. This experience has been instrumental in shaping my readiness to thrive in my first job."

Experiences

After the Braven course, Kailah secured a high-quality internship: **Social Media Marketing Intern, Living Full Out Inc**



Career-Ready College Graduate

Kailah

Kailah Stewart

Spring 2024 Fellow

NORTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY

Public Relations Assistant, Cook County Sheriff

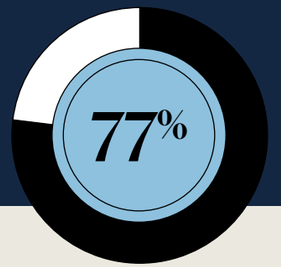
Chris Joyce

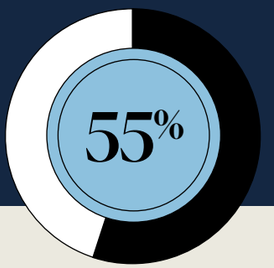


The strength of roles that NLU Braven 2025 graduates secured

Of the 97 Braven Fellows who graduated from National Louis University in 2025,

ARE EMPLOYED OR ENROLLED IN GRADUATE SCHOOL





SECURED QUALITY OR PATHWAY OUTCOMES

2025 NLU Braven Graduates:

27%	28%	22%	23%
QUALITY ROLES OR GRADUATE SCHOOL [10]	PATHWAY ROLES	NON-QUALITY	UNEMPLOYED AND NOT IN GRADUATE SCHOOL

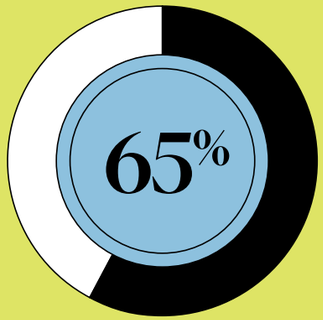
HOW WE DEFINE QUALITY ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES [8]

Quality role: 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

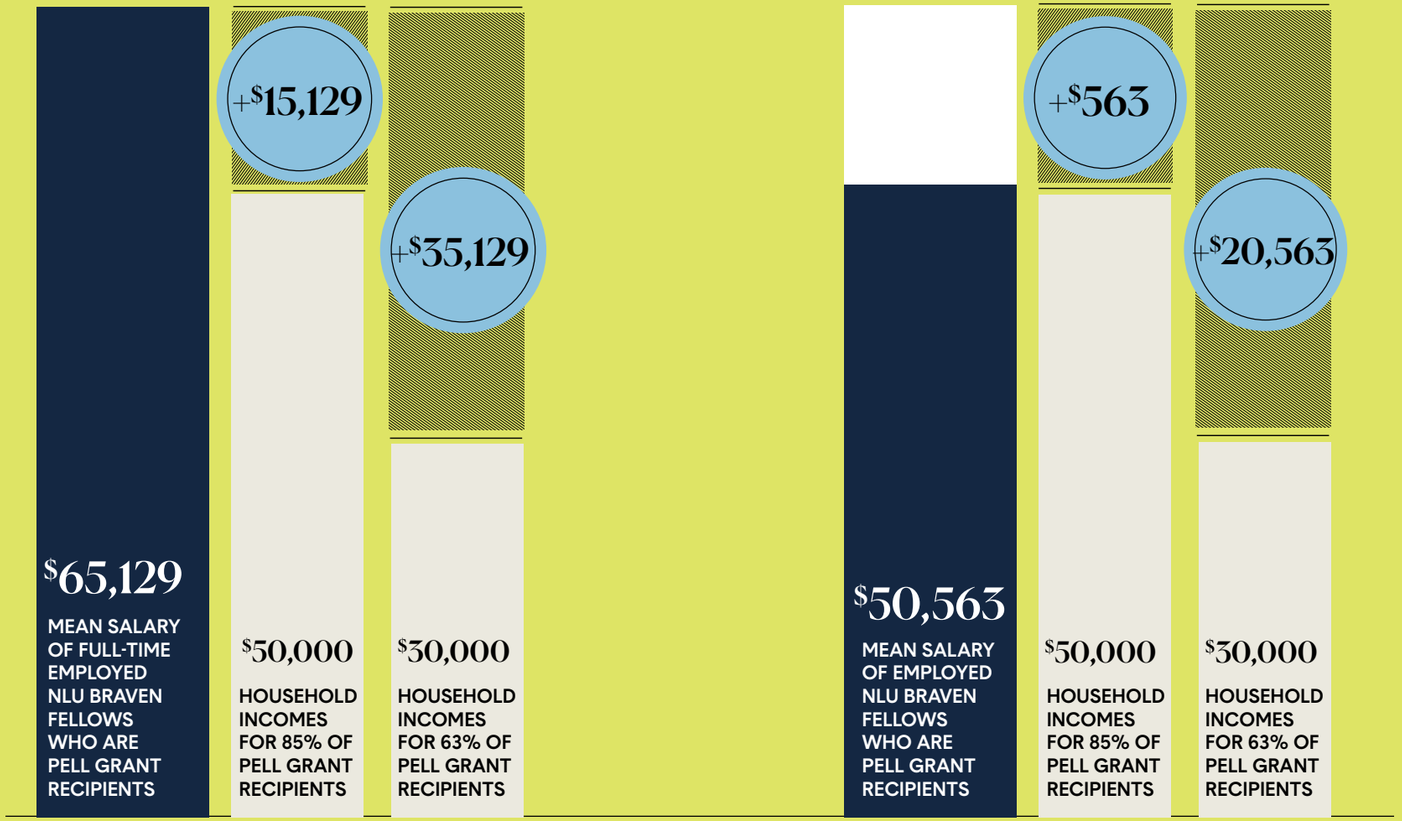
Pathway role: a role that does not require a bachelor's degree but helps students' financial sustainability, is aligned with career interests, and will likely lead to more career-accelerating possibilities through skill development

Non-quality role: 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

The American Dream in action for NLU students



NLU BRAVEN 2025 GRADUATES ARE PELL GRANT RECIPIENTS



Nationally, 85% of Pell Grant recipients come from families with annual incomes below $50,000 annually, and 63% of those come from families earning less than $30,000 annually. [9]

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

The Braven Equation in action

With Braven's help, Ghassen Hattab built the foundation to get on the path to the American Dream.

