

January 2, 2026

Dear THRIVE Participant,

Congratulations and welcome to **THRIVE**, our TRIO Student Support Services program. We are pleased that you have chosen to be part of a program designed to support your academic success, personal growth, and progress toward graduation.

THRIVE is funded by the U.S. Department of Education and it aims to support students committed to succeed here at Southern. As a THRIVE participant, you will have access to individualized academic support, coaching, skill-building workshops, and resources intended to help you navigate college successfully and achieve your educational goals.

Our dedicated staff looks forward to working with you throughout your academic journey. We encourage you to take full advantage of the services and opportunities available through THRIVE and to remain engaged with the program.

Again, welcome to THRIVE—we are excited to support you as you move forward toward graduation and beyond.

Sincerely,



Kimberly Crider
THRIVE Initiative Director

About the Program

History

Student Support Services (SSS) is a federally funded TRIO program authorized by the Higher Education Amendments of 1968 to increase college retention and graduation rates for low-income, first-generation college students, and students with documented disabilities. As one of the original TRIO initiatives, SSS was designed to provide eligible students with academic advising, tutoring, financial literacy, mentoring, and other supportive services that address barriers to postsecondary success. Since its inception, TRIO programs have served millions of students nationwide. Today, more than 2,900 TRIO programs operate across the United States, Puerto Rico, and the Pacific Islands, collectively serving over 840,000 middle school, high school, and college students each year, with Student Support Services playing a critical role in helping enrolled college students persist, graduate, and achieve their educational and career goals. In fall 2025, Southern Adventist University was awarded a TRIO grant to support 140 students through its SSS program, known as **THRIVE**—Tools for Higher-Ed Readiness, Involvement, Vision, and Excellence.

Objectives

THRIVE is guided by three standard objectives related to participants' academic achievement: good academic standing, persistence, and graduation. The objectives are ambitious and attainable given THRIVE's comprehensive plan of services, budget, and resources.

Who We Serve

To be eligible for the program, individuals must be:

1. A U.S. citizen or meet the residency requirements for federal student financial assistance.
2. Admitted to Southern Adventist University.
3. Committed to succeeding in college.

In addition, ONE or more of the following criteria must be met:

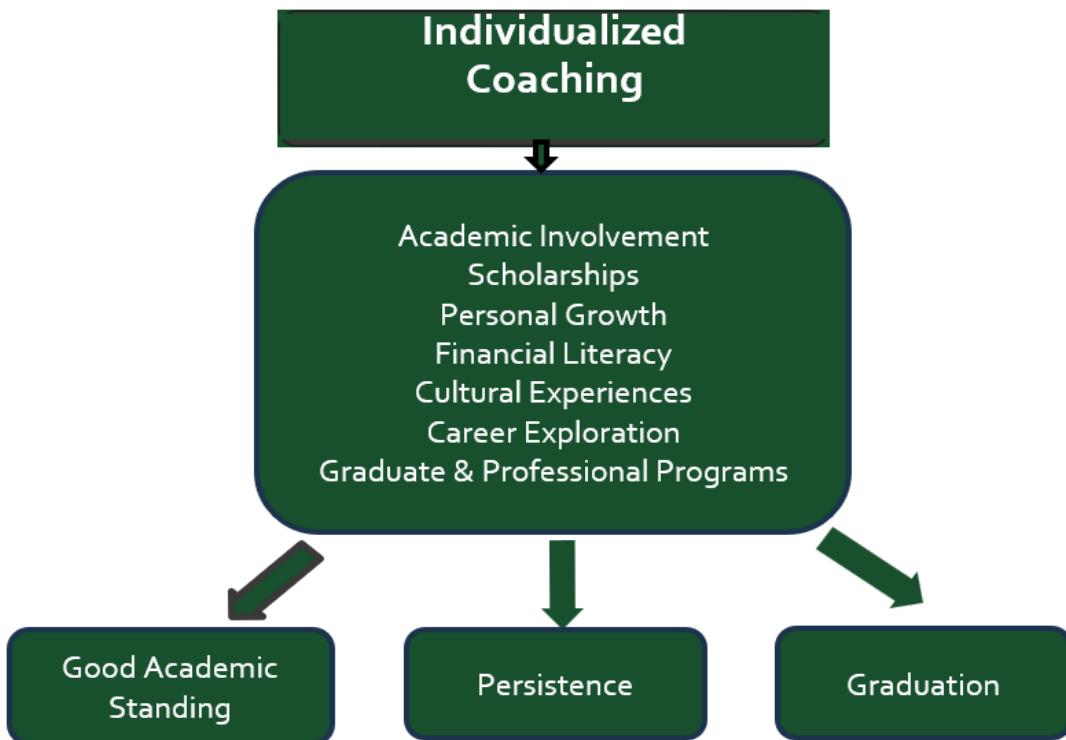
- You meet federal TRIO income eligibility criteria.
- Neither of your parents graduated with a four-year degree.
- You have a documented disability.

