Destination: Success

The Carolina Covenant is closing the gap in academic achievement between low-income students and their more affluent peers.

By 2015, the gap in four-year graduation rates between Covenant Scholars and all students had nearly closed.

Before Covenant: 17.7 percentage point gap

With Covenant: 3.6 percentage point gap

The four-year graduation rate of Covenant Scholars has increased by a striking 23.7 percentage points to 80.4% since the start of the program.
The most remarkable gains among Covenant Scholars have been made by men; most notably black men, whose graduation rates have nearly **doubled** since the Covenant was established in 2003.*

### Graduation Rates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Before Covenant</th>
<th>With Covenant</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>African American Men</strong></td>
<td>33.3%</td>
<td>61.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>All Covenant Men</strong></td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>72.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>All Covenant Women</strong></td>
<td>64.3%</td>
<td>84.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Point Gain**

- **African American Men**: 28.5 Point Gain
- **All Covenant Men**: 32.2 Point Gain
- **All Covenant Women**: 20.4 Point Gain

* See Endnotes on inside back cover
Covenant Scholars earn admission to Carolina on the same basis as all other students, without regard to financial need.

Entering characteristics of Covenant Scholars admitted in 2011 who graduated in 2015.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High School GPA</td>
<td>4.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average SAT</td>
<td>1209</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students of Color</td>
<td>58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First-Generation Students</td>
<td>58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median Parental Income</td>
<td>$25,960</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Carolinians</td>
<td>85%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Covenant Scholars are making the grade

Covenant Scholars: 3.15 GPA at UNC-Chapel Hill*

All students at Carolina: 3.31 GPA at UNC-Chapel Hill*

* See Endnotes on inside back cover
A Promise

The Carolina Covenant promises low-income students who earn admission that they can afford to attend the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill without worrying about how they will pay for it, and without having to borrow. This commitment has made a Carolina education possible for more than 6,000 students since the start of the program.

But the Covenant is more than the promise of financial aid. It also incorporates comprehensive support designed to help Covenant Scholars succeed.
The Carolina Covenant meets 100% of each Scholar’s financial need without loans. But it is not a “full-ride” scholarship. It does not replace the amount the family is expected to contribute, based on their circumstances. And Covenant Scholars are expected to earn a part of their financial aid by working 10-12 hours per week during the academic year.

Who earns the Covenant?

High-achieving students from low-income families who are:

- From NC or another state
- Eligible for federal financial aid
- First-year or transfer students admitted to the University
- Enrolled full time during the academic year
- In good academic standing at Carolina
The Covenant is more than the opportunity for a debt-free education. Carolina is committed to the success of Covenant Scholars through a comprehensive academic and personal support program that helps them chart their journey to a degree.

**Work-Study**

Work-Study helps Covenant Scholars earn part of their expenses. It provides work experience and helps connect students with career possibilities. Research indicates that students who work a reasonable number of hours during college tend to get better grades and are much more likely to stay in school.

**Mentoring**

First-year Scholars are assigned a faculty or professional staff mentor who helps Scholars integrate into the University and navigate academic advising and counseling resources available to Carolina students. Scholars may also learn from a peer mentor – an upper-class Covenant Scholar – who can provide guidance from the perspective of a successful student.
**Enrichment & Personal Development**

A variety of special programs and opportunities contribute to the success of Covenant Scholars. Orientation sessions help new Scholars get off to a strong start. Scholars are invited to events designed to develop community and celebrate achievements. They are given access to vouchers for performing arts events, and are invited to attend special workshops, such as business etiquette, financial management, etc., to help them prepare for life after graduation.

**Academic Support & Intervention**

The Covenant incorporates academic support and intervention to help Scholars get off to a solid start at Carolina and reach their educational goals. Faculty and staff monitor academic performance and intervene with Scholars who need assistance. Academic skills workshops covering topics such as time management, note-taking, study techniques, test taking, reading for better comprehension, and studying for math, biology, and chemistry are available to help Covenant Scholars as needed.

**Study Abroad**

Like all Carolina students, Covenant Scholars are encouraged to participate in a Study Abroad experience. Through Study Abroad, Covenant Scholars have the opportunity to experience another culture and explore the world.

**Campus Engagement & Community Service**

Covenant Scholars are actively engaged in giving back. They serve as peer mentors and in other volunteer capacities. They provide community service through a Covenant Scholar-created and administered organization as a way to express thanks for the opportunities they have been given through the Covenant.
Destination: Careers

And Graduate Studies

Since 2004, more than 6,000 students from low-income families have enrolled at Carolina as Covenant Scholars. Nine classes have graduated. Graduates have successfully launched careers in medicine, education, science, research, finance, and business. Others are continuing their education in medicine, dentistry, pharmacy, business, and other professional programs. Further research is underway.
Covenant alumni are eager to share their time and experience with current scholars. The first class of Covenant Scholars earned their diplomas in 2008, and many graduates are now well established in their careers and lives across the world.