Skills

The Braven experience equipped Ghassen with 7 key career competencies: **career navigation • leadership • organization • communication • teamwork • problem solving • technology**

Networks

Leadership Coach **Sean Neilsen, Manager, Talent Pathways Programming at Relativity** provided Ghassen with **60 hours of mentorship.**

Confidence

"Braven at NLU helped me shape my professional identity by teaching me how to build my skill set, define my values and clarify my career goals. I learned key communication skills and how to be more confident in interviews which helped lead me to a strong first job after college."

Experiences

After the Braven course, Ghassen secured a high-quality internship: **Sales & Trading Summer Analyst, Mitsubishi UFJ Financial Group**



Career-Ready College Graduate

Ghassen Hattab

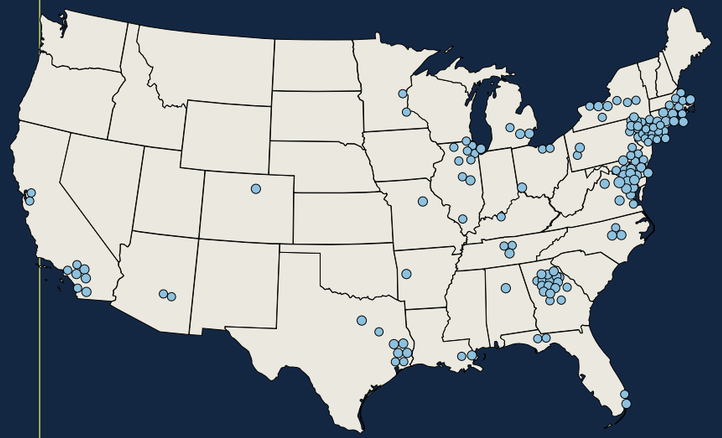
Spring 2024 Fellow

NATIONAL LOUIS UNIVERSITY

Business Development Representative, Shamrock Trading Corporation

Chris Joyce

National Fellow enrollment in graduate school



27% of the 2025 graduates continued on to graduate school within six months of graduation.[11]

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

1. Agnes Scott College
2. Alfred University
3. American University
4. Arizona State University
5. Augusta University
6. Aurora University
7. Bank Street College of Education
8. Barry University
9. Baruch College
10. Baylor University
11. Boston University
12. Brooklyn College
13. Brown University
14. California State University, Long Beach
15. Capella University
16. Carnegie Mellon University
17. Case Western Reserve University
18. Central Georgia Technical College
19. City University of New York
20. Clark Atlanta University
21. Columbia University
22. DePaul University
23. Drexel University
24. Duke University
25. Emory University
26. Emory University Nell Hodgson Woodruff School of Nursing
27. Emory University Rollins School of Public Health
28. Emory University School of Medicine
29. Faulkner University
30. Fisk University
31. Florida A&M University
32. Florida State University
33. George Washington University
34. Georgetown University
35. Georgetown University Law Center
36. Georgia College & State University
37. Georgia Institute of Technology
38. Georgia State University
39. Grand Canyon University
40. Harvard University
41. Howard University
42. Howard University School of Law
43. Hult International Business School
44. Illinois Institute of Technology
45. Illinois State University
46. Johns Hopkins University
47. Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine
48. Kean University
49. Kennesaw State University
50. La Sierra University
51. Lamar University
52. Lehman College
53. Loyola University Chicago
54. Massachusetts Institute of Technology
55. Meharry Medical College
56. Mercer University
57. Mercy University
58. Michigan State University
59. Mitchell Hamline School of Law
60. Montclair State University
61. Morehouse College
62. Morehouse School of Medicine
63. Morgan State University
64. National Louis University
65. New Jersey Institute of Technology
66. New York University
67. New York University Tisch School of the Arts
68. Newman University
69. Northeastern University
70. Northern Illinois University
71. Northwestern University
72. Old Dominion University
73. Palo Alto University
74. Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine
75. Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute
76. Rice University
77. Russell Sage College
78. Rutgers Business School
79. Rutgers New Jersey Medical School
80. Rutgers School of Public Health
81. Rutgers University-New Brunswick
82. Rutgers University-Newark
83. Saint Joseph's University Philadelphia College of Pharmacy
84. San Diego State University
85. San José State University
86. Savannah College of Art and Design
87. Seton Hall University
88. Seton Hall University School of Law
89. Sotheby's Institute of Art
90. Southern Illinois University Carbondale
91. Southern University Law Center
92. Spalding University
93. State University of New York at Brockport
94. Stevens Institute of Technology
95. Stony Brook University
96. Syracuse University
97. Teachers College, Columbia University
98. Temple University
99. Texas Southern University
100. The City College of New York
101. Towson University
102. Tufts University
103. Tufts University School of Medicine
104. Tulane University
105. University of Alabama at Birmingham
106. University of Arkansas
107. University of California, Irvine
108. University of California, Los Angeles
109. University of California, San Diego
110. University of Cincinnati
111. University of Colorado Boulder
112. University of Connecticut
113. University of Delaware
114. University of Georgia
115. University of Houston
116. University of Houston Law Center
117. University of Illinois at Chicago
118. University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
119. University of Maryland
120. University of Maryland, Baltimore County
121. University of Massachusetts Boston
122. University of Miami
123. University of Michigan School of Public Health
124. University of Michigan, Ann Arbor
125. University of Missouri
126. University of Mount Saint Vincent
127. University of North Carolina Adams School of Dentistry
128. University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
129. University of Pennsylvania
130. University of Pittsburgh
131. University of Rochester
132. University of Rochester School of Medicine and Dentistry
133. University of Southern California
134. University of Texas at Dallas
135. University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston
136. University of the District of Columbia
137. University of Virginia
138. Vanderbilt University
139. Virginia Commonwealth University
140. William & Mary
141. Yale Law School
142. Yale School of Public Health
143. Yale University

INTERNATIONAL SCHOOLS

144. Alliance Manchester Business School
145. Imperial College London
146. King's College
147. McGill University
148. Nanjing University
149. St. Matthew's University
150. University of Kent
151. University of Manchester
152. University of Oxford

How the job market is shaping up for the Class of 2026

The picture for the Class of 2026 is more nuanced than the headlines suggest. Hiring projections have turned upward and more graduates are finding work more quickly, but unemployment remains elevated.