Selection Process

- Participation in the program is limited. Our program is only funded to serve 140 students each year.
- Interested students must apply and upload all supporting documents in order to be considered for the program. Participants are selected through a review process. Applications are reviewed and selected individuals may be called for an interview.
- Meeting eligibility criteria and having an interview *does not* guarantee acceptance into the program.

Our Services

How does THRIVE Work?



A central feature of THRIVE is the personalized coaching and support you will receive as a program participant. Each student is paired with a THRIVE coach who collaborates with you to create an individualized Academic Success Plan (ASP) based on your assessed needs. Your ASP identifies which THRIVE services are required and which are optional, depending on your goals and areas for growth.

THRIVE provides services across seven focus areas: *Academic Involvement, Scholarships, Personal Growth, Financial Literacy, Cultural Experiences, Career Exploration, and Graduate School Preparation*. These service areas are described in the following pages and are incorporated into your Academic Success Plan. Each semester, you and your coach will select activities from these categories to develop a plan tailored to your specific needs. The coaching process and completion of the ASP are designed to help you:

1. Identify personal and academic needs
2. Connect with campus resources
3. Address challenges
4. Strengthen non-cognitive skills

All with the objective of maintaining satisfactory academic progress, continuing toward degree completion, and ultimately graduating. As you work with your coach, consider your academic, personal, and career aspirations. Select activities that will support your growth, enhance your sense of achievement, and foster meaningful engagement within Southern's community.

Categories and Services

The following services listed are for THRIVE participants.

Coaching

THRIVE coaches partner with students to develop a comprehensive Academic Success Plan (ASP) that reflects each student's individual strengths and areas for improvement. Students are required to meet with their assigned coach three times during the semester. During these meetings, coaches can address a wide range of topics, including academic progress and campus resources, personal development through self-growth and community involvement, financial literacy such as budgeting or managing student loans, and exploration of career options.

THRIVE coaches receive specialized training to support students in navigating the complexities of the higher education environment and to connect them with appropriate campus services. The program employs two THRIVE coaches, and each student is assigned a designated coach during orientation.

Mentoring/Tutoring

Mentors/tutors support first- and second-year THRIVE participants by promoting both academic success and social development. They offer guidance, share information, connect students to campus resources, and provide ongoing encouragement. First-year participants are paired with trained upper-class student mentors/tutors who meet with them individually on a weekly basis outside of class and occasionally participate in small-group activities. During the sophomore year, mentors/tutors continue to meet with students individually and periodically in group settings to maintain support and foster greater involvement in campus life. Mentors and mentees are expected to collaborate in establishing a regular weekly meeting time throughout the semester.

Upper-class THRIVE students who remain in good standing with the program may apply to serve as peer mentors while continuing their participation in THRIVE. Students interested in this opportunity should speak with their assigned coach for additional information.

THRIVE Start Orientation

Incoming first-year students admitted to the THRIVE program are required to arrive on campus before the university's standard New Student Orientation to participate in THRIVE Start. This extended orientation experience is designed to help new THRIVE participants build connections with their cohort and become familiar with the campus environment sooner. During THRIVE Start, students are introduced to the program's expectations, services, and benefits. An additional advantage of participating in THRIVE Start is the opportunity to move into the residence halls ahead of the regular move-in schedule.

