

**Next Generation Venture Fund:
Empowering Under-Represented Scholars to reach their
Academic Potential**

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The Next Generation Venture Fund is a scholarship program designed to increase the number of bright minority students who are fully prepared to enter highly selective colleges and universities, and assist them in doing so. The program brings these under-represented children to the highest levels of academic achievement through participation in rigorous summer programs, year-round distance education courses, specialized weekend courses, a mentoring program and year-round academic counseling. The Next Generation Venture Fund (NGVF) is operated by The Johns Hopkins University Center for Talented Youth (CTY) and the Duke University Talent Identification Program (TIP).

CTY, in conjunction with Duke TIP, designed an evaluation model to document the implementation and effectiveness of the Next Generation Venture Fund. This evaluation model was based on the previous research and evaluation of the Goldman Sachs Scholars program, implemented by CTY beginning in 2000, which also targeted highly able under-represented youth. The Next Generation Venture Fund evaluation expanded on the successes of the Goldman Sachs Scholars program to further our understanding of the academic, motivational, and counseling approaches and practices that are needed to prepare and empower gifted under-represented students to reach their academic potential.

Students are selected into the program based on evidence of ability, financial need, and minority status. Students begin the NGVF program in the summer after their 8th grade year and continue in the program until graduation from high school. There are currently 97 tenth graders and 32 ninth graders in the program. Data are collected through student and parent surveys, academic records, teacher evaluations, and pre- and post-testing. These data are then analyzed to determine which components of the program are most beneficial to the academic advancement of the students as evidenced by outcomes such as high level academic achievement throughout high school (e.g., Program participants take more honors and advanced placement courses in high school than a comparison group of non-program participants) and eventual college admissions to selective institutions (Program participants are more likely to apply to, and be accepted by, the most competitive colleges and universities).

The presentation includes a description and discussion of this innovative program, evaluation results and lessons learned. Through this presentation, we hope to provide information that will help teachers, schools, and other groups who work with under-represented gifted students to better meet their needs.