Encouraging signs for the Class of 2026

Employers project hiring for the Class of 2026 to be up 5.6% compared to last year, according to the spring update from the National Association of Colleges and Employers. [12]

Top industries hiring: [12]

- INFORMATION
- ENGINEERING SERVICES
- WHOLESALE TRADE
- CONSTRUCTION
- MISCELLANEOUS PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

Top 5 industries decreasing hiring: [12]

- UTILITIES
- COMPUTER & ELECTRONICS MANUFACTURING
- MISCELLANEOUS MANUFACTURING
- FOOD & BEVERAGE MANUFACTURING
- CHEMICAL (PHARMACEUTICAL MANUFACTURING)

The college degree makes a difference

Young college graduates faced a 5.6% unemployment rate as of December 2025—higher than the 3.1% for all college-educated workers, but meaningfully lower than the 7.8% facing their same-aged peers without a degree. [13]



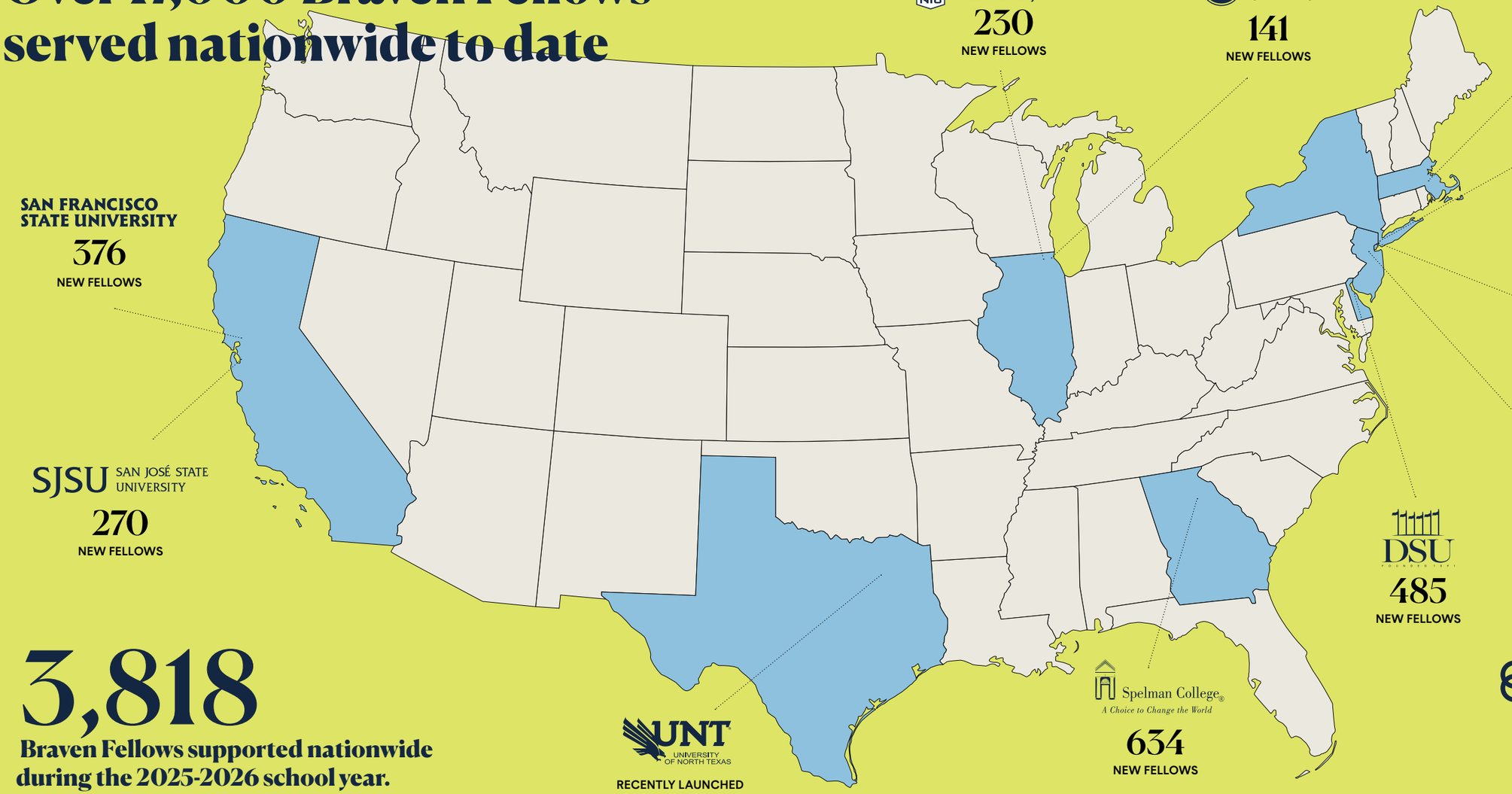


2

SECTION 2

Are we impacting more students and maintaining program quality?

Over 17,000 Braven Fellows served nationwide to date



Northern Illinois University
230
NEW FELLOWS

National Louis University
141
NEW FELLOWS

UMass Lowell
RECENTLY LAUNCHED

The City College of New York
630
NEW FELLOWS

San Francisco State University
376
NEW FELLOWS

Lehman College | CUNY
1,088
FELLOWS

SJSU San José State University
270
NEW FELLOWS

Rutgers Newark
495
NEW FELLOWS

DSU
485
NEW FELLOWS

UNT University of North Texas
RECENTLY LAUNCHED

Spelman College
A Choice to Change the World
634
NEW FELLOWS

BRAVEN
481
NEW FELLOWS

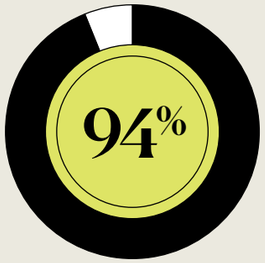
3,818

Braven Fellows supported nationwide during the 2025-2026 school year.