Workshops

THRIVE collaborates with a variety of campus offices and departments to offer a wide range of workshops throughout the academic year. These sessions cover topics such as completing the FAFSA, building financial literacy, developing effective study habits and learning strategies, enhancing memory and focus, managing test anxiety, and strengthening job search skills. Additional workshops address résumé and cover letter development, strengths-based leadership, and other skills designed to support academic success, personal growth, and career readiness.

Career Exploration

THRIVE coaches partner with Southern's Life Calling and Career Services to support students as they explore career pathways and vocational interests. Through this collaboration, students gain access to resources focused on résumé preparation, job search strategies, and interview skills.

Cultural Enrichment

Cultural activities are designed to enhance students' educational experiences while broadening cultural understanding and appreciation. Each academic year, THRIVE sponsors one to two cultural experiences, offering opportunities to attend events such as museums, musical performances, historical sites, and other enriching activities.

Graduate School Preparation

THRIVE partners with Life Calling & Career Services to host an annual graduate school program designed to help participants explore whether pursuing graduate education aligns with their academic and career goals. This initiative provides guidance, motivation, and support throughout the graduate school application process.

Graduate School Campus Visits

Junior and senior THRIVE participants may access opportunities to visit graduate schools within the region. Availability for these visits is limited, and participation is restricted to students who are in good academic standing. Trips are scheduled only when a minimum of five students express interest. Students should notify their assigned coach of their interest during their first meeting of the semester to be considered.

GRE Assistance

Students who are considering taking the GRE should discuss their plans with their coach as early as possible. THRIVE staff may assist eligible students with demonstrated financial need in obtaining GRE fee reduction vouchers that cover 50 percent of the testing cost (a value of up to \$100). The Educational Testing Service (ETS) provides a limited number of GRE Fee Reduction Vouchers on a first-come, first-served basis to qualified applicants. Approved students may use the voucher to register for the GRE General Test and/or a GRE Subject Test at half the standard fee. Detailed instructions are available at ETS along with the [GRE Fee Reduction Request Form](#).

Graduation Preparation

During their senior year, students will continue to meet with their assigned coach three times during the semester and as needed. Coaches will support seniors in identifying post-graduation plans and developing clear, actionable steps to move toward their next academic or career goals.

Awards and Special Recognition

To celebrate students' academic progress and the accomplishment of individual objectives, THRIVE hosts an annual recognition and awards ceremony each April for all participants. Attendance at this event is required.

Financial Assistance for THRIVE Participants

THRIVE students who remain actively involved in the program and who meet the expectations outlined in their Academic Success Plan and program guidelines may qualify for an annual scholarship. Scholarship amounts and disbursement schedules vary based on several criteria detailed in the chart and Sections 1–6.

While most participants receive \$1,000, some students may be awarded \$500, or in certain cases, may not receive a scholarship, depending on individual circumstances.

For each eligible semester (students with 0–59 earned credit hours: spring semester; students with 60 or more credit hours: fall and spring semesters), THRIVE scholarship funds are applied to student accounts mid-semester, after participants have demonstrated consistent engagement in program activities. Students who are not making adequate progress toward fulfilling their Academic Success Plan requirements may lose eligibility for the scholarship for that term.

THRIVE Scholarship Distribution

THRIVE Participation	0-59 Completed Credit Hours	60+ Completed Credit Hours
Full Academic Year (Fall-Spring)	\$1,000 in Spring	\$500 in Fall & \$500 in Spring
Fall Only	No Scholarship	\$500 in Fall
Spring Only	\$500 in Spring	\$500 in Spring

1. First-time THRIVE Participants Entering the Program in a Fall Term

OR THRIVE Participants Returning to the Program in a Fall Term

THRIVE participants beginning or returning to the program in a fall term, who continue in the program through the end of the spring semester, will be awarded a \$1,000 annual scholarship. For participants with 59 or less hours in the program, the full scholarship amount of \$1,000 will be applied in the middle of the spring term. For participants with 60 or more hours, the scholarship will be applied in two increments, \$500 in the middle of the fall term and \$500 in the middle of the spring term.

Note: Completed credit hours are assessed in August of each academic year and are not re-evaluated at other points during the academic year.

