

# BeyondAdmissions™



2019 Annual Benefit Report

Prepared by Ava Alexandar



Graphic Design by Pascale Marill

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## 2019 B LAB CERTIFICATION

**BeyondAdmissions™** proudly announced B Lab certification in early 2019, joining over 3,038 B Corporations in 64 countries and 150 industries. Certified B Corporations are businesses that meet the highest standards of verified social and environmental performance, public transparency, and legal accountability to balance profit and purpose. Dr. Joanne Valli-Meredith established **BeyondAdmissions™** in 2018 to provide young adults with guidance and skills as they begin to individuate and navigate their future.



Kaleef S. | Undergraduate Support

**BeyondAdmissions™** uses principles of social entrepreneurship to create ongoing, affordable, and easily accessible support to address the challenges students encounter in college and beyond while using a portion of its revenues to provide free in-kind services to those less fortunate.

Throughout 2019, as the scale and scope of **BeyondAdmissions™** services expanded, patterns of need emerged reaffirming that access and equity are not synonymous - inclusion in an academic setting or workplace did not always translate to knowing how to leverage the services or relationships available to help individuals reach their potential. Without a strong support system, many first-generation, LGBTQIA+, people of color, neuroatypical, international, aging, female students, and/or professionals expressed feeling inadequate or not part of the inner circle. The **BeyondAdmissions™** commitment to providing in-person or virtual coaching and workshops helped students

and career-seekers develop coping skills and gain confidence. They successfully built positive personal, social, academic, and professional relationships.

The second year of operations brought increased numbers of virtual clients across the States and internationally. Looking back at 2019 through the lens of the current COVID-19 pandemic, it is difficult to imagine how transformative it felt to be connecting virtually with students and career-seekers to provide support anywhere, anytime.<sup>1</sup>

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*A unique plan was created to identify each individual's interests and strengths...*

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Newly minted college freshmen, transfer students, and graduate students moved to institutions throughout the country—and for some across borders to Argentina, Canada, China, Korea, France, Ireland, England, and Spain. Graduates launched new careers around the globe as well, and many mid-career professionals sought growth opportunities or a transition to other industries at home and internationally.

A unique plan was created to identify each individual's interests and strengths, as well as to foster the development of healthy thought patterns to mitigate perceived and real barriers to success. Undergraduates learned communication and self-advocacy skills to take advantage of on-campus academic, physical, and mental health support services. College graduates interested in pursuing higher degrees learned how to locate suitable graduate programs, meet application requirements, effectively request letters of recommendation, and construct

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<sup>1</sup> The experience helped inform practices for meeting the needs of COVID-19 related needs in 2020, but this issue of **BeyondAdmissions™** Benefit Report will only address 2019 outcomes.

strong personal statements. Career-seekers learned to evaluate promising areas for career growth based on their interests and education. They received training for resume building, job searches, job applications, interviewing, networking, and how to cope with all the stressors that occur during this exciting transition.

## LOOKING BACK at 2019

In 2019, **BeyondAdmissions™** realized the need to expand support services as clients transitioned to the next stage of their academic or career development. Additionally, as its reputation grew, programs evolved to meet the needs of new client requests - all based on the same principles of social entrepreneurship that underpins the **BeyondAdmissions™** vision.



Ciara C. | **T**ransfer **S**upport

**Undergraduate Support** remained committed to promoting autonomy and self-reliance for all students by developing skills to navigate college-life. Incoming freshmen and sophomores were particularly interested in how to select courses strategically, whether to choose a minor or second major, and how to communicate with faculty. Some needed guidance balancing their workload and managing loneliness and/or homesickness. Juniors and seniors were more focused on

gaining letters of recommendation for jobs or graduate school, identifying research and internship opportunities, choosing a career path, and building a bridge to life after college.

**Community College & Transfer Student Support** continued to guide students through the transfer process to ensure proper classes were taken to qualify for admission to a four-year institution. Many commuter students requested guidance on how to engage both socially and academically on campus, as well as when acclimating to a new four-year college or university. There were also a significant number of students this year attending community college to take post-baccalaureate classes for graduate program requirements. Several others wanted to identify careers available to those with an Associate level degree, and others participated in community college programs to meet union requirements for production jobs in film and television.