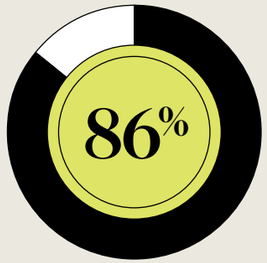
2025-2026 Northern Illinois University Braven Fellow Class

141 Fellows completed the Braven course in the 2025-2026 school year at Northern Illinois University.

Northern Illinois University

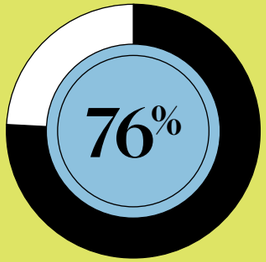


COURSE PASS RATE [14]

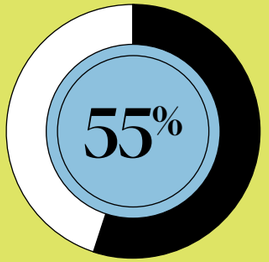


AVERAGE FINAL GRADE

2025-2026 NIU Fellows are:



STUDENTS WHO COME FROM LOW-INCOME BACKGROUNDS [15]



FIRST-GENERATION COLLEGE STUDENTS [16]

77%

of NIU Fellows who take the Braven Accelerator Course feel Braven has improved their chances of landing a job a great deal or quite a bit.

TOP 5 MAJORS



COMPUTER SCIENCE



BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION



BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES



GENERAL STUDIES

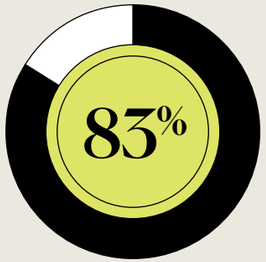


HEALTH & WELLNESS

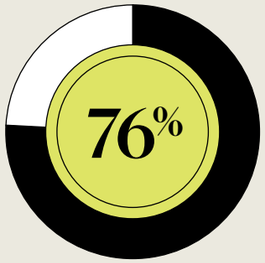
2025-2026 National Louis University Braven Fellow Class

230 Fellows completed the Braven course in the 2025-2026 school year at National Louis University.

NATIONAL LOUIS UNIVERSITY

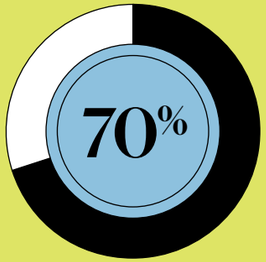


COURSE PASS RATE [14]

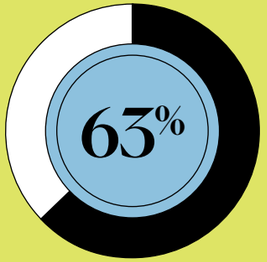


AVERAGE FINAL GRADE

2025-2026 NLU Fellows are:



STUDENTS WHO COME FROM LOW-INCOME BACKGROUNDS [15]



FIRST-GENERATION COLLEGE STUDENTS [16]

60%

of NLU Fellows who take the Braven Accelerator Course feel Braven has improved their chances of landing a job a great deal or quite a bit.

TOP 5 MAJORS



BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION



EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION



COMPUTER SCIENCE



PSYCHOLOGY



CRIMINAL JUSTICE



3

SECTION 3

Are we supporting Fellows to secure internships and complete college?



