

AISS' CORE SERVICES

We accomplish our goal by providing students with a full array of support services, including:

- Career counseling
- Educational goals/business planning
- Exposure opportunities in STEM fields
- Mentorships from professionals in STEM fields
- Participation in STEM project-based learning and hands-on activities
- Scientific research, mathematics, writing, and oral presentation skills
- Life/soft skills training
- Cultural capital building
- Financial education
- Scholarships, grants, and Financial Aid application assistance
- Advanced SAT/ACT preparation
- College application assistance
- Parent involvement and education
- Alumni engagement.



GET INVOLVED

- Become a guest speaker
- Become an event sponsor
- Have students visit your workplace
- Sponsor AISS program or a student's STEM career pathway
- Tax-Deductible donations
- Become a "Friend of AISS"
- Volunteer or become a mentor
- Provide Internships

IMPROVE
DEVELOP
TRAINING
MOTIVATE
COACHING
INSPIRE



CONTACT INFO

To learn more about our STEM program, please contact Debbie Wells at:

Debbie.Wells@aissfoundation.org
(714) 336-2061

We would be honored to have you partner with us!



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@AISSfoundation

AISS Foundation is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization
Federal Tax ID: 33-0734877



Scan to Support



Achievement Institute
for **STEM Scholars**

IMPACT **REPORT** **2024**

MESSAGE FROM OUR DIRECTOR

Dear Friends,

This year has been one of incredible growth, resilience, and impact at AISS. Thanks to your unwavering support, we've empowered more students than ever, helping them break barriers, achieve dreams, and step confidently into their futures, especially in STEM fields where representation and opportunities matter most.

At AISS, **we believe that potential should never be limited by circumstance.** That's why we provide high-achieving, underrepresented high school students, including many who are first-generation, with the mentorship, college guidance, and financial support they need to succeed. **With your help, we've changed lives** but there is still so much more to do.

Every year, more students need guidance, resources, and a community that believes in them. Your continued support and the support of new champions ensure that we can reach even more young minds, provide life-changing mentorship, and open doors that would otherwise remain closed.

Together, we're not just opening doors, we're building a future where every student has the opportunity to walk through them paving the way for a new generation of STEM leaders who will shape the world. Let's keep making an impact.

With gratitude,



Debbie Wells
Executive Director, AISS





OUR STORIES

FROM THE SCHOLARS: One of the most memorable experiences was visiting the laser lab, where participants had the chance to engrave their pens with custom designs. Another highlight was taking a strengths-based assessment to better understand individual skills and use them to collaborate effectively in designing unique board games. The externship also broadened our understanding of how different career paths intersect and function cohesively within a large corporation like Edwards.

A particularly impactful moment was Ms. Jennifer Pertgen's presentation. From day one, she guided us through the externship, ensuring everything ran smoothly—from organizing our daily schedules to securing additional lab access when needed. During her talk, she shared her personal journey, detailing how she carved her own career path instead of following family expectations to become a sales associate. Her story of balancing work, life, and family was truly inspiring.

Another unique aspect of the experience was dining at Edwards' on-campus cafeteria, which offered a diverse selection of cuisines. Sushi and poke bowls quickly became favorites among participants, with some scholars surprisingly enjoying the same dish every day without growing tired of it. The cafeteria also featured a wide variety of drinks, snacks, and desserts to satisfy every craving. Lunchtime wasn't just about food—it was also an opportunity for team bonding. Externs participated in engaging activities like a paper snowball fight featuring fun personal facts, helping them learn more about each other's hobbies and interests. When not in the conference room, many took part in lunchtime sports, playing cornhole, ping pong, soccer, and more.

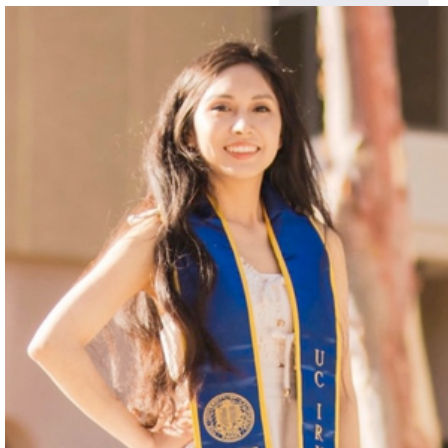
Overall, the Edwards Lifesciences externship provided invaluable experiences and insights, leaving a lasting impact on all who participated. We are incredibly grateful for the opportunity to learn more about the company and apply these lessons to our future endeavors.

