

VERBUM DEI JESUIT HIGH SCHOOL

# COLLEGE GUIDANCE REPORT 2024

# Welcome to Verbum Dei's Inaugural College Guidance Report

Two years ago, after celebrating more than a decade of **100% college acceptance**, we set a new, ambitious goal: improving college completion rates. While 54% of the Class of 2018 who attended college graduated with a degree—well above the national average for the student population we serve—**we are striving for even greater success with a goal of 80%**.

Thanks to your generous support, we're making significant progress. We've raised academic standards, hired an Alumni Advisor dedicated to supporting our graduates in college, and guided students toward better-informed decisions about where they'll succeed—an increasingly important factor given the rising cost of higher education.

While there's still more to accomplish, this report showcases the incredible strides we've made together. None of it would be possible without you—thank you for making a difference!

## Our Team



**Kevin Garcia** has served as Verbum Dei's College Counselor for four years and brings over a decade of experience in education as a coach, tutor, and teacher. A graduate of Cal State Fullerton, he earned his Master of Education and PPS Credential from Concordia University in 2020.



**Mark Palmer '16**, a South Los Angeles native and Verbum Dei alum, earned a BA in Political Science and an MPA from Marist College. A former Presidential Fellow at Marist, he now serves as Verbum Dei's first Alumni Advisor, bringing his expertise back to his alma mater.

# Gains in College Guidance Driving Success

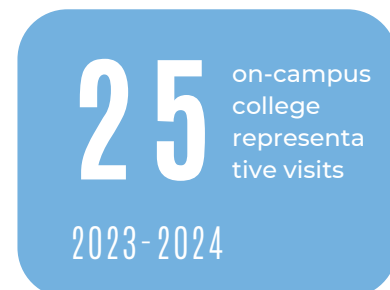
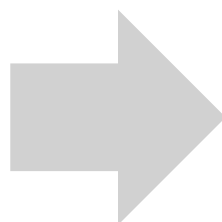
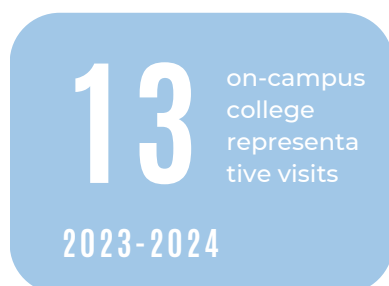
## Student Achievement and Application Success

### Excellence in College Application Process

- **Average Applications:** Seniors submitted an average of 15–20 college applications each.
- **Timely Submission:** All applications were completed and submitted prior to November 22, 2024.
- **Catholic College Focus:** On average, students applied to 4–6 Catholic colleges/universities.
- **Selective Schools:** The top 15% of seniors applied to three or more highly selective institutions.
- **Guided Preparation:** Rising seniors participated in a two-week essay workshop led by College Guidance.
- **Statewide Access:** Every senior submitted applications to California State University (CSU) and University of California (UC) campuses, with an average of four applications per student.

### Financial Aid Support

- **FAFSA Completion:** Achieved a 100% completion rate for the FAFSA, ensuring all students access federal financial aid.
- **College Scholarship Service (CSS) Profile:** For eligible students, a 100% CSS Profile completion rate was attained.
- **Family Engagement:** Two workshops supported families:
  - A session on application processes and deadlines.
  - A bilingual FAFSA workshop offered in English and Spanish.



# Engaging Alumni and Supporting College Success

## Alumni Engagement

- **Ongoing Support:** Over 800 touchpoints with alumni in undergraduate and postgraduate studies provided guidance and connection.
- **Celebrating Alumni Achievements:** School wide updates were shared to highlight the success of Verbum Dei Jesuit graduates.
- **Building Connections:** Alumni participated in the Fall 2024 Send-Off, inspiring the Class of 2025 to embrace the college application process.
- **Strengthening Ties:** Hosted an alumni basketball game during the holiday break to foster relationships and celebrate shared achievements.

# Expanding Horizons through College Visits

## Campus Visits and Outreach

- **Exposure:** Students visited over 25 colleges this fall, exploring both public and private institutions nationwide.
- **Strategic Partnerships:** Collaborations with colleges, such as Loyola Marymount University, have enabled workshops on critical skills like crafting letters of recommendation.

## Parent and Family Engagement

- Held parent workshops to guide families through the college application process and expectations.