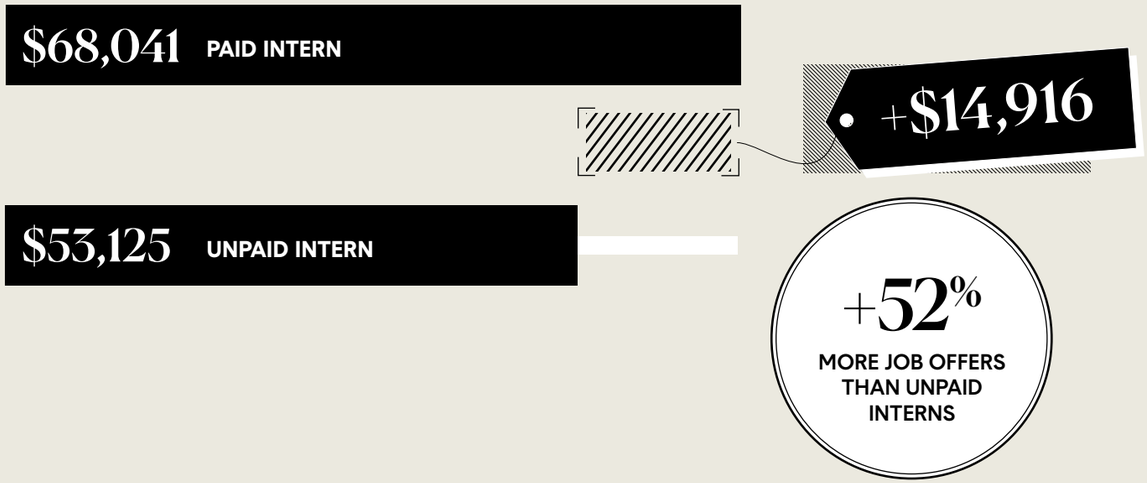


Quality internships during college make a difference

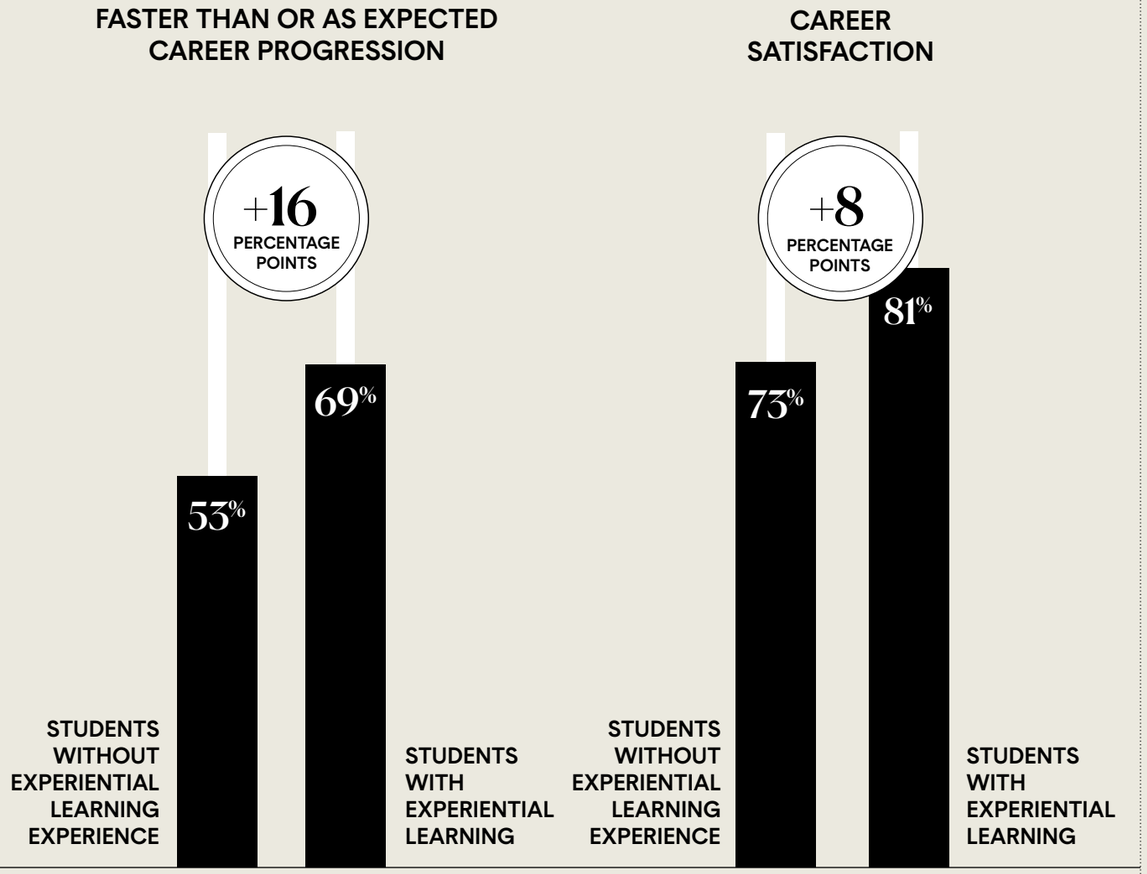
Internships are a critical piece of the college-to-career journey, but the quality of internships matters.

According to National Association of Colleges and Employers, students who take part in a paid internship secure more job offers and earn more than those who participate in unpaid internships. [17]

AVERAGE STARTING SALARIES:



Additionally, those who participated in experiential learning experiences reported faster than expected career progression and higher rates of career satisfaction. [17]



Encouraging levels of internship attainment for NIU Braven Fellows

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

Compared with graduates nationally, Northern Illinois University Braven 2025 graduates were 14 percentage points more likely to have at least one internship during their college experience.

62% NIU BRAVEN 2025 GRADUATES

48% NATIONAL 2022 GRADUATES [18]

+14 percentage points



Spring 2024 Fellow

Brandon Padilla

NORTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY

Audit Intern, KPMG

Chris Joyce



The Braven experience drives meaningful increase in internship attainment for NIU Fellows

In the 2025-2026 school year, NIU Braven Fellows saw a 10 percentage point uplift in internship attainment between the start and end of the Accelerator course, speaking to an important element of the immediate impact of the Braven experience. [19]

Internships are a key step toward strong career outcomes.

FELLOWS WHO HAD AT LEAST ONE INTERNSHIP

35% AT THE START OF THE ACCELERATOR

45% BY THE END OF THE ACCELERATOR

+10 percentage points

Encouraging levels of internship attainment for NLU Braven Fellows

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

Compared with graduates nationally, National Louis University Braven 2025 graduates were 20 percentage points more likely to have at least one internship during their college experience.

68% NLU BRAVEN 2025 GRADUATES

48% NATIONAL 2022 GRADUATES [18]

+20 percentage points



Angie

Angie Jaral

Spring 2022 Fellow

NATIONAL LOUIS UNIVERSITY

Intern, Chicago News Weekly

Chris Joyce



The Braven experience drives meaningful increase in internship attainment for NLU Fellows

In the 2025-2026 school year, NLU Braven Fellows saw an 8 percentage point uplift in internship attainment between the start and end of the Accelerator course, speaking to an important element of the immediate impact of the Braven experience. [19]

Internships are a key step toward strong career outcomes.

FELLOWS WHO HAD AT LEAST ONE INTERNSHIP

AT THE START OF THE ACCELERATOR

27%

+8 percentage points

35%

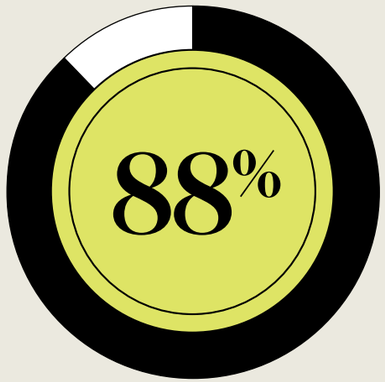
BY THE END OF THE ACCELERATOR

Encouraging levels of persistence for NIU Fellows

Nationally, less than 7 in 10 students graduate within six years of college enrollment.[20]

NIU Braven Fellows, who typically join us during their sophomore or junior year, are graduating at encouraging rates.

