

# RISING STAR



Dear Friends,

Now in our 20th year, Students Rising Above is continuing the **fight to break social and economic cycles of poverty by providing a new generation of a diverse and more representative workforce.** We do this by empowering youth in under-resourced communities and schools to access and excel in social, academic, and economic opportunities.

According to the Federal Reserve, “**Outstanding student debt reached \$1.52 trillion in the first quarter of 2018, hitting \$1.5 trillion for the first time.** This milestone is a jump from about \$600 billion 10 years ago to more than \$1.5 trillion today and the factors fueling the increase aren’t likely to disappear any time soon.”

**Did you know? The average per student loan debt for Students Rising Above is \$6,206 cumulative, compared to the national average of \$39,400, which is up six percent from the previous year.**

How did we accomplish this? With nearly 20 years of SRA programming, we are proud and grateful for the deep-rooted community we have built, encompassing:

- More than 155 corporate partners
- 300 alumni
- More than 600 career mentors and volunteers
- High focus on financial aid and college selection advising, enabling our students to obtain a higher education with little to no debt

In addition to the 750+ students we have served in our direct services program, we currently offer more than 14,000 students across the U.S. a diverse set of resources, tools, and professional advising through the SRA Hub. Our robust online college and career advising platform enables us to exponentially expand our network, helping students in more rural and remote areas pursue a college education and enter career-ladder pathways.

With the investment and support of our dedicated community, we’re excited to continue the journey, reaching tens of thousands more students across the country, making these opportunities for social and economic mobility possible.

Thank you for continuing the journey with us! - The SRA Family

Sources: MarketWatch: <https://www.marketwatch.com/story/student-debt-just-hit-15-trillion-2018-05-08>

Student Loan Hero:

<https://studentloanhero.com/student-loan-debt-statistics/>

Brittany Jones, San Diego State University, 2018

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# Hats Off To Our 2018 College Graduates!

**Congratulations to our 81 college graduates, who collectively mark the largest graduating class for Students Rising Above to date!** From the University of California, Berkeley to Lewis & Clark College to Emory University to Yale University, these new grads are pursuing their dreams of a higher education, further opening their pathways to social, academic, and economic opportunities.

2018 Graduates, we are so proud of all your accomplishments and look forward to following you on your professional journey in the years ahead!

Follow us on our blog for updates on our inspiring graduates and SRA alumni, <https://studentsrisingabove.org/> and for a complete list of the 40 colleges and universities, see the last page of this issue.



Photos clockwise: Zenay Clemmons, Agnes Scott College, 2018 and Zaria Clemmons, Agnes Scott College, 2018; Damont Hardnett, Franklin & Marshall College, 2018 and Geary Yu, Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo, 2018





Photos clockwise: Christina Craner, Humboldt State University, 2018;  
Reyna Montellano, University of California, Santa Barbara, 2018 and  
LaDejah Dillard, University of California, Merced, 2018

# Career Development Corner: Internship Spotlight



Dan Truong,  
University of Pennsylvania, 2020

Students Rising Above is on the move this summer! In addition to students studying abroad in Spain, Hong Kong, Morocco, and Italy, others have landed summer internships in various industries, including: tech, law, education, and healthcare.

SRA continues to inspire the upward economic and social mobility for our students through a myriad of ways, including supporting them in gaining access to summer internships. Dan Truong is elated to begin his Software Intern role with Equinix, which was listed #79 on Forbes' 2015 World's Most Innovative Companies! .

We are extremely grateful for companies like Equinix, who work with SRA to provide our students an opportunity to pursue their passions, while gaining industry knowledge and tangible skills. This experience fully prepares our students to successfully launch meaningful, professional careers when they earn their college degrees.

We sat down with Dan to learn more about his journey. Check out the Q&A below.

**Q: What are you doing as a Software Intern at Equinix?**

*A: During the span of my internship, I will be developing dashboards to provide clients a user-friendly means of accessing such data. Equinix, Inc. is the global interconnection and data center company connecting the world's leading businesses to their customers, employees, and partners inside the most interconnected data centers in 52 markets across five continents.*

**Q: Last year you applied for multiple internships before landing your role with the Federal Reserve. What motivated you to continue applying for internships?**



*A: My freshman year, my search for an internship took place from mid-December 2016 all the way to May 2017. By the end, I had submitted over 10 applications, hearing back from five companies and undergoing 11 interviews in total. What kept me motivated to continue applying and interviewing was my desire to gain more work experience beyond the scope of the classroom. And personally, after interviewing for several months, I felt I was too deep into the process to give up. The more human side of me insisted that my efforts would be rewarded if I continued persevering through these few months of interviewing, so I did.*

