

ABSTRACT

COLLEGE PREPAREDNESS PROGRAM FOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS IN SOUTH LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA: A GRANT PROPOSAL

By

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The purpose of this project was to write a grant proposal to develop and fund a College Preparedness Program to educate students in South Los Angeles about college requirements, process and resources. An extensive literature review was conducted in order to examine the risk factors implementing college attendance for students in South Los Angeles and strategies utilized in the past to increase college enrollment. The Annenberg Foundation was selected as the funder for this program.

The proposed program would be offered to high school students enrolled at Youth Opportunities High School, located in the community of Watts in south Los Angeles. If funded, the program will aid students with college planning, preparedness and workshops. The overall goal of this program will be to increase high school students' knowledge about college, provide guidance and support to increase college enrollment. The actual submission and/or funding of this grant was not a requirement for the successful completion of the project.

COLLEGE PREPAREDNESS PROGRAM FOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS IN
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Problem

In a community known for high crime rates, gang activity and drug use, Watts, a community in South Los Angeles, California is the home to future scholars who are in great need of encouragement, educational skills and resources. For any population, including students living in Watts “school failure is not a random act” but a social injustice put upon students of communities who are disenfranchised and underprivileged (Martinez, DeGarmo & Eddy, 2004, p. 130). Disenfranchised communities, schools in particular, suffer the “consequence of a host of interacting influences that can set children on a trajectory toward a lifetime of difficulties” (Martinez et al., 2004, p. 130). Martinez et al. (2004) state that “School success is among the most important correlates of overall physical, mental, and social well-being” (p. 128). In order to help students accomplish their academic goals, it is important to provide them with the accurate support and resources.

A study measuring educational attainment in the United States, indicated that 85% of adults 25 years of age and over reported having at least a high school diploma or its equivalent; from that same population only 28% reported having a bachelor’s degree or

higher (Ryan & Siebens, 2012). The same study indicated that educational attainment was also influenced by the racial background of the individuals, as 89% of native-born students completed a high school diploma or equivalent, compared to 68% of foreign-born individuals (Ryan & Siebens, 2012). As of 2012, in the state of California 80% of adults completed high school or more while 29% obtained a bachelor's degree or more (Ryan & Siebens, 2012). The California Department of Education, Data Reporting Office reports that in the school year of 2011-2012, the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) graduation school rate was 65% (California Department of Education, Data Reporting Office, 2014). Of those students who graduated from LAUSD only 36.8% completed all courses required for admission to the University of California (UC) and/or California State University (CSU) system (California Department of Education, 2014). In comparison the 39.4% of graduating students from the county of Los Angeles had completed all courses required for admissions to the UC and/or CSU system (California Department of Education, 2014).

The LAUSD provides annual school report cards of each school under its jurisdiction; for the community of Watts, David Starr Jordan High School is the home school for most students. The annual report card for David Starr Jordan High School reports that in the academic year of 2012-2013, only 43% of students in the 9th and 10th grades completed the 55 credit requirement and 35% of juniors and seniors met the 110 credit requirement, with only 52% of students completing high school in four years (LAUSD, 2013). Students surveyed reported that 13% planned to attend a two-year college, 32% planned to attend a four-year college and 19% planned to attend graduate school (LAUSD, 2013). According to the 2010 Census, the community of Watts has a

population of 39.7% of high school graduates and a 3.3% of bachelor's degree graduates, and the median household income for residents is 27,602 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2011).

Price (2005) states that minorities and women, whose income is low in comparison to those of Whites and men, discover that higher education is the most reliable means for improving their socioeconomic position; in particular the income of African American women greatly increases as a result of additional schooling (Mizzell, 2000). According to Ryan and Siebens's (2012) study of educational attainment, individuals with high educational achievement are less likely to be unemployed: students who earn a bachelor's degree earn an average of 20,000 dollars more per year than those who are high school graduates.

Definition of Terms

College: For the purpose of this proposal, college will be defined as an institution that provides higher education leading to obtaining and not limited to an associate's degree, technical degree and/or bachelor's degree (California Community College Chancellor Office, 2013).

High school students: Refers to a student typically of the age of 14 to 19 years of age, who is currently in pursuit and working on a high school diploma. In LAUSD, high school students are required to complete a total of 230 class credits and pass the California High School Exit Exam, also known as the CHSEE (LAUSD, 2013).

Purpose of the Grant Proposal

The purpose of this project was to write a grant to fund a college preparedness program for Youth Opportunities High School, which is a part of the Los Angeles Educational Conservation Corps. The program will aid students with college planning,

college preparedness and workshops. The overall goal of this program will be to increase high school students' knowledge about college, provide guidance and support to increase college enrollment.

Program Design

The college preparedness program will provide planning, resources and guidance to successfully apply, attend and graduate college. With a population of approximately 100 students attending Youth Opportunities High School, a college counselor would be recruited to help meet students' individual needs, special circumstances and plan towards college admission. Student needs may range from special education placement, class requirements and credit recovery. Students with special circumstances may be identified as students with disabilities, of extreme poverty and out of home care. College planning needs consist of aid with college submissions, financial aid and course requirements. Research indicates that high school counselors greatly contribute to attaining the goal of increased college enrollment, which help provide programs and services that can assist students by individual planning (McKillip, Rawls & Barry, 2012).

College workshops from the program will provide students with the opportunity to have options after graduation. College workshops emphasizing financial literacy will give students an opportunity to learn the cost of college education and obtaining financial aid, which is an important component of any college preparation with the main purpose to increase student enrollment in college (Bergerson, 2009). College workshops will focus on financial aid, Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), types of higher education and colleges. Lastly, college planning for students will consist of obtaining A-G class requirements, ACT and SAT testing and high school exit exams.