**Graduate Student Support** expanded significantly as current undergraduate clients chose to pursue higher degrees and new clients requested guidance with graduate admission. Many needed help identifying appropriate graduate programs and assurance they fulfilled the prerequisite coursework and experience necessary to be eligible candidates for admission. Efforts were focused heavily on how to request effective letters of recommendation and construct strong personal essays.

**Career Launch** also expanded as many college seniors and recent graduates sought help to successfully present themselves in the job market. A comprehensive review of the many skills students developed throughout their undergraduate studies helped them identify appropriate career paths to support their interests and strengths. Services were tailored to each individual's specific needs and included an overall assessment of any real or perceived obstacles hindering landing a job. Emphasis was placed on how to translate skills and accomplishments onto a resume, cover letter, and online professional networking profiles.

**Career Advancement** is a new service that grew organically out of an expressed need for on-the-job guidance. Many individuals wanted to optimize their opportunities for

expanded responsibility and leadership at their current job or within their specific field but did not have access to mentorship. They sought techniques to enhance written and verbal communication, build relationships, and master how to steer clear of office politics. As with all **BeyondAdmissions™** services, a unique action plan addresses any real or perceived obstacles hindering professional progress.

**Career Transition** developed as mid-career professionals sought guidance on how to identify and transition to positions in new fields. Age, experience, and success did not prevent these individuals from falling prey to unsubstantiated assumptions that hindered shifting careers. A comprehensive assessment of past employment and experience helped to identify possible career paths. Guidance was provided on how to market previous work experience and talent to prospective employers.



Maritza A.  
**Community College**



Zach A.  
**Graduate Student Support**



Richard C.  
**Career Advancement**



Mariel L.  
**Career Transition**

## OUTPUT AND OUTCOMES

In 2019, **BeyondAdmissions™** offered pro-bono services or reduced fees to 102 new clients. Individuals requesting assistance were asked to pay the maximum amount they could afford given their financial circumstances to fund those lacking the resources to contribute. Services were the same regardless of one's contribution, and their ability to pay was based on the honor system. For some, this meant a reduced rate could be as low as \$10 per hour, but their payment was meaningful and they insisted on

contributing what they could afford to help others. In total, 24% of clients received pro-bono services and 17% received services at a reduced rate.

Clients ranged in age from 17 - 63 years old, with the majority of clients in their mid-twenties to early thirties. Sixty-three percent of clients identified as female and 37% identified as male. Table A compares the ethnic and racial makeup of **BeyondAdmissions™** clients with the US Census estimates for 2019.<sup>2</sup> It also includes the fee distribution and percentage of hours served in each of the represented racial and ethnic groups.

Table A: 2019 **BeyondAdmissions™** client race/ethnicity demographics and fee distribution

Race/Ethnicity	US Census July 2019 estimates	<b>BeyondAdmissions™</b> 2019 Clients	Full Pay	Pro-bono & Sliding Scale	Hours Served Pro-bono & Sliding Scale
White	61.27%	55.4%	71%	29%	18%
Black	13.3%	9.7%	25%	75%	15%
Asian	5.67%	14.1%	50%	50%	14%
LatinX	17.79%	10.8%	45%	55%	38%
Mixed Race	2.67%	7.6%	50%	50%	8%
Other	1.491%	2.4%	0%	100%	7%

More often than not, all segments of our clientele were the first in their family to attend college and/or professional school. Several others were the offspring of parents educated internationally at the post-secondary level. Table B illustrates the educational backgrounds of clients and their families, along with fee distributions in each racial and ethnic group.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.statista.com/statistics/270272/percentage-of-us-population-by-ethnicities/>

Table B Educational backgrounds and fee distributions of 2019 **BeyondAdmissions™** client and families by race/ethnicity

Race/Ethnicity	First Generation College Students or Professionals	Students or Professionals with Internationally-educated Parents Full Pay	Students or Professionals with Internationally-educated Parents Pro-bono & Sliding Scale	International Students or Professionals Full Pay	International Students or Professionals Pro-bono & Sliding Scale
White	58%	n/a	n/a	66%	34%
Black	62%	0%	100%	n/a	n/a
Asian	35%	66%	34%	40%	60%
LatinX	63%	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Mixed Race	33%	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Other	57%	50%	50%	n/a	n/a