**Q: What career / profession would you like to pursue after graduating? Does this internship relate to your career / professional goals? If so, how?**

*A: I would like to pursue a career that involves software development. I'm especially excited for this internship because it is the first opportunity I've gotten to program in a real-life setting. The full-stack experience I'll be exposed to this summer will also help me decide whether there are certain aspects of the software development life cycle that I enjoy working on (front-end, back-end, etc.).*

**Q: What is your favorite SRA resource related to career development and why?**

*A: My favorite SRA resource by far was definitely the interview preparation. While you might be exposed to various interview questions by watching online tutorials, these guides may not always address ways to sound natural or improve your body language. Practicing with experienced SRA advisors was by far most effective at boosting my confidence in interviews. The connections that SRA has with companies and past interns also provides a lot of insider insight that I wouldn't have been exposed to otherwise.*

If you have connections at companies that want diverse, talented college students for summer internships, we'd love to hear from you! We also welcome entry level opportunities for our new graduates, who have an 85% success rate of landing career-ladder opportunities or attending graduate school within a year of getting their degrees. For more information on our internship program, contact Lauren Brener, [Lbrener@studentsrisingabove.org](mailto:Lbrener@studentsrisingabove.org) or Paula Galvez-Anzano, [pgalvez-anzano@studentsrisingabove.org](mailto:pgalvez-anzano@studentsrisingabove.org).

# Workshops, Workshops, and More

Back by popular demand, The Students Rising Above 5th Annual Mock Career Fair will be held on Saturday, July 14, 2018. This is one of our more in-depth workshops, hand tailored for our rising college juniors, seniors, and alumni. All will have the opportunity to learn how to make connections at a job fair, as well as experience true networking with potential employers.

Thank you to our 30+ participating corporate partners, including; Autodesk, Cisco Systems, Equinix, Lucasfilm, Macy's, NERA Economic Consulting, Union Bank, Wells Fargo, and many more. We look forward to seeing you this weekend!

Enjoy our favorite moments from the SRA Mock Career Fair 2017!





# Career Insight Days

Additionally, we are thrilled to host eight dynamic SRA Career Insight Days over the course of the summer. These 'shadow days' will be held at the headquarters of a variety of our corporate partners in industries, such as finance, high-tech, sports, health and wellness, and more. SRA students will enjoy corporate office tours, speed networking, career panels, and other hands-on professional development experiences.

Thank you to our dedicated partners, including; Asurion, Atlassian, BiRite Foodservice Distributors, Goldman Sachs, Google, Pac-12, Rodan + Fields, and Tesla for making these invaluable Career Insight Days happen for our students!

Check out photos from the Goldman Sachs SRA Career Insight Day, held on June, 20, 2018. With eight SRA students and over 10 volunteers in attendance, the day was a huge success! For more information on the SRA Mock Career Fair and, or SRA Career Insight Days, please contact Kendall Jaramillo, [kjaramillo@studentsrisingabove.org](mailto:kjaramillo@studentsrisingabove.org).





# Conversations with Krasny

We're grateful for our supporters, who bought into our 2018 Gala live auction item, "Conversations with Krasny." On June 10, 2018, over 40 donors, 10 volunteers, SRA staff, and students Gilberto Malfabon and Sabrina Villanueva, as well as SRA Alum, Ali Rucker, enjoyed an exclusive fireside chat with Dr. Michael Krasny, PhD, best selling author and host of the award winning KQED FORUM. Guests enjoyed brunch and conversations with Dr. Krasny at a private home in the Peninsula.



SRA Students, Alumni, Donors and Volunteers with Dr. Michael Krasny, PhD at "Conversations with Krasny" event



# SRA Around the World



During her childhood, Brenda Vasquez never thought she'd go to college, let alone become a world traveler. But in just two years, Brenda has hopscotched across more countries than many people will visit in a lifetime. Now a recent graduate from California State University, Long Beach, Brenda is setting off for India to pursue a prestigious Fellowship with The Fulbright Program. Watch how Brenda's passport is stamped with success!

Christin Ayers, CBS San Francisco Bay Area KPIX 5 reports:

<https://sanfrancisco.cbslocal.com/2018/06/21/bay-area-scholar-becomes-world-traveler/>