Social Work Relevance

Social workers have the power to impact not only the high school students seeking the opportunity to prepare for college, but also service delivery and improve school practices that encourage college planning. Social workers can bring awareness of services needed to help educational administrators identify factors that influence the effectiveness of services when working with high school students and planning for college (McKillip et al., 2012). Advocacy is also important in a setting where social workers can help build a partnership between school staff, provide more resources and services to students (McKillip et al., 2012).

The National Association of Social Workers Code of Ethics (NASW) states that the social work profession enhances human well-being of all people, especially the needs and empowerment of people who are vulnerable, oppressed and living in poverty (NASW, 2014). High school students who are not given the opportunity to enhance their education beyond high school can be categorized as an injustice to their wellbeing, mainly because these students are disenfranchised by the academic institutions that service them. It is social workers responsibility to advocate, connect and empower the students who do not have the resources to reach their full potential, which is academically succeeding beyond high school.

Multicultural Relevance

Educational attainment is accessible for students in the United States regardless of race, religion, nationality, socioeconomic status or sexual orientation, however, there continues to be an increasing educational opportunity gap between minority students and socio-economic class backgrounds (Boswell, 2004). Regardless of racial or socio-

economic background all students should have an equal opportunity to be academically successful. Although the rate of minority students has significantly increased in accessing postsecondary education, there continues to be a correlation between inequality in educational opportunity and minority students (Boswell, 2004). Minority students who experience inequality in educational opportunity can be attributed to various factors such as limited resources, funding and lack of knowledge. As social workers it is important to have cultural knowledge of student needs as a group in order to provide advocacy, support and adequate resources.

Social workers must have cultural knowledge of student's needs in order to help close the educational gap, in particular social workers must be aware of the specific needs of students in the community of Watts in South Los Angeles face when attempting to continue their education after high school. Students in the community of Watts in South Los Angeles can face variation of barriers such as poverty, lack of educational services or interventions. Social workers must be aware of these barriers and have the adequate resources, support and advocacy in order to help students succeed academically beyond high school.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

The following literature review analyzes existing literature on topics related to higher education, high school graduation and educational policy changes. The chapter includes the diverse experiences students face while navigating the educational system on their paths to higher education. The chapter discusses in detail students' encounters with the drop out epidemic, poverty, academic barriers and post high school educational services. The chapter also includes literature discussing support systems placed to help students succeed academically like, the White House Initiative, strategic school settings, resourcing with community colleges, college ready strategies programs and interventions.

Federal Education Policy

It is important to understand the barriers students face when planning for a post-secondary education and successfully obtaining a degree. In 2010, the Obama Administration released the revised Blueprint to reauthorize the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), which stated a clear goal: "Every student should graduate from high school ready for college and career, regardless of their income, race, ethnic or language background, or disability status" (U.S. Department of Education, Office of Planning, Evaluating, and Policy, 2010, p. 3). The Administration's agenda initiated a revolution throughout the states increasing college and career readiness programs in educational institutions (U.S. Department of Education, Office of Planning, Evaluating, and Policy, 2010). However, it is important for the Administration to also

take into consideration factors that become barriers for students who participate in educational institutions following the ESEA.

Poverty

One important factor to take into consideration are students who experience poverty which can prevent proceeding with postsecondary education plans. A study conducted by the U.S. Department of Education (2012) indicated in the school year of 2007-2008, 28% of high school graduates from high poverty schools attended a four year college in comparison to the 52% of graduates from low poverty schools. Consequently, research suggests that children living in poverty have a higher likelihood to academically perform lower than average through elementary and high school, which can lead to completing school at lower than average rates (Lee & Burkman, 2002). Also, it is important to look at student disparities in graduation rates which negatively correlates with college planning and attendance in regards to poverty (U.S. Department of Education, 2012).

Students who live in poverty are prone to encounter societal and structural inequalities, in particular school-level socioeconomic status. School-level socioeconomic status (SES) can be described as an educational institution that experiences poverty amongst the school resources, policy and program deliverance. Research evidence has indicated that school-level socioeconomic status has a greater impact on a student's academic success than individual student level SES (Rumberger & Palardy, 2005). Studies report schools serving mostly minorities and lower income students tend to be organized and managed differently compared to those serving higher income students (Rumberger & Palardy, 2005). Schools with higher populations of low income and

minority students, including those with disabilities or limited English proficiency are less likely to make progress in the Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP), than schools with lower populations of those students (U.S. Department of Education, 2010). Sociostructural discrimination such as poverty, unequal access to educational institutions and racial separation can be a predicting factor in shaping academic success for all students (Hogrebe & Tate, 2010).

Students who live in low SES are at risk of not obtaining the adequate resources and programs to prepare for college. Low-income students are more likely to have parents without a post-secondary education; as a result, parents are less likely to provide their children with essential information and resources that can aid their path to college (Cates & Schaeffle, 2011). Unlike parents of high-SES, parents of low SES, who do not obtain a post-secondary education have a more difficult time discussing college plans with their children (Charles, Roscigno, & Torres, 2007). Parents of low-SES tend to focus on responsibilities that emphasize the basic needs of the child such as love, comfort and safety, while abandoning educational responsibilities (Lareau & Weininger, 2008). Although low-SES parents may express excitement and eagerness for their child's academic success, low-SES parents are more likely not to participate in a relationship with school officials (An, 2013). Low-SES parents tend to "display signs of intimidation and confusion when interacting" with school officials regarding their child's college planning (An, 2013, p. 409). Hence, low-SES parents are more inclined to minimize their participation and influence on helping their children with college planning (An, 2013). Ultimately, students whose parents are of low educational attainment are less likely to participate in advance curriculums (Cates & Schaeffle, 2011). In particular,

students with less than a high school diploma participated in a less than standard curriculum (Cates & Schaeffe, 2011).