88% of NIU Braven Fellows persisted in college or have graduated[21]





Jesika

Jesika Pabello

Fall 2022 Fellow

NORTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY

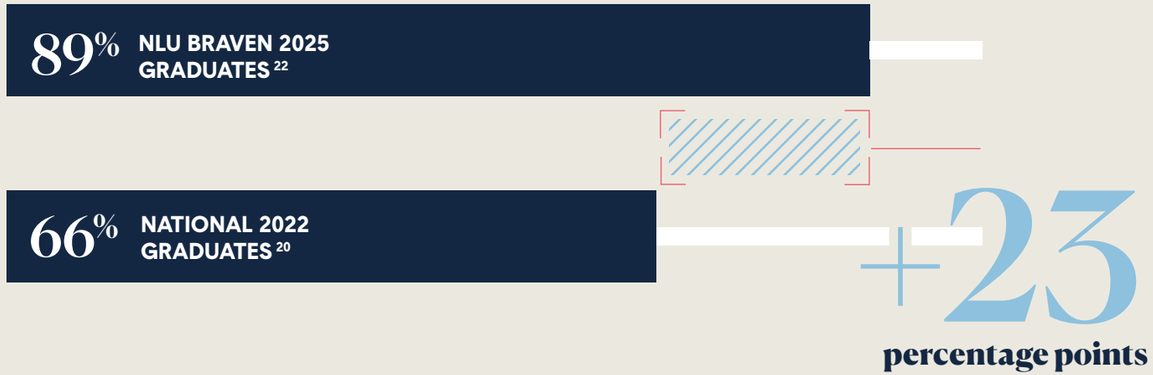
Registrar Associate, Adtalem Global Education

Encouraging levels of graduation for NLU Fellows

Nationally, less than 7 in 10 students graduate within six years of college enrollment. [20]

NLU Braven Fellows, who typically join us during their sophomore or junior year, are graduating at encouraging rates.

NLU Braven Fellows achieved a 89% six-year on-time graduation rate





Juan-David

Spring 2022 Fellow **Juan-David Cardona Londoño**

NATIONAL LOUIS UNIVERSITY

Master in Business Administration, DePaul University

Chris Joyce



SECTION 4

4 Are our Fellows developing the career readiness skills, networks, and confidence needed for success?

Growth in career-readiness skills

In 2025-2026, **NIU Braven Fellows** achieved an average Accelerator course pass rate of 94% and an average final grade of 86%, demonstrating strong career-readiness skill mastery.

In 2025-2026, **NLU Braven Fellows** achieved an average Accelerator course pass rate of 83% and an average final grade of 76%, demonstrating strong career-readiness skill mastery.

Why these career-readiness skills? They are:

1. Grounded in what research says is needed to successfully secure a strong first opportunity
2. In high-demand from employers (however, employers report recent graduates have not sufficiently developed these skills)
3. Aligned with other career-readiness frameworks such as the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) career-readiness competencies and the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U)'s VALUE rubrics

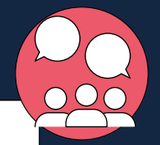
The Braven experience focuses on the following seven career-readiness skills:

Career Navigation



- Reflects on strengths, values, and interests
- Explores multiple career options
- Takes career actions such as making plans, creating a portfolio, and building networks

Teamwork



- Works effectively towards shared goals
- Navigates differences
- Holds self and others accountable for deliverables

Technology



- Evaluates the ethical considerations of GenAI to guide its use
- Explores and applies GenAI strategies in the career-navigation process
- Develops proficiency with essential technological tools in your desired career field

Communication



- Presents ideas clearly and purposefully
- Listens actively to understand and asks questions
- Demonstrates empathy and respect

Leadership



- Leads from values
- Grounds in purpose and assets
- Learns continuously from feedback and reflection

Problem Solving



- Defines the problem and identifies root causes
- Designs potential solutions
- Tests and implements solutions

Organization



- Plans and prioritizes tasks
- Monitors progress and adjusts when faced with challenges
- Gets things done

Networks and social capital

Extensive research has illustrated the importance of networks and social capital in career navigation and success.[23]

Braven supports students to build strong networks by connecting students to professionals and helping students build the skills necessary to mobilize those networks to advance their career goals.

To measure students' networking skills and how they activate their social capital, we leverage resources from the Search Institute.

Northern Illinois University

In the 2025-2026 school year, NIU Braven Fellows showed statistically significant growth[24] across all the following measures:

+36%

NETWORKING SELF-EFFICACY

The degree to which an individual purposefully uses relationships within their social network to reach their goals.

+32%

SELF-INITIATED SOCIAL CAPITAL

Refers to the degree to which an individual actively builds relationships and uses the relationships and the resources they have to reach their goals.

National Louis University

In the 2025-2026 school year, NLU Braven Fellows showed statistically significant growth[24] across all the following measures:

+22%

NETWORKING SELF-EFFICACY

The degree to which an individual purposefully uses relationships within their social network to reach their goals.

+17%

SELF-INITIATED SOCIAL CAPITAL

Refers to the degree to which an individual actively builds relationships and uses the relationships and the resources they have to reach their goals.

Growth in Confidence Measures: Self-Efficacies

Each semester, Braven measures growth in self-efficacies from the start to the end of the Braven Accelerator.

Self-efficacy is a person's belief in their ability to succeed in various situations and is associated with academic and lifetime success. It is not typically measured through traditional assessments like standardized tests, but plays a large role in explaining job search, career search behaviors, and career outcomes.

Northern Illinois University

In the 2025-2026 school year, NIU Braven Fellows showed statistically significant growth in Job-Search Self-Efficacy and Career Self-Efficacy. [24]

+53%

JOB-SEARCH SELF-EFFICACY

Refers to students' confidence in their ability to successfully complete the steps of the job search process.

+20%

CAREER SELF-EFFICACY

The degree to which an individual feels they can successfully reach their career goals.

National Louis University

In the 2025-2026 school year, NLU Braven Fellows showed statistically significant growth in Job-Search Self-Efficacy and Career Self-Efficacy. [24]

+47%

JOB-SEARCH SELF-EFFICACY

Refers to students' confidence in their ability to successfully complete the steps of the job search process.