AISS SCHOLARS EDWARDS' EXTERNS



SUMMER 2024 AISS EXTERNS AT EDWARDS LIFESCIENCES
WITH JENNIFER PERTGEN (IN PINK)
LEFT-TO-RIGHT: TYLER, BRANDON, HELEN, JENNIFER
PERTGEN, BENJAMIN, JASON, & ADAMS. AISS SCHOLARS IN
BLUE.

AISS ALUMNA



RUTH BELTRAN
AISS CLASS OF 2017
FUTURE DOCTOR OF OSTEOPATHIC MEDICINE

I am the youngest of three. Both my older sister and brother were a part of AISS and both pursued engineering. I felt like it was a rite of passage. I wanted to pursue college for myself. It's helped me find my own way through STEM and it has helped me encourage my own family to pursue their education. Now, both my parents have graduated from college and it is something my siblings and I take pride in. We've worked our way backwards in our family. We helped them apply, we've helped them through their graduation, and now we are helping the pursue their post graduate. So it is a milestone that has impacted us in many ways.

AISS really helped me get out of my comfort zones. I am an introvert by nature, and so I would not be as comfortable speaking in public or just being able to network with others. I now feel comfortable and am able to communicate with others and present myself in a professional setting.

AISS has shaped me in a way that I am not who I am without it. To not come back is to not realize the impact it has had on my life. That is why I come back to AISS.

Hello, my name is Annie Trinh! I completed my B.S. in Genetics (2019) and Ph.D. in Biomedical Sciences (2024), both at the University of California, Irvine. Growing up, identifying my favorite school subjects was quite easy, but deciding how to apply these passions was more difficult.

In college, I immersed myself in various career fields to explore how one could use a biology degree, including volunteering at the CHOC Children's Hospital and conducting laboratory research. These experiences revealed my passion for the intellectual freedom associated with scientific research and for sharing advice and experiences with the younger generation.

As a first-generation Vietnamese American, I believe that mentorship contributed tremendously to my success thus far, and I find it so rewarding to be able to pay it forward. Through academic research, I discovered a career path that combines my love for research and mentorship. Currently, I aspire to become an academic research professor and will begin a postdoctoral research position early next year.

As an ARCS Foundation Scholar, I met Dr. Jacqueline Rojas and learned about AISS. At this time, I was Co-President of ReachOut TeachOut, whose mission is to immerse local underrepresented high school students into STEM research and careers by demystifying STEM and creating opportunities for students to interact with UCI researchers at all levels. When I heard about the amazing work of AISS, I knew we had to work together! Our connection was important to me because it enabled our organization to reach many talented scholars in Santa Ana. Together with AISS, we organized UCI lab tours for the scholars and guest speaking events. I also visited the scholars at Chapman University to provide feedback for the AISS Scholar Research Presentations! The scholars never fail to impress me with their diligence, fearlessness, and positive attitudes. Some words of encouragement in the wise words of President Rutherford B. Hayes: "Every expert was once a beginner." You can do it!

AISS SUPPORTER



DR. ANNIE TRINH
PH.D IN BIOMEDICAL SCIENCES

PARTNER SCHOOLS: EXPANDING OUR STEM SUCCESS

AISS collaborates with partner schools to identify and support talented students who aspire to pursue STEM careers. These schools play a vital role in connecting students with mentorship, resources, and academic opportunities that prepare them for higher education and beyond.



OUR PARTNER SCHOOLS

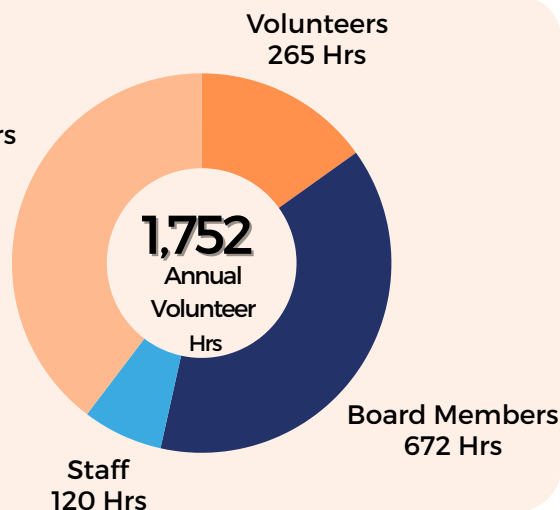
GODINEZ FUNDAMENTAL HIGH SCHOOL
CENTURY HIGH SCHOOL
MIDDLE COLLEGE HIGH SCHOOL
SANTA ANA HIGH SCHOOL
VALLEY HIGH SCHOOL
SADDLEBACK HIGH SCHOOL
SEGERSTROM HIGH SCHOOL
SAMUELI ACADEMY