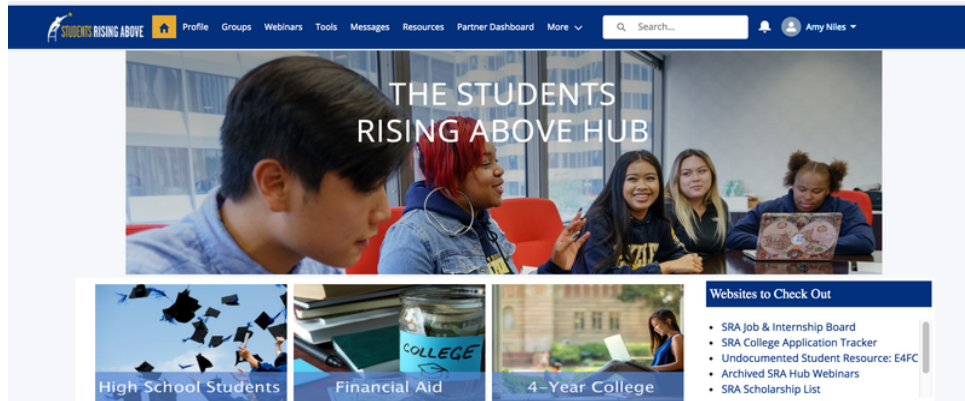
For more SRA student stories, tune into CBS San Francisco Bay Area KPIX 5 or visit [cbsSF.com/sra](http://cbsSF.com/sra).

As Brenda embarks on her journey to India, Brittany Jones recently returned from Ghana, where she spent the the Fall of 2017 at the University of Ghana. While in Ghana, Brittany volunteered with Play and Learn, where she mentored students weekly to attain their personal and academic goals, as well as achieve self-actualization.

Brittany is back in the states and recently graduated from San Diego State University and is off to pursue her passion for public affairs as a Coro Fellow at the St. Louis Center. Over the next nine months, she will participate in a series of full-time projects across a variety of sectors in public affairs, which will allow her the opportunity to truly learn by experience. We know this will be an excellent launching pad for Brittany's career in public affairs!



# Soar With Us



This past spring, we brought you the new redesigned SRA Hub, featuring a fresh interface and added college search and career exploration tools to better support our growing user base of students and educators across the country. This month, we bring you SOAR!

SOAR, *Students Online Achieving Results*, is a seven-week, virtual summer program for rising college freshmen and current college students. We believe every student deserves the opportunity to pursue higher education and their dreams, and that obstacles presented by summer melt are not only unfair, but preventable.

According to a study by Harvard University, 10-40% of rising college freshmen, especially those from low-income backgrounds, experience summer melt, which means they have been admitted to colleges and have committed to them, but do not enroll in the fall semester. This is often due to the failure of completing necessary steps such as attending orientation, registering for classes, securing housing, and ensuring they can afford to make tuition payments. Often, summer melt is the result of not having the appropriate resources and guidance after leaving high school and before starting college; students are left to figure things out on their own. National Public Radio shares more on the phenomenon: “Summer Melt: Why Aren't Students Showing Up For College?” <https://www.npr.org/2018/06/18/621023537/summer-melt-why-arent-students-showing-up-for-college>

“We created the SOAR Program to serve those students who want extra support but don’t necessarily have the resources or the time for summer transition programs. By spending a few hours with us each week, these students will make meaningful relationships with advisors and peer mentors, increase their chances of college persistence, and work toward graduation and securing their first career-ladder opportunity,” shares Isabella Flores, Community Engagement Coordinator on the SRA Hub Team.

In late June, twenty rising college freshmen and ten current college students began the exciting SOAR pilot program. Each student was matched with an SRA Hub advisor and placed in a cohort with 7-9 peers. Current college students also serve as peer mentors for their cohort to gain hands-on leadership skills and serve as valuable resources to younger students. All students participate in 1-2 virtual hangouts per week, which guide them through class selection, financial aid, on-campus job search, budgeting, resume creation, college navigation, major and career exploration, and more! To learn more about SOAR and the robust SRA Hub Summer Success program, contact [hubsupport@studentsrisingabove.org](mailto:hubsupport@studentsrisingabove.org)



# 2018 College Graduates: Colleges & Universities

Agnes Scott College  
Babson College  
Carleton College  
Connecticut College  
CSU Cal Poly Pomona  
CSU Cal Poly San Luis Obispo  
CSU Chico  
CSU East Bay  
CSU Humboldt  
CSU Long Beach  
CSU Monterey Bay  
CSU Sacramento  
CSU San Diego  
CSU San Francisco  
CSU San Marcos  
CSU Sonoma  
Dominican University of California  
Emory University  
Franklin and Marshall College  
Gonzaga University  
Guilford College  
Lewis and Clark  
Pitzer  
Rochester Institute of Technology  
Southern Oregon University  
St. Edward's University  
UC Berkeley  
UC Davis  
UC Irvine  
UC Los Angeles (UCLA)  
UC Merced  
UC Riverside  
UC San Diego  
UC Santa Barbara  
UC Santa Cruz  
University of Southern California (USC)  
Wesleyan University  
Whitman College  
Williams College  
Yale University