+6%

CAREER SELF-EFFICACY

The degree to which an individual feels they can successfully reach their career goals.





SECTION 5

Are we building employer and higher education partnerships with true shared value?

Employer spotlight: Teach For America

Braven's collaboration with Teach For America (TFA) helps open doors to the American Dream while also ensuring their alumni and staff stay proximate to the communities they care about and continue to develop leadership skills as they advance in their careers.

TFA Employee & Alumni Volunteerism during the 2025-2026 school year

Teach For America

7 LEADERSHIP COACHES

14 PROFESSIONAL MENTORS

28 MOCK INTERVIEWERS

~900 VOLUNTEER HOURS

Building the pipeline during the 2025-2026 school year

38 2026 BRAVEN GRADUATES ACCEPTED INTO THE TFA CORPS

20 BRAVEN FELLOWS IN COLLEGE ACCEPTED INTO TFA IGNITE

Programmatic highlights from the 2025-2026 school year

CAPSTONE CHALLENGE SPONSOR

Teach For America's Reinvention Lab served as a Capstone Partner for BravenX in Spring 2026, asking Fellows to explore how young people can showcase digital media skills.

8 Events co-hosted for Braven Fellows

"At Teach For America, we know that the future of this country depends on who has access to opportunity, and Braven is getting that right. The talent that comes through Braven's programs is remarkable: driven, prepared, and deeply committed to making a difference in their communities. Their work is not just developing the next generation of professionals; it's building the next generation of leaders our nation needs."

— Aneesh Sohoni
Chief Executive Officer, Teach For America



2025-2026 Braven National Faculty Council

The Braven National Faculty Council is a distinguished collective of faculty leaders from Braven's partner institutions.

Faculty have deeply informed our model from the start. Launched in FY25, the Council formalized that engagement, bringing educators' voices directly into the evolution of our curriculum. In its second year, the Council expanded to include participation across eight of our partner institutions and deepened its impact—delivering substantive guidance on AI ethics and Capstone design, and strengthening alignment between the Capstone Challenge and AAC&U's high-impact practices.

City College of New York



Naomi Nwosu-Stewart
Assistant Vice President of Enrollment Management



Renata Miller
Dean of the Division of Humanities and the Arts & Professor of English

Delaware State University

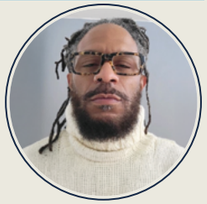


Kimeu Boynton
Associate Professor in Sociology and Criminal Justice & Interim Assistant Dean of the College of Humanities, Education, and Social Sciences



Phyllis Brooks Collins
Founding Program Director and Assistant Professor for the Integrated Studies Program

National Louis University



David O'Neale Corbin Jr.
Senior Student Success Coach



Natasha Kohl
Director of the Undergraduate Honors Program & Director of the University Writing Initiative



Uzoma Obidike
Director and Assistant Professor of Undergraduate Career Development

Spelman College



Anastasia Valecce
Associate Professor of Spanish (Hispanic Studies)

Northern Illinois University



Alicia Schatteman
Vice Provost for Academic Affairs & Professor



Andrea Radasanu
Director of the University Honors Program, Assistant Vice Provost for Student Enhancement

Rutgers University-Newark



Hyacinth Miller
Assistant Teaching Professor in the Departments of Africana Studies and Political Science & Study Abroad Director



Kaleena Rogers
Associate Director of Practicum Education

San José State University



Mary Currin-Percival
Associate Professor of Political Science; Director, Institute for Public Affairs and Civic Engagement (IPACE); Founding Director, SJSU Votes



Ryan Skinnell
Professor of Rhetoric & Writing; Director of First-Year Writing



Yolanda Wiggins
Assistant Professor in the Department of Sociology & Interdisciplinary Social Sciences

San Francisco State University



Jeff Duncan-Andrade
Professor of Latina/o Studies and Race and Resistance Studies; Founder of the Roses in Concrete Community School

HIGHER EDUCATION PARTNERS & EMPLOYER PARTNERS

Higher Education Partners

Chicago State University
City College of New York
Illinois Institute of Technology (launched Fall 2026)
Kean University (launched Fall 2026)
University of Mount Saint Vincent (launched Fall 2026)
National Louis University
Northern Illinois University
Rutgers University-Newark
San Francisco State University
San José State University
Spelman College
The University of Massachusetts Lowell
University of North Texas

BravenX Partners

Academy Charter High School
Achieve Atlanta
Associated Colleges of Illinois
At The Table NYC
Augustana College
Birmingham Promise
CARA NYC
Camino Nuevo Charter Academy
Carmen Schools of Science & Technology
Chicago Scholars
City Year
Common Ground Foundation
Coney Island Prep Public Schools
Cooperman College Scholars
Cristo Rey Network
Daniel Murphy Scholarship Fund
Delta Sigma Phi
Dream Charter School
Eagle Academy Foundation
East Harlem Tutorial Program
El Dorado Promise
Eureka College
Excel Academy Charter School
Excellence Community Schools
Fidelity Scholars
Hendrix College
Horatio Alger Association
IDEA Public Schools
Illinois College
KIPP Forward (Post-Secondary Success Collaborative)
KIPP Massachusetts
Knox college
LISA Academy
Meeting Street Scholarship Fund
Millikin University
North Central College
Prospect Schools
Quincy University
Rivet School
Rockford University
SEEDS
The Noble Network of Charter Schools
The Wight Foundation
Tulsa Honor Academy
Uncommon Schools
University Settlement
Uplift Education
UtmostU

Employer Partners

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

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

KEYSTONE
($25K+ and programmatic support)
Berkshire Hathaway Specialty Insurance
CBRE
CME Group Foundation
Cornerstone Research
Northern Trust
Pathward N. A.
Taco Bell Foundation
UBS
United Airlines