Academic Barriers

High school students face several barriers that are out of their control when planning for college enrollment. In 2013, researchers have long examined the programmatic experiences and outcomes of students of color and low income as part of a larger national trend of low college readiness (Castro, 2013). For example, first generation college students that completed their post education and attain their credentials, completed their education at lower rates than their counterparts (Núñez & Cuccaro-Alamin, 1998). Although there are controlling factors that might affect first generation college students, such as socio-economic status, institution and attendance; first generation students still manage to have a negative effect on continuation and completion of post-education (Núñez & Cuccaro-Alamin, 1998). Like first generation college students, students who are nonnative speakers of English also encounter problems completing college. Even with additional academic support, students with limited English proficiency continue to demonstrate continued lower academic achievements and educational attainment than native English speaking students (Klein, Bugarin, Beltranena, & McArthur, 2004). First generation students do not have the knowledge needed to effectively transition from high school to a college institution (U.S. Department of Education, 2012).

An important influence on high school students completing a college education is their economic status and financial need. Many students seek part-time employment while in high school and summer employment may not affect academic achievement

(Singh & Ozturk, 2000). However, in the same study indicated a negative effect on students' school work while working during the regular school year (Singh & Ozturk, 2000). Additionally, this study found that students who were working part-time took fewer mathematics and science courses, with an overall lower academic math achievement (2000).

Students' determination to continue with their academic career beyond high school is influenced by personal and environmental factors like family and community expectations (U.S. Department of Education, 2012). Students who experience retention, suspension or expulsion tend to have poor academic outcomes (U.S. Department of Education, 2012). Students' negative behaviors have lasting effects on their school experience which can lead to truancy (Ringwalt, Ennett, & Johnson, 2003), violent behaviors (Nansel, Overpeck, Haynie, Ruan, & Scheidt, 2003), poor academic performance and dropping out (MacMillan & Hagan, 2004). Students with low academic achievement are linked to alcohol, cigarette and drug use, and they are more likely to have truancy and other discipline issues (Bryant, Schulenberg, O'Malley, Bachman, & Johnston, 2003).

Dropout Epidemic

A serious problem educational institutions and educators face regarding student academic success is the impactful decision a student makes to discontinue his or her educational plan. There are various reasons why students decide to quit school; motives for quitting school can range from environmental, personal or societal issues influencing the student's decision. For example problems at home, urgent financial need and unplanned pregnancies (Messacar & Oreopoulos, 2013). Other students who drop out

claimed to be unprepared to complete the high school curriculum (Messacar & Oreopoulos, 2013). However, a large number of dropouts admit to be unmotivated and uninspired to attend class (Messacar & Oreopoulos, 2013). According to Swanson (2004) about 32% of America's high school students do not obtain a regular high school diploma on time, which is usually within 4 years.

Before deciding to drop out, some of these students have troublesome experiences while in school. Students who eventually drop out tend to be more truant, have academic problems and have failing grades throughout their academic career in comparison to their graduating peers (Messacar & Oreopoulos, 2013). Caregivers of dropouts are more likely to be less encouraging and helpful with school work (Messacar & Oreopoulos, 2013). When the student decides to leave school, the student feels a disconnect and lack of support between his or her caregivers and teachers (Messacar & Oreopoulos, 2013).

When students decide to abandon their academics the consequences of this decision can translate into high social impacts such as costs for incarceration, public assistance programs and foregone tax income (Sterns & Glennie, 2006). Research indicates that contact with the juvenile justice system increases dropout rates (Hirschfield, 2009). For example, students who were first arrested in the first 2 years of high school are 6 to 8 times more likely than were no-arrested students to drop out of high school (Hirschfield, 2009). Around 59% of African American males who abandon their education early are more likely to be imprisoned by the age of 34 compared to 11% of non-Hispanic males who also abandon their education (Pettit & Western, 2004). High school dropouts also earn less money, are less healthy, less likely to be married and unhappier than a high school graduates (Messacar & Oreopoulos, 2013).

High school dropouts also experience more negative social outcomes (Messacar & Oreopoulos, 2013). The General Social Survey reports 33% of recent female high school dropouts have children as teenagers, 13% of dropouts are separated or divorced, 32% are unhealthy and 22% are unhappy (Messacar & Oreopoulos, 2013). Ultimately adults who dropped out of high school express regret leaving school without obtaining their high school diploma (Messacar & Oreopoulos, 2013). High school dropouts earn about \$10,000 less per year than a high school graduate (Obama, 2010). The U.S. economy spends hundreds of billions of dollars on high school dropouts over a course of a life time in lower wages and public assistance programs (Obama, 2010).

Parental Involvement

For high school students to be academically successful beyond post high school education, parental involvement is fundamental in their educational path. Studies have shown that high amounts of parental involvement enhance the academic performance among children which leads to increased aspirations to enroll to college (Brueck, Mazza, & Tousignant, 2012). A study conducted in 2011, where parental involvement and academic success was measured, indicated a positive association between parental involvement and academic success (Brueck et al., 2012). Furthermore, the results of the study indicates as parental involvement increased in high school education, academic success also increased in college (Brueck et al., 2012).

When working with high school students in a college preparedness program, parental involvement is essential for the student to succeed. In a research study examining parental involvement and child outcomes results indicated that parental involvement is related to students' likelihood to achieve higher grades and lower rates of

behavioral problems (Zick, Bryant, & Osterbacka, 2001). A separate research study conducted by Kim and Schneider concluded that students are more likely to apply and participate in post-secondary education when parents have discussions with their children regarding college planning and academic matters (2005).