“There’s no one-size-fits-all path,” Emerson Evans ‘08 told students at a recent alumni event. “It’s about your path.”

That message has been a theme for Covenant alumni, with graduates explaining the hard work, tough decisions, and occasional good luck that led them to successful lives. For many, their time at Carolina — and the support of the Covenant — was crucial.

Evans is now a public health officer with the federal government in Washington, DC. But it took a lot of personal exploration before he found his calling. “Dig deep,” he advised scholars. “What do you feel like your purpose is? What are your professional goals and personal aspirations? Those questions are a kind of foundation for you.”

For Chloe Whiteaker ’11 — now a graphic designer for a major media company — that meant using her time at Carolina to take on new challenges and meet fascinating people. “You can find something that clicks,” she told Covenant Scholars on a visit back to campus.
For as long he can remember, Luis Acosta wanted to be a doctor. “I remember seeing this little career book from pre-school and realizing that doctors can fix people,” he recalled. “Being able to take care of someone, to fix their problems, has always appealed to me.”

Growing up, Luis spent a lot of time translating for his immigrant parents, who are from Mexico. He sees a real need for more medical professionals who can communicate with diverse populations. “I feel like I can really relate to my future patients,” Luis said.

Money was always tight for the Acosta family. But the Carolina Covenant put UNC within reach, and it helped Luis reach far beyond Chapel Hill. A summer program in Malawi, shadowing UNC surgeons as they made their rounds, helped drive home the desire to study medicine.

“Keep your mind on the goal, and keep working,” Luis said. “Don’t let outside things get in the way.”

He has attended Covenant workshops, worked with a peer mentor to get settled at Carolina, and kept in touch with Covenant advisors as he tackles the challenges of a chemistry major. “Keep going forward and work to make yourself better,” Luis said. “If you really try, you can do a lot of things.”

Learn more about Covenant Scholars at carolinacovenant.unc.edu
“Take advantage of everything Carolina has to offer,” Josh Ellis advises. “There’s something out there for you, no matter what your interests.”

And Josh should know. He spent his years at UNC doing everything from psychiatry research to campus ministry work to underwater hockey. “It’s a crazy sport,” he recalled. “It’s basically hockey in the bottom of the pool.”

With the resources and connections of the Carolina Covenant, Josh was able to work as an assistant manager on the baseball team, take part in research studies alongside medical school professors, and study abroad in Ecuador. Now, after taking a gap year to bike across the United States and teach English in Santiago, Chile, Josh is preparing to enter UNC’s Medical School.

He credits the Covenant with helping him get there. “It’s not just about money,” Josh said. “It really is about all-around support. Med school is going to be a challenge, but I think I’m well prepared.”

Learn more about Covenant Scholars at carolinacovenant.unc.edu
Growing up in Charlotte with three younger brothers and not much money to spare, Destiny Planter didn’t imagine a future at Carolina. It took a conversation with a College Advising Corps mentor to change her mind.

“She really showed me all of the opportunities at Carolina,” Destiny recalled. “She showed me all of the things you could study, all of the places you could go.”

At UNC, Destiny served as a resident advisor, became a leader in the Black Student Movement, worked on the Honor Court, traveled abroad, and interned in a Washington, D.C. law firm. She wants to become a lawyer, serving as an advocate for children.

But before law school, Destiny is bringing her Carolina journey full circle as an advisor with the Carolina College Advising Corps. She’ll help guide the next generation of North Carolina high school students.

“I want to be able to tell them, ‘Never be ashamed of your background,’” she said. “It made me who I am today, and I’m so excited to help students like me find their way.”

Learn more about Covenant Scholars at carolinacovenant.unc.edu
Summary of Findings

The Carolina Covenant’s promise of the opportunity for a debt-free education to those who qualify has enabled more than 6,000 high-achieving, low-income students to attend Carolina. Its comprehensive support infrastructure has helped them succeed.

The Covenant is an extraordinary promise to extraordinary students. By many measures, it is a remarkable success. Its promise should be continued.

ENDNOTES

Except where otherwise noted, data are for Covenant Scholars who enrolled in Fall 2011 and graduated in Spring 2015.

Personal Data: Characteristics for Covenant Scholars entering as first-year students in 2011.

Grade Point Average: Cumulative 4th-year grade point average.

Four-Year Graduation Rate: Covenant Scholars compared to a control group from the 2003 entering class who would have been eligible for the Covenant, had it existed.

*Updated August 2016
Open a world of promise. Support the Carolina Covenant.

Please scan the QR code or visit: www.unc.edu/carolinacovenant/give