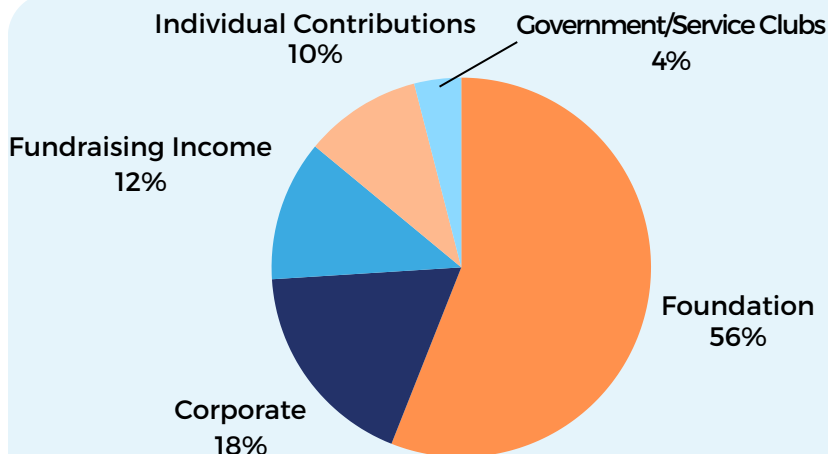
THE HEART OF AISS: OUR VOLUNTEERS

At AISS, our volunteers are the driving force behind our mission. Their dedication, mentorship, and support empower students to break barriers and achieve success in STEM. From guiding students through college applications to providing career advice and hands-on training, our volunteers serve as role models and advocates.

Community Members
695 Hrs



OUR FUNDING: INVESTING IN STUDENT SUCCESS



AISS is supported by grants, corporate sponsors, individual donors, and foundations committed to empowering students through scholarships, mentorship, and STEM training. These contributions help break financial barriers, ensuring every scholar has access to life-changing opportunities in education and career development.

2025



Achievement Institute
for STEM Scholars

AISS Class of
2025 and 2026



Achieve. Inspire. Support. Succeed.

Empowering the Next Generation of STEM Leaders

Our Mission

To guide high-achieving, economically disadvantaged high school students interested in pursuing a career in the STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) fields. Our goal is to break the cycle of poverty.

Poverty &
Limited Access

AISS Support

Education &
Empowerment

Career
Opportunities

Financial
Stability

ORGANIZATION OVERVIEW

Our **College to Career Readiness STEM Program** provides **low-income, minority students** with a **clear pathway to a STEM career**, equipping them with the skills and resources needed to secure **gainful employment and break the cycle of generational poverty**.

We work directly with **40-50 high school juniors and seniors from Santa Ana, California**, while impacting **over 700 individuals annually**. Our participants are **61% female and 39% male**, and **100% of our graduates are accepted into a four-year university or college**.

This intensive, **two-year program** takes place outside of school hours and offers:

- **Exposure to STEM careers and mentorship from STEM professionals**
- **College preparation**, including university research, applications, and campus tours
- **Math and writing skill development** to ensure academic success
- **Financial literacy education** to prepare students for economic independence
- **Mental health and self-care workshops** to support long-term well-being

Through hands-on experiences and dedicated mentorship, we empower students to **pursue meaningful STEM careers and transform their futures**.

REDUCE the college drop-out rate in Santa Ana by increasing students' college readiness and alumni support to and through college.



PROMOTE next generation of STEM leaders from underrepresented groups.



PROVIDE STEM FOCUSED journey that includes over 205 out-of-school hours of hands-on learning a year in:

- **STEM Career Awareness**
- **College to Career Readiness**
- **Life Skills/Soft Skills**

OUR GOALS

SUPPORT parents of economically disadvantaged high school students on understanding the value of higher education and access to resources for their children's university education.