School Policies

School policies and administrators can offer current and graduating students assistance in creating an academic climate that will encourage students to pursue post-secondary education. Schools that provide students with the opportunity to take advanced coursework, can be an advantage for college perseverance (U.S. Department of Education, 2012). Additional assistance that can be provided to students is high school guidance counseling which has historically promoted college enrollment for underrepresented students (U.S. Department of Education, 2012). McDonough's research findings state an association between students' consistent contact with guidance counselors, high academic achievement, college ambition and financial aid knowledge. The U.S. Department of Education reports a strong correlation of positive relationships between academic marks and involvement with school sponsored extra-curricular activities (2012). Research indicates that student participation in school extra-curricular activities increases students' sense of attachment to the school, minimizing the possibility of school failure and dropping out (U.S. Department of Education, 2012). Another study indicates students engaged in school activities are more prone to experience higher literacy, test scores, grade point average and yearn for post-secondary education (Shulruf, Tumen, & Tolley, 2008).

Special Student Populations

Academic success among high school students can be jeopardized, especially for students who face educational challenges such as specific learning or other disabilities (U.S. Department of Education, 2012). Students with disabilities can struggle more to meet academic standards, score low on standardized tests and graduate with a regular diploma at lower rates than other students without a disability (U.S. Department of Education, 2012). Other research shows that students with disabilities such as a learning disability (LD) or attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) that pursue higher education do not complete degree requirements at the same rates as their counterparts who do not have a disability (Hamblet, 2014). Nonetheless high schools can prepare students for the educational transition to college by informing them about college disability programs and academic expectations (Hamblet, 2014).

Students with Disabilities

Once students with disabilities enroll and start attending college they are unable to keep the same pace in their academics towards earning their degree like the rest of the student population who do not have a disability (Hamblet, 2014). College students with disabilities have reported having difficulties with note taking, organization, study skills, test taking and preparation (Hadley, 2007). Especially students diagnosed with ADHD report having difficulties due to deficits with organization skills, academic coping strategies, focusing and sustaining attention (Norvilitis, Sun, & Zhang, 2010). Although most students need to make adjustments when starting college, students with disabilities have a more difficult time adjusting to the changes due to their disability (Hamblet, 2014). Due to their disabilities, students with a LD and ADHD struggle with learning,

concentration and planning, which are crucial for academic success and new environment (Hamblet, 2014).

Students with disabilities also face changes in the disability service system utilized at the college level (Hamblet, 2014). When students enroll in college, they do not automatically qualify for services under the disabilities service system because the services are governed by several federal laws and regulations compared to high school (Hamblet, 2014). When entering college, students must apply for and request services on their own and provide the documentation verifying their disability in order to receive services (Wolanin & Steele, 2004). If students fail to apply for services when entering college, any poor or failing grades on assignments or exams will not be excused if they are later eligible for services (Hamblet, 2014). Once students submit the required documents confirming they are eligible for services, they are typically faced with problems that range from documents not meeting college testing guidelines or the evaluation date is expired (Hamblet, 2014). Many students whose documentation does not meet the guidelines are forced to pay for costly testing to get the documents needed (Hamblet, 2014). Students who are unable to pay for the testing required usually try to get through college without the services needed to aid their LD and ADHD (Wolanin & Steele, 2004).

Minority Students

Additionally, students who can be identified as minorities, of low income backgrounds and undocumented seem to be a part of disproportionate educational practices throughout all levels of education (Darling-Hammond, 2010). Much like students with disabilities, these disproportionate educational practices are examples of

structural barriers and challenges that the federal government must address to increase the college readiness agenda and educational attainment for underserved populations (Castro, 2013).

Report findings indicate that minority students are less likely to be prepared to enroll into college (Jacobson, 2004). A report released by the ACT, “Crisis at the Core: Preparing All Students for College and Work” indicates only 22% of the 1.2 million students who took the ACT were ready for college coursework in English, math and science (Castro, 2004). The same report indicates students of color are less prepared to enter college. Results of the report state Native American and Hispanic Americans are about half as likely to be ready for college biology and African Americans are 5 times less likely to be ready for college biology (Castro, 2004). A small number of students who are of African American, Hispanic American and Native American descent took the required 4 years of English and 3 years of math, science and social studies each in comparison to their White and Asian American peers (Castro, 2004).

College enrollment continues to be at low rates for Hispanic students because they are less likely to be academically prepared to attend college and are less likely to enroll into college when they are qualified to do so (Cates & Schaeffle, 2011). Hispanic students who are academically prepared are less likely to take college entrance exams (Berkner & Chavez, 1997). Even high achieving Hispanic students score lower in their SAT exams compare to their White counterparts (Gandara, 2005), which reflects in part the nonexistence of social and cultural capital (Contreras, 2005). Students of Hispanic descent are also less likely to have the access and cultural capital needed for college enrollment, which can be crucial for enrollment (Cates & Schaeffle, 2011).

The U.S. educational system continues to have considerable obstacles to equal educational opportunity (White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for African Americans, 2014). African American students continue to experience lack of equal access to effective teachers and principals, safe schools and college-preparatory courses (White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for African Americans, 2014). African American students also excessively experience school related discipline and referrals to special education (White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for African Americans, 2014). The report also indicates that more than a third of African American students are unable to graduate from high school on time (White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for African Americans, 2014). While only 4% of African American graduates interested in college are enrolled in college-ready courses (White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for African Americans, 2014).