IMPACT
($5K+ and/or programmatic support)
Anonymous
Brown Advisory
Catalina
Goodman Theatre
Kindle Communications
Medline
Northwestern Medicine
Old National Bank
Teach For America
Unacast
Visa
Young Invincibles

PHILANTHROPIC SUPPORTERS ($10K+)

Anonymous
A Better Chicago Fund, a Fund of the Robert R. McCormick Foundation
Charles Ashby Lewis & Penny Bender Sebring
Chicago Community Trust
Crown Family Philanthropies
David Cohen & Kristen Argo
Deloitte Foundation
Ellie's Foundation Fund
Finnegan Family Foundation
Mansueto Foundation
Marc and Jeanne Malnati Family Foundation
Paul Angell Foundation
Osa Foundation
Prosper Road Foundation
Rachel Kohler
Ron & Kathy Sonenthal
Schreiber Philanthropy
Square One Foundation
The Berghorst Foundation
The Cleveland Avenue Foundation for Education
The Joseph Pedott Charitable Fund at The Chicago Community Foundation
The Mayer and Morris Kaplan Family Foundation
Vivo Foundation

A big thank you to our Chicago Board of Directors:

Sarah Berghorst
Mara Botman
David Cohen
Joan Evans
Betty Fleurimond
Kelly Mannard
Ron Sonenthal
Elizabeth Thompson

ENDNOTES

1. 17,404 Fellows have completed the Braven Accelerator course to date; this includes core sites from FY2026 (BravenX, City College of New York, Delaware State University, Northern Illinois University, Rutgers University-Newark, San Francisco State University, San Jose State University, and Spelman College) and non-core sites (National Louis University, University of Massachusetts Lowell, and University of North Texas).

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. 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, https://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.

4. 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.

5. Kessler, Sarah. "The Rise of the Robot Job Seeker." The New York Times, 21 June 2025, https://www.nytimes.com/2025/06/21/business/dealbook/ai-job-applications.html. Accessed 24 Feb. 2026.

6. Job Outlook 2025. National Association of Colleges and Employers, Jan. 2025,https://naceweb.org/docs/default-source/default-document-library/2025/publication/research-report/2025-nace-job-outlook-jan-2025.pdf. Accessed 24 Feb. 2026.

7. 41% is the percentage of NIU Fellows who secured a quality job or enrolled in graduate school. All outcome percentages are based on NIU Fellows for which their post-graduation outcome is known (77% or 147 out of the total 192 NIU graduates in FY2025 has a known outcome).

8. 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.

9. National Student Aid Profile: Overview of 2024 Federal Programs. National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators, 2024, https://www.nasfaa.org/uploads/documents/2024_National_Profile.pdf. Accessed 24 Feb. 2026.

10. 27% is the percentage of NLU Fellows who secured a quality job or enrolled in graduate school. All outcome percentages are based on NLU Fellows for which their post-graduation outcome is known (80% or 78 out of the total 97 NLU graduates in FY2025 has a known outcome is known).

11. 27% is the percentage of Fellows who enrolled in graduate school. This percentage is based on Fellows for which their post-graduation outcome is known (87% or 1136 out of the total 1306 Fellows at FY2025 core sites' outcome is known).

12. Job Outlook 2026: Spring Update. National Association of Colleges and Employers, Apr. 2026, https://naceweb.org/docs/default-source/default-document-library/2026/publication/research-report/2026-job-outlook-report-spring-update.pdf. Accessed 25 July 2026.

13. The Labor Market for Recent College Graduates. Federal Reserve Bank of New York, https://www.newyorkfed.org/research/college-labor-market#--:explore:unemployment. Accessed 25 July 2026.

14. Course Pass Rate represents the percentage of students who received an A-D out of the total number of students enrolled at the end of the semester. This value does not include students who withdrew throughout the semester.

15. Low-income is defined as whether the student is Pell-eligible as determined by partner college roster files or Braven Fellow self-report data.

16. First-generation is defined as the Braven Fellow identifying as a student who is the first in their immediate family to attend or graduate from a four-year college or university.

17. The 2024 Student Survey Report, Four-Year Schools: Executive Summary. National Association of Colleges and Employers, Sept. 2024, https://naceweb.org/docs/default-source/default-document-library/2024/publication/executive-summary/2024-nace-student-survey-executive-summary-four-year.pdf. Accessed 25 July 2026.

18. Clayton, Dave, et al. From College to Career: Students' Internship Expectations and Experiences. Strada Education Foundation, 17 May 2023,https://www.strada.org/reports/from-college-to-career-students-internship-expectations-and-experiences. Accessed 24 Feb. 2026.

19. Change in internship attainment is measured by the percentage of students who self-reported at least one internship at the beginning of the Braven course on the pre-accelerator survey and comparing it to the percentage of students who self-reported at least one internship at the end of the Braven course on the post-accelerator survey.

20. The National Comparison represents the six-year graduation rate for the 2018 cohort of full-time, first-time Pell Grant recipients at four-year public Title IV institutions. This rate is adjusted to account for year-over-year persistence from freshman through junior year. Data is synthesized from the NCES IPEDS Data Explorer (2024), the Digest of Education Statistics (2021), and American Institutes for Research (2023).

21. Six-year graduation rate of NIU Braven Fellows includes students who enrolled as first-time freshmen, not including those who took Braven as seniors, transfers, or international students. NIU is included in the six-year graduation rate calculation because the university reached a threshold of graduates to date (200+) for which we have both valid enrollment and graduation data.

22. Six-year graduation rate of NLU Braven Fellows includes students who enrolled as first-time freshmen, not including those who took Braven as seniors, transfers, or international students. NLU is included in the six-year graduation rate calculation because the university reached a threshold of graduates to date (200+) for which we have both valid enrollment and graduation data.

23. Boat, A. A., Syvertsen, A. K., & Scales, P. C. (2021). The role of social capital in promoting work readiness among opportunity youth. Children and Youth Services Review, 131, 106270. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.childyouth.2021.106270

24. Search Institute (2021). Social capital assessment and learning for equity measures: User manual. Minneapolis, MN: Search Institute.