While the backgrounds and experiences of each **BeyondAdmissions™** client varies greatly, there is a common thread that runs through all their experiences. Clients frequently faced challenges associated with a lack of knowledge or a belief system that undermined their ability to move forward. Without family members or community connections to help inform these decisions, these individuals suffered from self-doubt and began to abandon their aspirations. **BeyondAdmissions™** coaches clients to identify resources that lead to informed decisions and greater opportunities:

*...a low-income transfer student believed she lacked the funding to expand her college choices beyond state schools until learning that private colleges and universities often offer more financial aid due to their large endowments...*

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<sup>3</sup> All first-generation students and professionals with the exception of one 35-year-old LatinX were provided pro-bono or reduced fee services.

*...a graduate student applicant was convinced he did not qualify for certain doctoral programs based on his undergraduate GPA until learning that his post-baccalaureate work experience would tip the balance for acceptance...*

*... a mid-level career professional assumed she would need to take a paycut when changing industries until learning that many companies appreciate employees with different operational perspectives...*

The key to supporting client needs rests on cultivating new ways to resolve issues through informed decision making, effective communication, and self-awareness.

One's position on the intersection of multiple aspects of identity will determine the obstacles they will experience. Continued research and resources must target solutions for equitable support to first-generation students, LGBTQIA+, people of color, neuroatypical, international, aging, female students, and/or professionals. It is imperative to recognize these complicated crossroads to best serve an individual so they may overcome barriers to success. On an individual level, **BeyondAdmissions™** is committed to bridging the gaps—structural, social, and personal—that separate students, career seekers, and career professionals from realizing their potential.

In their own words...



Kunal R. | Undergraduate Support

*"I was having a tough time in school but **BeyondAdmissions™** helped me navigate the bureaucracy of a large school as an international student really well."*

Dustin J. | Undergraduate Support

*"I am grateful for **BeyondAdmissions™** close assistance in helping me narrow down disciplines for my major. **BeyondAdmissions™** helped me see the potential for success in my various academic and extracurricular interests."*



Ilana W. | Transfer Student Support

*"**BeyondAdmissions™** helped me approach college in a nontraditional way that was personalized to me and my passions, talents, and needs. They work endlessly and passionately to help you create a future that is authentic and meaningful to you."*



Mugdha D. | **T**ransfer **S**tudent **S**upport

*"Thank you **BeyondAdmissions**<sup>™</sup> for your unconditional help. The entire process was difficult as a first generation college student but you made it easy. Thank you for everything. I am glad to have you by my side. Thank you."*



Nick C. | **G**raduate **S**tudent **S**upport

*"**BeyondAdmissions**<sup>™</sup> filled all the gaps left by the university when it came to planning for life after graduation. Not only did I gain direction and perspective but also the confidence necessary to thrive."*

Audrey V. | **G**raduate **S**tudent **S**upport

*"I found **BeyondAdmissions**<sup>™</sup> just as I had lost confidence to apply to law school. With the help of **BeyondAdmissions**<sup>™</sup>, I was able to find the strength to share my story and my test scores with the world."*





Steph G. | Career Launch

*"BeyondAdmissions™ helped me navigate life after graduating college as an English language and garden conservation teacher in Spain, and now in my role working on agricultural land restoration for AmeriCorp. Speaking with someone allowed me to organize my thoughts, plan, and meet my personal and professional goals."*

Piper L. | Career Launch

*"After relocating to Los Angeles, I found myself basically adrift in a sea of opportunity but unable to find the rudder to direct myself. Thanks to BeyondAdmissions™ I'm now on the path to union membership and hopefully a lifetime in a career I love."*