2. First-time THRIVE Participants Entering the Program in a Spring Term

First-time THRIVE participants beginning the program in a spring term, who continue in the program through the end of the semester, will be awarded a \$500 scholarship in the middle of that term.

3. Graduation

If a THRIVE participant graduates at the end of the fall semester, he or she would be eligible for the fall term THRIVE scholarship awarded to participants with 60 or more hours of \$500. The student would not be eligible for the spring term THRIVE scholarship in which he or she would not be enrolled as an undergraduate student. When a student graduates he or she is no longer eligible to receive scholarship funds. Graduate students are not eligible to receive scholarship funds.

4. Suspension or Withdrawal

If a THRIVE participant departs from the university, they may be considered for return to the THRIVE program provided all of the following conditions are satisfied:

- a) The student exited THRIVE while in good program standing.
- b) The student has been officially readmitted to the university.
- c) The student completed the required THRIVE re-entry procedures.
- d) Space is available within the THRIVE program at the time of re-entry. THRIVE has a maximum capacity of 140 participants, and therefore re-entry cannot be guaranteed.

Students who suspend or withdraw from the university may be required to forfeit their THRIVE scholarship for the semester in which the separation occurred and are not eligible to receive

THRIVE scholarship funds during periods of non-enrollment. Additionally, students with 59 or fewer earned credit hours may lose eligibility for any THRIVE scholarship for that academic year. Please note that suspension or withdrawal may also affect other forms of financial aid beyond the THRIVE scholarship. Students are encouraged to consult the Financial Aid Office to understand how their individual circumstances may be impacted.

5. Part-time Student Status

THRIVE participants who enroll on a part-time basis may continue their participation in the program; however, receipt of the THRIVE scholarship is not assured during semesters in which a student is classified as part-time. Holding part-time status in one semester of an academic year may also affect scholarship eligibility in the subsequent term. Please note that part-time enrollment may influence other components of your financial aid package in addition to the THRIVE scholarship. Students should contact the Financial Aid Office for guidance specific to their individual circumstances.

6. Program Standing

THRIVE participants who fail to meet program expectations may be required to forfeit their THRIVE scholarship until they regain good standing within the program. Lack of compliance during one semester of an academic year may also affect scholarship eligibility in the subsequent term.

Financial Aid Information

THRIVE collaborates closely with the Financial Aid Office to help students gain a clear understanding of federal financial aid processes and policies. In addition, the program offers workshops focused on completing the FAFSA and identifying scholarship opportunities.

Financial Literacy

THRIVE provides educational sessions on topics such as budgeting, responsible money management, student loan debt, and credit card use to help students develop sound financial decision-making skills.

Group Tutoring

Group tutoring may be arranged when two or more THRIVE participants enrolled in the same course section express interest in receiving academic support together. Students interested in this option should contact the THRIVE Program Advisor, who will assess demand and coordinate group tutoring if sufficient interest exists. When group tutoring is not feasible, individual tutoring will be recommended.

Tutoring Services/Individual Tutoring

Academic tutoring is offered to help students strengthen study strategies across a wide range of subject areas. Tutoring is not limited to students who are struggling academically; it is also an effective way to reinforce learning, build confidence, and enhance overall academic achievement. Students with a GPA below 2.0 are required to participate in tutoring, and their attendance will be monitored. Those with a GPA between 2.0 and 2.5 are strongly encouraged to utilize tutoring services. Students seeking one-on-one tutoring should schedule appointments through the [Tutoring Center](#).

When using tutoring services, students are expected to arrive prepared for each session. Preparation includes attending and actively participating in class, completing assigned readings, and bringing relevant notes and course materials. Students are also expected to engage actively during tutoring sessions. If you are unable to attend a scheduled tutoring appointment, you must notify the Tutoring Center and cancel or reschedule at least 24 hours in advance.

Important Policies

THRIVE Academic Performance Expectations

THRIVE participants are required to maintain a cumulative GPA of 2.0 or higher to remain in good academic standing within the initiative. Participants whose university GPA drops below the 2.0 minimum will be placed on THRIVE Academic Probation and assigned a revised Academic Success Plan (ASP) until the GPA requirement is met. This alternative plan places greater emphasis on academic support and includes additional tutoring obligations. Students must receive approval from their assigned coach before withdrawing from any course.

