



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS: MERITUS INTEGRATION

Why are you combining organizations?

Combining 10,000 Degrees and Meritus College Fund will result in serving even more first-generation college students from low-income backgrounds. Together, we can take the best practices of each organization to create a college success model that leads the nation. At the same time, by integrating back-office functions, we can devote more resources to expanding and further developing our programming.

What exactly does 10,000 Degrees do?

10,000 Degrees combines personal support, college advising, scholarships, and financial aid management to help students from low-income backgrounds get to and through college. More than 80% of 10,000 Degrees four-year college students earn bachelor's degrees, compared to 31% of their peers nationally. Unlike most other college support organizations, there is no GPA requirement for students applying to 10,000 Degrees programs. Headquartered in San Rafael, California, 10,000 Degrees works with students in 20 area high schools, 11 community colleges, and over 50 four-year colleges and universities in California and across the nation. Since 1981, 10,000 Degrees has awarded more than \$65 million in scholarships.

What exactly does Meritus College Fund do?

Founded in 1996, Meritus helps Bay Area youth from low-income backgrounds succeed in college and prepare for career opportunities by providing scholarships, individualized coaching, and professional development. To date, Meritus has supported nearly 750 students and provided close to \$9.5 million in scholarships.

How does this integration benefit each organization?

10,000 Degrees supports Meritus through increased efficiencies thanks to integrated back-office functions. At the same time, Meritus students will benefit from 10,000 Degrees expertise in financial aid management, including improved access and support in obtaining more free state and federal financial aid. In turn, Meritus helps 10,000 Degrees expand college success programming to San Francisco, the Peninsula, and the South Bay through established partnerships and emerging resources. Additionally, 10,000 Degrees students will benefit from the Meritus corporate internship program, helping even more students turn their college degrees into fulfilling careers.

What will be the name of the combined organization?

The combined organization will operate as 10,000 Degrees. Four-year college scholarships awarded to San Francisco area youth will continue to be called Meritus Scholarships.

Who will lead the combined organization?

The combined organization will be led by Kim Mazzuca, who has served as President and CEO of 10,000 Degrees since 1999. A San Francisco Bay Area native and first-generation college graduate, Kim brings more than two decades of executive nonprofit management and philanthropic leadership in the areas of youth development, human services, workforce development, and education and has developed nationally recognized college success programs.

Who will serve on the Board of Directors of the combined organization?

The Board of Directors of the combined organization will include Directors from both organizations. Likewise, the leadership team will also be a blend of staff from both organizations.

When will the organizations officially combine into one?

10,000 Degrees and Meritus will officially combine on July 1, 2018.

How will this affect current 10,000 Degrees students and scholarships?

Current 10,000 Degrees students and scholarships will also remain unaffected.

How will this affect current Meritus Scholars?

Current Meritus Scholars will continue to receive their funding in the same manner, and they will continue to work with their same Meritus advisors.

Will the combined organization award Meritus Scholarships in the future?

The Meritus Scholarship Program will continue for San Francisco area youth headed to four-year colleges, and the criteria will remain the same. Also, the recipients will continue to be called Meritus Scholars.

Will the combined organization honor Meritus partnerships in the South Bay?

Meritus partnerships with San Jose's East Side Union High School District and the Boys & Girls Club of the Peninsula will continue.

DONORS QUESTIONS:

How will the combining of organizations affect donations given or pledged?

For 10,000 Degrees and Meritus donors, all gifts and/or pledges will be designated as indicated by donors. For Meritus designated scholarships, all scholarship donations and gift restrictions will continue to be honored and used to support Meritus Scholars and programs. Also, Meritus scholarship donors will continue to receive annual correspondence from awarded student(s).

Will donors who designate their funds for San Francisco still be matched to Meritus Scholars?

Yes. Please note that prior to the merger, starting with the 2018 Scholar Cohort, Meritus made the decision to match with Scholars only donors who give one-half a scholarship (\$8,000) or more. Smaller donations will continue to support Scholars in exactly the same way, but there won't be an individual match of a donor to a Scholar.

FOR STUDENTS:

Will the combined organization continue to honor current student scholarships?

Yes. Current 10,000 Degrees students and Meritus Scholars will continue receiving their scholarships under the same terms as described by the awarding organization.

Will Meritus scholarship recipients still be called "Meritus Scholars"?

Yes. Under the organization name 10,000 Degrees, the Meritus Scholarship program will continue for San Francisco area graduating high school seniors headed to four-year colleges.

Will students continue to work with the same support staff?

Yes. Under the organization name 10,000 Degrees, all students will continue to work with support staff they have become familiar with, and Meritus Scholars will continue working with their current Advisors.

Will 10,000 Degrees and Meritus students combine communities on shared campuses?

Yes. 10,000 Degrees will be organizing combined student cohort events on shared campuses.

Will support for internships and career guidance for Meritus Scholars continue?

Yes.

FOR SCHOOLS & COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS:

How does the combining of 10,000 Degrees and Meritus affect program and/or scholarship application processes?

Under the combined organization name 10,000 Degrees, the current program and/or scholarship application processes remain unchanged. 10,000 Degrees will continue to accept applications for 10,000 Degrees programming and scholarships from aspiring first-generation college students from low-income backgrounds, regardless of GPA. At the same time, Meritus will continue to rely on partnerships with San Francisco schools and counselors to support qualified candidates.

Will the type of student Meritus has traditionally supported change?

Under the combined organization name 10,000 Degrees, Meritus will continue to support graduating low-income seniors headed to four-year colleges with a GPA between 3.0 and 3.7.

Will there be changes to scholarship and program teams under the combined organization?

Though there will likely be staffing changes due to normal business operations, there are no immediate plans to change current 10,000 Degrees or Meritus personnel.

Will the combined organization continue to do outreach and information sessions and other events on partner campuses?

Yes. Under the combined organization name 10,000 Degrees, both 10,000 Degrees and Meritus staff will continue to participate in information sessions.

FOR PARTNERS:

Will current partnerships as agreed upon with the separate organizations continue under the same terms?

Under the organization names 10,000 Degrees, all current partnerships will continue under the same terms.

Will the Meritus internship and career program continue?

Under the organization names 10,000 Degrees, the Meritus internship and career program will continue, and program partners will continue working with the same Meritus team. At the same time, the combined organization will now serve nearly 2,000 students per academic year, dramatically increasing the opportunity to serve even more students.

Will the Young Professionals Council continue?

Yes. The Young Professionals Council will support the combined organization, including Meritus Scholars and 10,000 Degrees students and alumni. In the future, YPC will serve an integral role in determining how best it can support even more first-generation college students from low-income backgrounds.