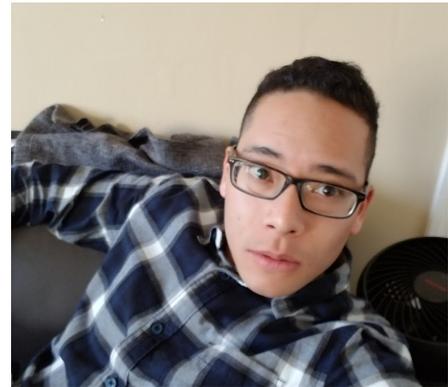


Laura S. | Career Launch

*"As someone raised in Italy and who attended college in the US, I have faced many uncertainties and challenges throughout my college career. Thankfully, BeyondAdmissions™ helped me strengthen my college curriculum by providing me lifelong tools and tips, such as resume building, cover letter formatting, and interview skills. They gave me the clarity and guidance that have made me confident in navigating my future goals."*

Nando T. | **Career Advancement**

*"It is super helpful to have a resource for advice and guidance when navigating my career - I'm immensely grateful."*



Carol H. | **Career Advancement**

*"Working with **BeyondAdmissions**<sup>TM</sup> was tremendously helpful. They helped me form my resume and cover letter to make it stand out and gave me the confidence I needed when it came to applying for jobs and going on interviews!"*

Normarie S. | **Career Transition**

*"Insightful personalized career coaching, which helped me transition from Big Law to an amazing opportunity in the Biotech sector. I recommend this to anyone looking for the next steps in their career."*





Mariel L. | Career Transition

*"I've had the pleasure of working with **BeyondAdmissions**<sup>TM</sup> twice in my career. We are currently working on defining a new path in my life and having a lot of fun as I move from living to work to working to live."*

Meg F. | Career Transition

*"After using the career coaching, I successfully transitioned into a new academic field. But the best part was understanding that I was more qualified than I realized. It had a radical impact on my professional confidence."*



## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

**Joanne Valli-Meredith, Ph.D.**

Founder | CEO | **BeyondAdmissions™**



Joanne has 12 years of administrative and teaching experience at UCLA —most recently as the Director of Evaluation and Educational Assessment at UCLA's Office of Instructional Development. Her teaching in Community Health Science focused on student success using stress and coping skills derived from cognitive behavioral theory, identity theory, and communication practices. She was also a college-drop out!

**Ava Alexandar, M.P.A. | Benefit Director**

Director of Development | Casa Treatment Center



Ava, a dedicated social advocate, holds a B.A. in Political Science from UCLA and a Master's in Public Administration from New York University. During her 18 years of service in non-profit and public administration, she has authored two books and numerous articles on public policy and development.

**Reco Sanders | Secretary**

Business Operations Manager | KIPP LA Schools



Currently the founding Business Operations Manager at a charter elementary school, Reco began his career in education with the AmeriCorps City Year program. He earned his B.A. in American Studies at Dickinson College where he received a full-tuition merit-based scholarship from the Posse Foundation.

## Megan Koehler, LCSW | Chief Financial Officer

Vice President | Mentoring Services

Jewish Big Brothers Big Sisters of Los Angeles



Megan's experience in the non-profit sector spans 30 years, with the last 22 years dedicated to youth mentoring programs. Her tenure working in Los Angeles-based non-profit organizations includes Fulfilment Fund, Jewish Family Services, and Stuart House. She earned her Master's in Social Work at the University of Minnesota after studying at UCLA to earn her B.A. in Music.

## Laura Macchia Amescua

Manager | Policy Implementation & Admissions Evaluation

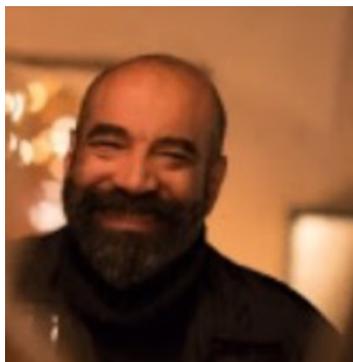
University of California | Office of the President



Laura has devoted the past 23 years to public higher education and currently works in admissions for the University of California, Office of the President. She began her career with UCLA Admissions, focusing on international students and ultimately overseeing the transfer process while pursuing her Ed.D. Laura received her B.A. in Italian at UCLA, studied abroad, and worked in Italy for three years.

## Keith Sears

Screenwriter



Currently a screenwriter, Keith spent 27 years as a business affairs executive and agent at Creative Artists Agency. Holding a B.A. in History from Harvard and a J.D. from Columbia, he has also served as an alumni interviewer for Harvard's Office of Admissions and Financial Aid.