

YMCA College Readiness Program

September, 2012 – June, 2013

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Introduction

The YMCA College Readiness Program is funded by the California Community Foundation. There are two components to the College Readiness Program (CRP); the youth component and the parent component. The youth component provides higher education support services to members of the YMCA of Greater Long Beach High School Youth Institute (HSYI). The HSYI is a program that uses technology as an integral mechanism for promoting positive youth development and enhancing the academic success and career readiness of low-income, culturally-diverse high school youth. This year, the program consisted of a senior meeting at the beginning of the school year, where the CRP staff shared available college assistance services, a campus visit, a scholarship workshop and a senior dinner and college information session, where the accomplishments of the senior class were celebrated. Academic consultation was also provided to seniors. This report documents CRP efforts from September, 2012 to June, 2013.

Methods

Data Collection

Data on academic counseling was collected using the College Preparation Tracking form which was specifically designed by College Readiness staff and the researchers for this project. The form allows staff to track youth's high school grades, extracurricular activities, which colleges they are interested in, college entrance requirements, college application checklist, college applications submitted, and final college status. Staff also kept attendance on all project meetings and campus visits which they provided to the researchers.

Sample

CRP youth are all YI alumni. Youth were recruited by CRP staff via phone calls, letters mailed to their homes, emails, Facebook and talking to their friends. Twenty (13%) of the 159 YI

youth who were potentially eligible, participated in the CRP during the current time period. The largest percent of youth were high school seniors (85%). The youth ranged from 16 years to 19 years, with an average age of 18. Males (60%) and Latinos (60%) made up the majority of the sample. An attrition analysis was used to explore demographic differences between the YI youth who did and did not participate in the CRP. There were significant grade differences between the two groups. Seniors were overrepresented in the CRP group while juniors were underrepresented

Table 1
Description of 2012-13 College Readiness Youth Participants
(N = 20)

	%	N
Year in High School**		
Junior	15%	3
Senior	85%	17
Gender		
Male	60%	12
Female	40%	8
Ethnicity		
Latino	60%	12
Asian American/Pacific Islander	20%	4
African-American	20%	4
Current Age		
16	10%	2
17	25%	5
18	60%	12
19	5%	1

**Significant differences at the .05 level

Results

College Readiness Activity Attendance

The number of college readiness activities attended by participants ranged from one ($n = 8$, 40%) to four ($n = 3$, 15%), with an average of two activities per participant. Sixty percent ($n = 12$) attended two or more of the college readiness activities. As shown in Table 2, the senior meeting had the most participants and one campus visit was made to Cal Poly Pomona.

Table 2
College Readiness Activity Attendance
($N = 20$)

Activity	%	N
Senior Meeting	75%	15
Senior Dinner & College Information Session	65%	13
Cal Poly Pomona Campus Visit	60%	12
Scholarship Workshop	15%	3

Individualized Academic Advising

In addition to the general CRP activities, 16 high school seniors met individually with the College Readiness Director to receive assistance with their college plans. This section details those efforts.

College Requirements

Youth who received academic advising from the CRP varied on the types of colleges to which they applied. Colleges ranged from four-year universities, such as UC Los Angeles, USC, UC Santa Barbara, UC Berkeley, UC Davis, UC San Diego, UC Riverside, UC Irvine, CSU San Jose, CSU Long Beach, CSU San Diego, CSU Dominguez Hills, CSU Humboldt, CSU San Francisco, CSU Fullerton, Cal Poly Pomona, Cal Poly San Luis Obispo, and Williams College; to two-year colleges such as Long Beach City College and Cerritos College.

Table 3 displays the percentage of youth who completed the required high school courses for entrance into a four-year university. The percentages ranged from a 94% completion rate for the history/social science requirement, the college preparatory elective and visual/performing arts, to a 75% completion rate for world languages. Four (25%) youth also reported SAT assessment scores. They ranged from 990 to 2360, with a mean of 1597.

Table 3

High School Courses and Number of Years Completed for UC/CSU College Admission
(N = 16)

High School Courses and Number of Years Needed for UC/CSU College Entrance Requirement	% of YI CR Youth who met Requirement	Number of CR Youth who met Requirement
History/Social Science (2 years)	94%	15
Visual/Performing Arts (1 year)	94%	15
College Preparatory Elective (1 year)	94%	15
English (4 years)	87%	14
Laboratory Science (2 years)	81%	13
Mathematics (3 years)	81%	13
World Languages (2 years)	75%	12

College Readiness Staff Assistance

As shown in Table 4, the most frequent assistance provided by CRP staff was in high school course selection and college and financial aid application completion. Youth were least likely to receive assistance from staff on writing their essay and providing letters of recommendation. All 16 seniors who received individualized assistance applied to college. The number of applications submitted ranged from one (44%) to nine (6%), with an average of four applications per youth. Of the 62 applications submitted, 34 (55%) received college acceptance

letters. All 16 youth who CRP staff assisted with the financial aid process were awarded financial aid monies to attend college. One was also awarded two scholarships.

Table 4

Types of College Individualized Assistance Provided by College Readiness Staff (N = 16)

College Application Task	%	N
A-G College Entrance Requirements	100%	16
Financial Aid Applications	100%	16
College Applications	94%	15
SAT or ACT Admission Test	62%	10
High School Transcripts	56%	9
Scholarship Applications	56%	9
Letters of Recommendation	44%	7
Essay	12%	2

Types of Colleges CPR Youth Will Attend

As shown below in Table 5, half of the CRP participants will attend a four-year university in the Fall.

Table 5

Outcome of College Applications Submitted

(N = 16)

College Applications Submitted	%	N
Four-Year University	50%	8
Two-Year College	50%	8

Conclusions

The CRP provided college-related activities and individual academic counseling to 20 juniors and seniors who were YI alumni during the 2012 – 2013 school year. This represents a substantial reduction in the number of youth served during the prior year (N = 68). The number

of college trips was also reduced from three to one. The population the program served this year was also different in that freshmen and sophomore youth also participated in college exposure activities last year while only juniors and seniors were served during this reporting period. The reasons for these changes are unclear. Seniors who received individualized academic applied to a broad range of colleges and, just over half (55%) of the applications resulted in acceptance letters. At the time of this report, all 16 youth had been accepted into into a two or four year institution of higher education. It is very positive that all of the youth had received some form of financial aid given their socioeconomic circumstances. However, many YI seniors were not served by the program and their college plans are currently unknown. This limits the ability to determine whether program participation increased the rates of college acceptance.

The information collected here provides some indication of the need for program expansion and/or enhancement to increase the number of YI graduates attending college. As suggested last year, given that not all of the seniors had taken the high school courses required for admission into a four-year university, it may prove useful to meet with all incoming freshman, sophomores and juniors to review the university requirements early. Staff could then help youth to plan the classes they should take each year. Careful course planning would give them more flexibility in their later higher education choices. Establishing yearly meetings with grade-specific cohorts may also encourage youth to believe higher education is an option for them and might also establish a positive peer culture for higher education. It might also be useful to invite YI alumni who are attending or have graduated from college to share their experiences or to serve as mentors on college-related issues. Providing parent meetings specifically related to course requirements and the college application process might also be useful since they could then also monitor class schedules. Helping parents to better understand the value of and

mechanisms to achieve higher education possibilities might ensure also additional support for youth to strive for higher education. To more fully understand the extent of services provided, the current individual tracking forms should be modified to include the dates or number of consultations done with each youth.