# Notable Recognitions and Partnerships

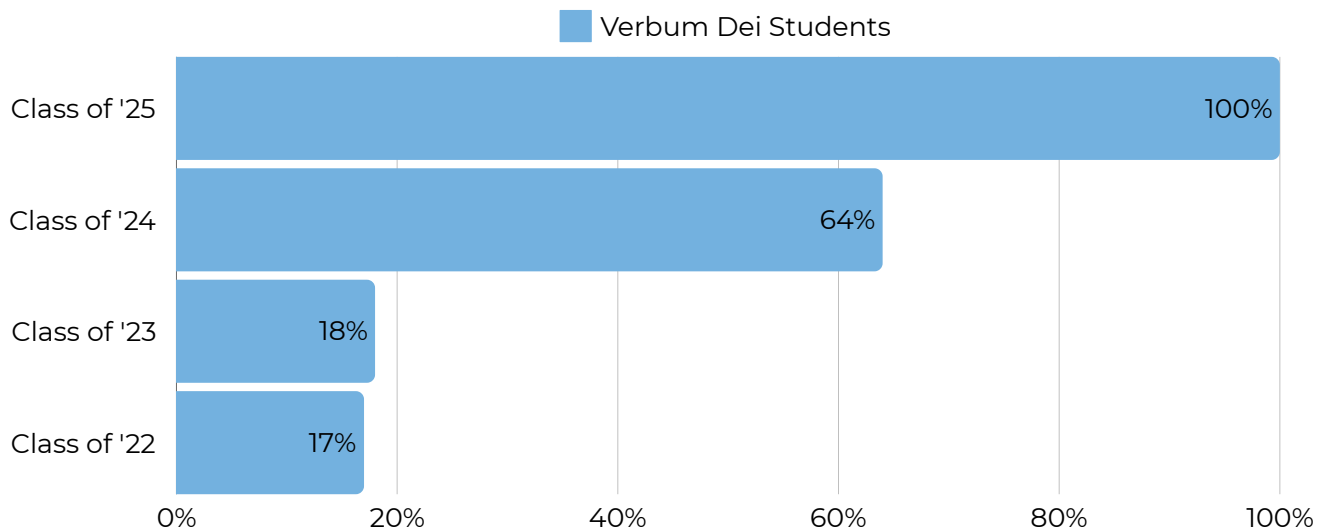
## Unique Opportunities:

- **University of Notre Dame Partnership:** Top-achieving students were invited to attend the Summer Scholars Program at no cost.
- **Instant Decision Day:** 25 students interviewed with Woodbury University and received instant acceptance along with a merit aid package.

## Achievements:

- One senior was selected as a Posse Scholar finalist, reflecting our commitment to preparing students for competitive opportunities.

# Early Action Achievements



1

## INCREASES ACCESS TO FINANCIAL AID

Many EA deadlines coincide with priority deadlines for financial aid and scholarships. Our students, who come from underserved communities, can benefit from maximizing financial aid opportunities to ensure affordability.

2

## ENHANCES ADMISSIONS CHANCES

Applying EA provides an edge in the admissions process, as colleges can admit a portion of their class early. This can be helpful for students who may face challenges competing in larger applicant pools during regular decision cycles.

3

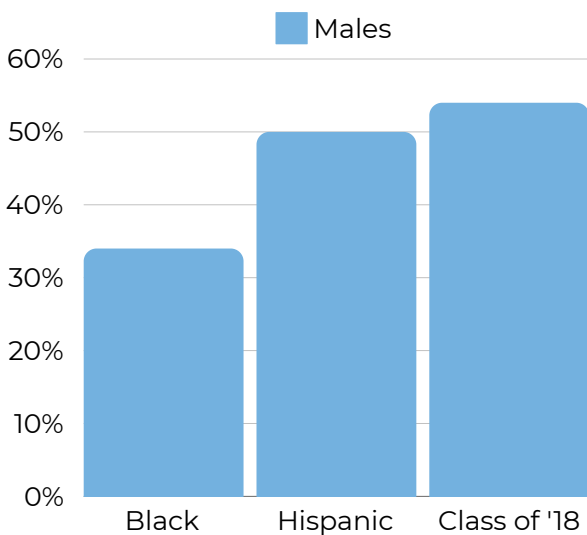
## GIVES STUDENTS MORE TIME TO DISCRN THE RIGHT FIT

Early acceptances allow students to focus on securing scholarships, planning campus visits, and weighing their options without the stress of waiting until spring. This extra time is invaluable in the college decision-making process.