White House Initiative

In particular, high school education is one of the nation's hot topics since President Barack Obama introduced the High School Redesign initiative. The U.S. Department of Education reports that President Obama's goal to lead the world with college completion by the end of this decade requires a new investment and concept to renovate the nation's high schools, in order to better prepare students for an innovative and global economy (2013). The initiative is designed to encouraged school districts and other partners to utilize existing federal, state and local services to change American's youth high school experience by redesigning the whole school effort (U.S. Department of Education, 2013). The purpose of the redesign is to challenge educational institutions to place curriculums that are more rigorous, applicable and focused on real-world

experiences (U.S. Department of Education 2013). Ultimately providing students with personalized learning based on career and college exploration, while graduating with college-level coursework or credit (U.S. Department of Education, 2013).

The High School Redesign Initiative's main purpose is to promote rethinking of learning experiences and challenge schools to change to a more modern curriculum. A part of the initiative is to provide academic and wrap-around support services for students which are tutoring, mentoring and support (U.S. Department of Education, 2013). With wrap-around support services, all students, in particular low income, English learners and students with disabilities are able to successfully graduate from high school and continue on to a college education (U.S. Department of Education, 2013). Also the initiative offers students the opportunity to receive postsecondary credit while enrolled in high school by college-level courses which include dual enrollment and advance placement courses (U.S. Department of Education, 2013). The initiative additionally states that schools should also provide high-quality career, college exploration and counseling for students (U.S. Department of Education, 2013). Students have the opportunity to prepare for postsecondary education when provided training requirements, financial aid options and success skills (U.S. Department of Education, 2013). The Redesigned High School Initiative's main focus is to move from a traditional seat and timed schooling to an interactive individualized curriculum, where knowledge and skills emphasizes college and careers (U.S. Department of Education, 2013).

College Ready Strategies Programs

It is imperative to provide high school seniors with different skill sets that can aid them in the transition from high school into college. One factor that has been shown to

aid high school students' transition well into college was dual enrollment. Dual enrollment is a fast-tracked program that permits students to enroll in college courses while still attending high school (Black Board Institute, 2010). For many high students, dual enrollment provides an opportunity to earn college credit at low cost or for free in some states (Hoffman, Vargas, & Santos, 2008). Participants in dual enrollment programs are exposed to college materials, which some professionals believe can better prepare students for college coursework (An, 2013). The dual enrollment program's main focus is to increase the importance of studying course subjects while still attending high school (An, 2013). The program also helps decrease senioritis, referred as graduating seniors disengagement in their studies before graduation, which can greatly affect their final grades (An, 2013). Dual enrollment helps reduce senioritis by providing high school students challenging coursework and incentives which can result in a level of motivation and commitment (An, 2013). Another added benefit to dual enrollment programs is, participants have the opportunity to experience college in a more realistic matter and replace any vague concepts of college (An, 2013). Participants in dual enrollment programs are able to determine how much college coursework they can handle, while other students without proper preparation need to catch up or prepare themselves without any guidance (An, 2013). However some critics state that dual enrollment program courses are more rigorous and prestigious than traditional programs (Black Board Institute, 2010). Despite critics of dual enrollment programs, enrollees are able to earn college credit while in high school, at the same time providing students the momentum into the next transition (An, 2013). Furthermore, studies indicate dual enrollees are more academically successful in contrast to students who do not participate

in the program (An, 2013). Other research results state that participation in dual enrollment programs are positively correlated with college grade point average, persistence and degree attainment (Allen & Dadgar, 2012).

College Ready Interventions

In order to help increase college enrollment rates in ethnic groups who are underrepresented on college campuses, college preparation or early intervention programs are utilized to help students plan for a postsecondary education (Perna & Titus, 2005). College preparedness programs are intended to encourage educational success to disadvantage students by offering services that provide skills, knowledge, confidence, aspirations and preparation required to enroll and graduate college (Perna & Titus, 2005).

In a study evaluating college ready programs, Cates and Schaeffle (2011) found several important elements that help promote, increase and measure program effectiveness in college enrollment. Cates and Schaeffle indicate college tours, visits, fairs, encouraging rigorous coursework completion, parental involvement and program deliverance since the eighth grade increase college readiness. These researchers also added college exposure, promoting academic skills, parent assistance in financial aid documentation and involvement in student activities, were also important elements to college ready program effectiveness (Cates & Schaeffle, 2011). Results from the study indicates students who participated in more advising hours completed more college track classes, which is a part of the element of encouraging rigorous coursework (Cates & Schaeffle, 2011). The study also indicates students who were not engaged in advising or college visits were less likely to take the PSAT (Cates & Schaeffle, 2011).

Participants from the study conducted by Cates and Schaeffle indicated the activities intended to welcome them in the college environment and providing them with task specific information about college and college planning was the most significant influence in their decision to attend college (2011). This study also indicated that some elements such as tutoring and mentoring were not significantly related to college readiness nor did students in the study indicate that these elements helped in their decision to attend college (Cates & Schaeffle, 2011). Ultimately, this study indicated that all of the elements evaluated important to different aspects of college readiness (Cates & Schaeffle, 2011). It is important to focus on college campus visits and providing college information to at risk students to help increase college awareness and enrollment (Cates & Schaeffle, 2011).

Strategic School Settings

Students who have disengaged from their academics need to enroll in an academic institution or program that can engage, motivate and help prepare them for college. There are a growing number of drop-out recovery schools and programs that believe they can help prepare students succeed in college (Steinberg & Allen, 2011). These recovery schools are able to help students who are significantly behind on their academics by implementing an accelerated and compressed high school program combined with college ready courses (Steinberg & Allen, 2011). This method of a college head start accelerated program can help low income and at risk students stay involve in high school and achieve a successful postsecondary education (Steinberg & Allen, 2011).