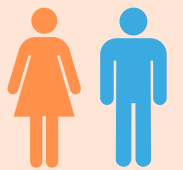


COORDINATE industry and academic partners to create STEM career awareness and build soft skills.

IMPACT REPORT 2024

The Achievement Institute for STEM Scholars (AISS), founded in 2001, is dedicated to empowering underrepresented and underserved students to excel in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics. Since its first graduating class in 2003, AISS has provided mentorship, scholarships, and hands-on learning experiences to hundreds of students, helping them achieve academic and professional success. Through strategic partnerships with schools, industry leaders, and community organizations, AISS has created a lasting impact by fostering innovation, leadership, and excellence in the STEM fields. This report highlights the accomplishments of the current class and celebrates the achievements of our scholars over the past two decades.

DEMOGRAPHICS

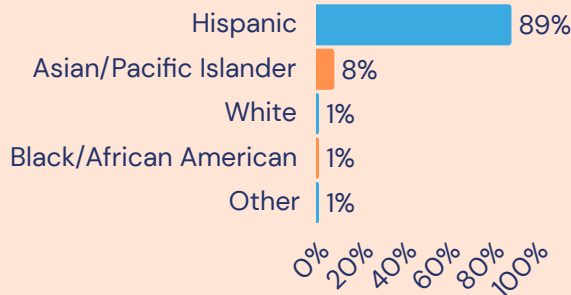


61% 39%

FIRST GENERATION COLLEGE STUDENTS



ETHNIC DIVERSITY



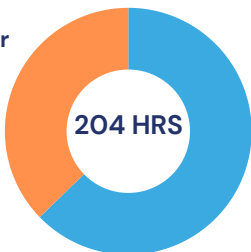
775

PEOPLE SERVED EACH YEAR

VOLUNTEERS, PARENTS, PARTNERS, MENTORS, SCHOLARS, ALUMNI, ETC.

PROGRAM COMMITMENT PER YEAR

School Year
76 Hours



Summer
128 Hours

MEASURING PROGRAM SUCCESS



GRADUATED SCHOLARS
214

HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION RATE

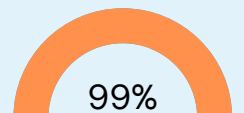


CA H.S. GRAD. RATE: 86.4%*
NATIONAL GRAD. RATE: 87%*
*ACCORDING TO CA D.E. AND NCES RESPECTIVELY

ATTEND COLLEGE/UNIVERSITY



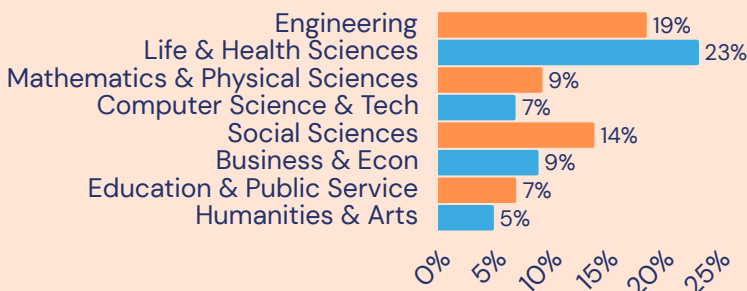
COLLEGE GRADUATION RATE



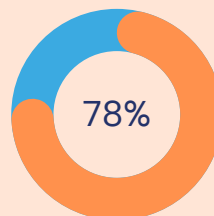
NATIONAL GRAD. RATE: 62.2%*
*ACCORDING TO BESTCOLLEGES.COM

ALUMNI STATS

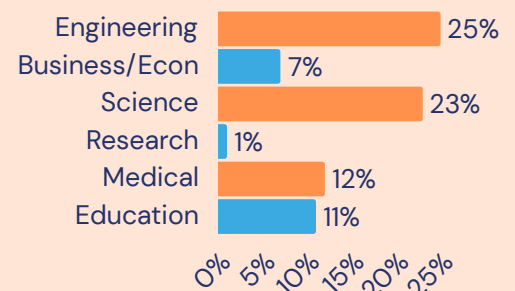
UNDERGRADUATE MAJORS



ALUMNI WORKING IN STEM FIELDS



CAREER STATISTICS



1/3 OF OUR ALUMNI GO TO TOP 25 COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