# By the Numbers

This data, sourced from the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), is **controlled for race and ethnicity but does not account for First-Generation or Pell Grant eligibility.**

Verbum Dei's success stands out even more, as **most of our students are both first-generation college-goers and from low-income backgrounds.** Despite these additional challenges, our students consistently outperform expectations, demonstrating the transformative power of a Verbum Dei Jesuit education.

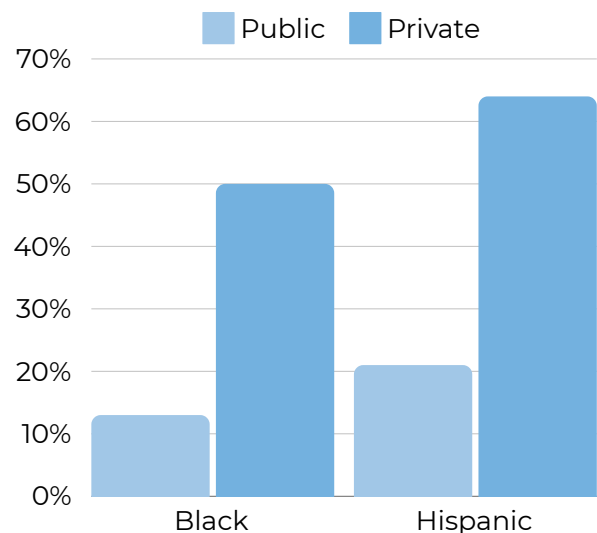


## COLLEGE GRADUATION RATE WITHIN 6 YEARS BY RACE/ETHNICITY AND SEX

National college graduation rates for Black and Hispanic males lag behind the overall average, highlighting persistent disparities in educational outcomes. This underscores the importance of Verbum Dei's mission and the need for access to support and resources to bridge the gap.

## COLLEGE GRADUATION RATE WITHIN 6 YEARS AT 4-YEAR POSTSECONDARY INSTITUTIONS

Success rates for Black and Hispanic students are higher at private universities due to better resources and support. Verbum Dei students also excel at private institutions, shaping our Catholic college-focused strategy.





# Year in Photos



Mark '16 (above) at **Santa Clara University** to watch **Jay Elie '23** (middle) perform in the student talent show, joined by his brother **Baron Elie '17** (left), an engineer at **Lockheed Martin** and **Cal Poly** graduate.



Mark '16 (above) visiting our **nine alumni** at the **University of Notre Dame**, where they are thriving. Go Irish!



Mark '16 (above) presented on food scarcity among low-income students alongside alum **Champ Martinez '20** (left), now a senior at **Drexel University**.



Mark '16 (left) visiting our **four alumni** at **Regis University** in Denver. Regis has provided a supportive environment where they've built a strong community by dorming together. They even experienced snow for the first time and enjoyed a family-style Thanksgiving with other students.

# Cristo Rey University Partners

Albion College  
Augustana College  
Barry University (NEW)  
Berea College  
Blackburn College  
California Lutheran University  
Case Western Reserve University  
Chapman University  
The Catholic University of America  
College of the Holy Cross  
College of Saint Benedict  
DePaul University  
DePauw University  
Earlham College (NEW)  
Fairfield University  
Fordham University  
Franklin & Marshall College  
Georgetown University  
Georgia Institute of Technology (NEW)  
Gonzaga University  
Grinnell College  
Hollins University (NEW)  
Holy Cross College  
Illinois Institute of Technology  
John Carroll University  
Juniata College  
Lewis University  
Loras College  
Loyola Marymount University  
Loyola University Chicago  
Loyola University Maryland

Marquette University  
Mount St. Joseph University  
Mount Saint Mary's University - LA  
Oklahoma City University  
Olivet Nazarene University  
Providence College  
Reed College (NEW)  
Regis University  
Rhodes College  
Rockhurst University  
Saint Anselm College  
Saint John's University - Minnesota  
Saint Joseph's University  
Saint Mary's College  
Saint Mary's University of Minnesota  
Saint Peter's University  
Saint Vincent College  
Santa Clara University  
Seattle University  
Stonehill College  
St. John Fisher College  
St. Olaf College  
University of Dallas  
University of Dayton  
University of Denver

**68%** of Cristo Rey students in the Class of 2017 who enrolled at a University Partner graduated within six years.

## We thank you for your continued support.

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### Contact

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