“Back on Track” is a template developed to help schools and programs that serve off track or out-of-school students get back on track with their academics and adapt the

early college design (Steinberg & Allen, 2011). The template is designed to address three core elements that will help students succeed: Enriched Preparation, Postsecondary Bridging and Postsecondary Support. Enriched Preparation focuses on college-ready standards with courses emphasizing high-level reading and writing with a college going culture (Steinberg & Allen, 2011). Postsecondary Bridging concentrates on intense coursework, counseling and assistance in navigating the transition to college (Steinberg & Allen, 2011). Postsecondary Support is categorized as a continuant support with on-site case management to connect students with resources and career goals (Steinberg & Allen, 2011). The template is designed for students who are academically behind or out of school and beat the national odds in the total of graduates who successful enroll in postsecondary education (Steinberg & Allen, 2011).

College Prerequisite Courses

For high school students to become academically successful in postsecondary education, it is important that the high school education being offered can prepare the student for college courses. In particular, students who are from ethnic-minority groups and low income families who enroll in college succeed at a lower rate than White or wealthier peers (Gewertz, 2010). Still, there are new studies that indicate that students with low rates of success in college are able to close the gaps greatly by effectively preparing them for college (Gewertz, 2010). A study conducted by the ACT, “Mind the Gaps” researched revealed that completing a strong core curriculum during high school can improve the chances of the student enrolling in college (Gewertz, 2010). College ready courses are defined by the ACT as four years of English and at least three years of mathematics, science and social science. The study also indicates students obtaining

college ready scores in the ACT exam can be associated with good grades and credit earning college credit courses (Gewertz, 2010). At the same time students that take the minimum courses directed to fulfill college entrance requirements and the ACT exam does not ensure students will be ready for college (Jacobson, 2004).

A report by the ACT, “Crisis at the Core: Preparing all Students for College and Work” states college ready courses in high school may not be difficult enough (Jacobson, 2004). Despite meeting high school requirements for graduation and college enrollment, many students may start college underprepared for the coursework (An, 2013). High schools need to increase the quality and intensity of college ready courses being provided to students (Jacobson, 2004). Students that complete rigorous high school core courses demonstrate higher perseverance geared towards postsecondary academics, in comparison to students who completed lower or average core courses (U.S. Department of Education, 2012). Inadequate preparation of high school education is the motive why students who aspire to go to college do not succeed or do not enroll at all (Gewertz, 2010). It is important to create a strong supportive high school experience for disadvantage students (Gewertz, 2010): the ACT is prepared to work with school districts across the country to assess courses and help improve them (Jacobson, 2004).

Students’ Perceptions on College Ready Programs

An approach that can be utilized to improve academic performance and college readiness is to offer high students the college experience before postsecondary entrance (Iatarola et al. 2011). College preparedness programs such as Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness of Undergraduate Programs (GEAR UP) provide high school students essential elements that focus on increasing college enrollment; one crucial element is

college exposure. GEAR UP utilizes college exposure as part of the program development which helps participants feel welcomed and increases familiarity of college campuses and college resources (Cates & Schaeffle, 2011).

The American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) has suggested community colleges can be utilized and redirected to focus on college readiness with high school students (Castro, 2013). Since community colleges provide open enrollment, commitment to serving diverse populations and providing developmental and remedial education (Cohen & Brawer, 2008), the educational institution is well equipped to offer college readiness efforts (Castro, 2013). In particular, the AACC recommends community colleges and high schools to work together in order to help increase college readiness (Castro, 2013). The AACC suggest community colleges are able to provide high schools clear definitions of college readiness, where community colleges can take an active role in creating a college going culture, creating college success skills, increasing dual enrollment and planned approaches to accelerate college progress (American Association of Community Colleges, 2012). Pre-college exposure combined with college ready courses offers students the opportunity to carry over skills and aspirations that develop before college entrance rather than restarting at each new level of education (Bound et al., 2010).

Strategies to Help College Students in School

Due to the high dropout rates in many post-secondary institutions throughout the United States, academic institutions have adopted several interventions to decrease student dropout rates (Barefoot, 2004). Interventions utilized in academic institutions range depending on the type of institution, student needs and resources available

(Barefoot, 2004). One intervention widely used in academic institutions is out of class retention programs which are designed to target first-year students (Barefoot, 2004). Retention programs can be found in clubs, organizations, residential programs, campus orientations, community service and events that promote school spirit (Barefoot, 2004). Recent research indicates that college activities with retention programs have a positive correlation between student participation, formation of peer relationships and group affiliation (Astin, 1993).

Many college institutions place a higher emphasis of retention programs on at-risk students (Barefoot, 2004). College institutions provide early alert programs that focus on students who score poorly on assessments in the first semester in college (Barefoot, 2002); these students will be referred to tutoring or counseling services (Barefoot, 2004). Major colleges provide students of underrepresented groups such as economically and educationally disadvantage with special assistance, which includes financial, personal and academic (Barefoot, 2004). However, colleges targeting underrepresented groups might start directing services geared to the general population of student body. Since dropping out of college has many causes average and above average students can also possibly benefit from special assistance during the difficult time of transition to post-secondary education (Barefoot, 2004).

To help decrease the percentages of college student dropout rates, colleges have begun to appoint a retention director (Barefoot, 2004). By providing retention directors, college institutions are able to have personnel directly responsible for placing focus on retention of students (Barefoot, 2004). Retention directors have the authority to

effectively organize resources and respond to wide a variety of student and instructor needs and concerns (Barefoot, 2004).