Attendance and Participation

Students must meet with their assigned coach at least three times each semester. The initial meeting must occur within the first two weeks of the term, followed by a mid-semester meeting and a final meeting near the end of the semester. Meeting times are coordinated jointly by the student and coach.

All first- and second-year THRIVE participants who are assigned a tutor/mentor are required to meet with that individual on a weekly basis. Mentors and mentees should agree on a regular meeting time each week, and sessions should only be rescheduled in exceptional situations. In such cases, the student is responsible for notifying the tutor/mentor in advance.

If a student is unable to attend an activity included in their ASP, they must notify their coach via email prior to the scheduled event and collaborate on identifying an appropriate alternative activity. Repeated or unexcused absences from THRIVE activities may result in dismissal from the initiative and loss of associated benefits.

Lifestyle Expectations and Community Standards

All THRIVE participants are expected to conduct themselves in a way that aligns with the mission and values of both the university and the THRIVE initiative, and to adhere to Southern's Community Standards. Failure to meet these behavioral and lifestyle expectations may result in disciplinary action by Southern Adventist University and could lead to removal from the THRIVE initiative.

Dismissal from THRIVE

A THRIVE participant may be dismissed from the initiative for a number of reasons related to their academic commitment, conduct, and communication. Reasons for potential removal include:

- Deciding not to pursue a bachelor's degree
- Failing to enroll full-time in classes
- Having a history of poor academic performance
- Ceasing to communicate with the THRIVE coaches or peer mentors
- Failing to return calls or respond to other repeated attempts at contact
- Receiving an academic suspension from Southern
- Experiencing disciplinary problems on campus
- Being disrespectful or abusive to THRIVE staff or students

Pending Status

Upon joining the THRIVE program, you will initially be assigned a "pending" status. This one-month "pending" period begins after your orientation and allows the initiative to monitor your level of engagement and commitment. While in this status, you have full access to all services; however, continued enrollment is contingent upon active participation. If you do not remain consistently involved during this time, you may be dismissed from the initiative.

Re-entry Policy

If you withdraw from THRIVE while in good standing, you can request re-entry without submitting a new application. To initiate this process, email thrive@southern.edu with a brief explanation of why you left, your reasons for returning, and your desired start date. Please keep in mind that because THRIVE is limited to 140 students, re-admission depends on current program capacity and the Director's approval; it is not guaranteed. You will receive an email regarding the final decision. See the section on *Financial Assistance* for details on the THRIVE scholarship impact to re-entry.

THRIVE Advocacy

While THRIVE staff prioritize your privacy, they will also maintain regular contact with faculty and other staff members to advocate for your needs and support your success.

If Your Contact Information Changes

Please notify the THRIVE office immediately of any changes to your contact details (mailing address, phone, or email). Keeping your information current ensures you don't miss vital updates regarding scholarships, job and internship opportunities, or important deadlines. Also, please make these changes with the Records & Advisement Office so that your file will be updated. As a federally funded initiative we must always have your accurate contact information.

THRIVE Initiative Student Participant Agreement

Southern Adventist University is committed to your academic success and therefore supplies multiple resources to make this initiative and you succeed in your collegiate experience. All program opportunities and services are intended to help you grow both academically and personally. In turn, we ask that you agree to a "good faith" partnership.

Upon acceptance, these are the expectations required of you:

I will meet with my coach to create an Academic Success Plan (ASP) at the beginning of the semester and will do my best to follow the guidelines of the plan.

I will meet with my coach a minimum of three times throughout the semester to discuss my ASP.

I will actively participate in the learning process by preparing for and attending class.

I will participate in the THRIVE community activities as outlined in my ASP.

I understand THRIVE staff will communicate with faculty and staff to advocate on my behalf.

I will check my Southern email daily, as this is the primary form of contact between THRIVE and myself.

I will check and use MyAccess, and my Southern email, in order to stay in contact with the THRIVE office.

I will respond to communication between THRIVE and myself within 48 hours.

I understand that if I do not uphold the terms and conditions of this commitment, I may be denied further participation in the THRIVE.

Student Signature

Date

Print Name