Another intervention used to increase college student retention is first-year seminars (Barefoot, 2002). Although first-year seminars can vary depending on the academic institution, the goal is to increase social and academic involvement of first year students and increase student retention (Tinto, 1993). The first-year seminar will include content that focuses on study skills, time management and utilizing campus resources which include the library, learning assistance centers and technology (Barefoot, 2004). Studies focused on campus-specific interventions had shown that first-year seminars have been found to be positively correlated to academic determination (Barefoot, 2004).

A curricular change that has also helped diminish college dropout rates is Supplemental Instruction (SI) (Barefoot, 2004). The main goal of SI is to provide linkage services to students with a supplemental class session for at high risk courses where at least 30% of students earn a fail or withdrawal, facilitated by upper-level graduate student (Barefoot, 2004). The SI supplemental class session provides students the opportunity to review the difficult content and clarify misconceptions (Barefoot, 2004). Students' improvement in higher grades and retention can be positively correlated with SI sessions (Martin & Arendale, 1993). However, there is a current growing trend within college curriculum that has shown the most significant retention improvements are learning communities (Barefoot, 2004). Learning communities are designed to link class courses with school curriculums (Barefoot, 2004). Instructors that teach the linked courses will collaborate in connecting course content, utilize themes, link courses of remedial English or English as a Second Language to regular academic course (Barefoot, 2004).

Resourcing with Community Colleges

Students who are unable to enroll into four year universities right after high school completion, have the opportunity to continue higher education in a community college. More importantly, community colleges are an important point of access for students of color to obtain a baccalaureate education (Bowell, 2004). However, it is also important to note that with a community college level education there are many policy barriers that affect student educational attainment. In collaboration with the American Association of State Colleges and Universities, the American Association of Community Colleges hosted a round table discussion about barriers and policies that can help aid student success in community colleges.

During the round table discussion one major issue that arose was student transfer from community college to university. A report generated from the round table discussion, there is a non-existing state level coordination between institutions which ultimately leads to inconsistent statewide educational policies and barriers for students intending to move from community college to university (Boswell, 2004). In many states funding and policies provide very few incentives that encourage a collaboration between educational institutions that help aid student transfer (Boswell, 2004). An example of the miscommunication between institutions is the high school curriculums that do not prepare students for college courses, which causes students' to perform poorly in college entrance exams (Boswell, 2004). Due to students not being college course ready, they spend limited eligibility time for financial aid on remedial courses that are not applicable for college transfer courses, prolonging the transfer process (Boswell, 2004). Another important note on the institutional communication is inadequate or non-existent systems

that track student records from high school to community college and on to university are extremely difficult to provide feedback on students' performance (Boswell, 2004).

Although the community college system is in great need for improving, policy makers and institutional leaders are working together to help build bridges over the barriers students face. For instance, an increasing number of states have adapted new policies that mandate two-year colleges and four-year universities to collaborate in determining the courses needed for the first two years of the baccalaureate degree (Boswell, 2004). Policy makers are also working on preparing students while they are still enrolled in the K-12 system with early assessment tests and requiring students to pass high-stakes tests to graduate (Boswell, 2004).

College Dropout

Students who drop out of college institutions may be affected differently depending on the student maturity level, college readiness or personal feelings about college (Barefoot, 2004). Dropping out of college may be permanent for some students, especially for students who do not think college is important, some students drop out of college to prioritize academics or career goals, deal with personal problems or mature (Barefoot, 2004). In the United States, the highest dropout rates occur at two-year colleges like community colleges that prepare almost one-half of undergraduate students (Barefoot, 2004).

Predictors that influence college students to dropout before completing their degree can range from academic preparation, socio-economic status, family involvement and being female (Choy, 2002). However, an important characteristic that students need to succeed in post-education is commitment to a specific institution or to a personal goal

(Tinto, 1993). Many prestigious colleges with strong academic reputations, winning athletic teams and selective admissions tend to have high level of student commitment (Barefoot, 2004). Poor academic preparation is a major factor of college dropouts, however in the United States the majority of student college dropouts is not due to academic failure (Barefoot, 2004). For example, students doing well academically drop out of college due to boredom, lack of academic challenge or poor institutional fit (Tinto, 1990). Also, college students may decide to drop out of college because of financial problems, failure to connect with school social groups, general dissatisfaction and desire to transfer to another college (Barefoot, 2004).

Summary

There are various barriers such poverty, parental involvement, special student populations and school policies that prevent students from successfully continuing their education beyond high school graduation, however with the adequate resources, support and guidance students are able to reach their academic goals beyond high school. The college preparedness program is designed to provide high school students with the support such as initiatives, college ready interventions and strategic school settings.

CHAPTER 3

METHODS

Target Population

The target population for this program will be current high school students at Youth Opportunities High School. Youth Opportunities High School serves approximately 100 students every school year, who are former students of the local public school system who have many unexcused absences, are significantly behind on credits and have behavior problems. Youth Opportunities High School student population majority are 16 and 17 years old; with approximately 56% of the student body identifying as Hispanic and 44% as African American. Students will be recruited for program participation based on grade level, educational need and referrals by school administrators (Los Angeles Conservation Corps, 2015).

Host Agency Description

The host agency is the Los Angeles Conservation Corps, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that provides at-risk young adults and school-aged youth opportunities for success through job skills training, education and work experience with an emphasis on conservation and service projects that benefit the community. Since the establishment of the organization in 1986, the Los Angeles Conservation Corps has become a national leader in youth and workforce development and alternative education for inner-city youth/young adults (Los Angeles Conservation Corps, 2014).

Although known for their environmental and conservation work, one important component to the Los Angeles Conservation Corps are the educational programs. As an independent charter school approved by the Nevada County Office of Education in partnership with the Los Angeles Education Corps, the LACC is able to offer high school diploma programs accredited by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (Los Angeles Conservation Corps, 2014). In 2000, Youth Opportunities High School was founded as a result of the growing need for educational and supportive services for young people from the South Los Angeles, California community of Watts. Youth Opportunities High School provides students with a small setting classroom, emphasizing core subjects focusing on the California High School Exit Exam, as well as accelerated credit recovery program. A letter of agency support for the project can be found in Appendix C.

Potential Funding Source Identification and Selection Strategies

In order to identify potential funding sources for this grant, several foundations that promoted education, college planning and at risk youth were explored. Databases such as the Grantsmanship Center, Center for Non-Profit Management and the Long Beach Non-Profit Partnership were searched. Furthermore, search for potential funding sources was conducted in other websites such as the State of California and the U.S. Department of Education, as well as the search engine Google with key terms including *education, college planning, graduation requirements and at risk youth.*

As a result of the search, three potential foundations were identified: (a) California Community Foundation: Educational Grant, (b) Weingart Foundation and (c) Annenberg Foundation.

The California Community Foundation (CCF): Education Grant program was considered due to CCF's goal to address disparities in student achievement by increasing academic scores in math and literacy in low-income, minority and English learner students in Los Angeles County. The CCF also believes that the future generation depends on the prosperity and strength of well educated workers. The grant's goals and strategies are to promote parental engagement in their children's reading and learning, improve teacher quality and improve organizational learning and capacity to self-reflect. The average award granted ranges from \$50,000 to \$150,000. This funder was not selected because the education grant focuses on pre-kindergarten through 5th grade support only; thus, a high school does not meet the criteria (California Community Foundation, 2014).

The Weingart Foundation, founded in 1951, is a private, nonprofit grant making foundation that offers grants and other support to help improve nonprofit organizations that can provide effective services in areas of health, human services and education. The Foundation provides priority funding to programs that serve people who are economically disadvantaged and underserved. The Foundation is specifically interested in applications that purposely address the needs of low-income children and youth, older adults, and people affected by disabilities and homelessness. The Weingart Foundation was considered as a funding source, however the guidelines for the application process indicates that a Letter of Inquiry (LOI) is needed thus, this foundation was not selected (The Weingart Foundation, 2014).

The Annenberg Foundation, is a family foundation founded by Walter H. Annenberg. The Annenberg Foundation supports the worldwide community through its

“grant making, technical assistance and direct charitable activities” (The Annenberg Foundation, 2015). The Foundation largely awards grant proposals that involve arts, culture, humanities, animal welfare, civic & community, environment, education, human health & wellness and military veterans. Funding priority is placed on nonprofits serving residents in the five-county region of Greater Los Angeles, which include Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino and Ventura Counties. Grants funds can range from \$10,000 to \$100,000, and the average size of funds were \$80,688 in 2013 (The Annenberg Foundation, 2015). The foundation was selected because it supports the college preparedness program proposal of education, funds organizations servicing in the Los Angeles area and does not require a letter of inquiry.

Potential Sources of Information

Promoting higher education in academic institutions where communities are disenfranchised and suffer from poverty is imperative. In order to break the cycle of poverty, youth need to be empowered with the skills, academic tools and resources to succeed beyond high school. The grant writer not only discussed the need of a college preparedness program with the principal at Youth Opportunities High School (YO), but also interned at the school for a year. While interning at YO High, the grant writer witnessed the many barriers students faced while planning for post-high school education. During internship placement the grant writer meet with students to discuss college planning; for many students this was the first attempt to plan for future academics. The school principal reported that many students enrolled in the high school struggle to find supportive programs and resources that help aid with college planning (J. Hutcheson, personal communication, June 6, 2014). Although the staff and the principal

attempt to work with students who are interested in education beyond high school, it is difficult to serve all enrolled students with college planning services. Due to various reasons some students do not receive the adequate services when completing high school and planning for college.

The grant writer utilized information databases such as; (a) U.S. Department of Education (<http://www.ed.gov>) for information regarding legislative and policy changes made in education, (b) U.S. Census (<http://www.census.gov>) statistics on educational levels, (c) LAUSD (<http://home.lausd.net>) high school completion rates and college enrollment from LAUSD students and (d) Los Angeles Conservation Corps (<http://www.lacorps.org>). These websites provided information regarding graduation and college enrollment rates among the population being targeted. In addition, scholarly and peer reviewed journals such as the Journal of Research on Adolescence and New Directions on Higher Education were analyzed to gather information on the thesis topic.

CHAPTER 4

THE ANNENBERG FOUNDATION APPLICATION

This section contains the Annenberg Foundation grant application. The following content is included: Proposal Narrative, Project Description, Visionary Leadership, Impact, Innovation, Population Served, Organizational Information, Partnerships, Goals, Objectives and Outcomes, Program Evaluation, Line Item Budget and Time Line. Due to privacy concerns, information such as financial audits, case flow statements, and executive staff names and affiliations will be excluded. This application was completed for academic purposes.

Proposal Narrative

The purpose of this project was to write a grant to fund a college preparedness program for Youth Opportunities High School, which is a part of the Los Angeles Educational Conservation Corps. The program will aid students with college planning, college preparedness and workshops. The overall goal of this program will be to increase high school students' knowledge about college, provide guidance and support to increase college enrollment.

Project Description

The program will aid students with college planning, college preparedness and workshops. The overall goal of this program will be to increase high school students' knowledge about college, provide guidance and support to increase college enrollment.

The college preparedness program will provide planning, resources and guidance to successfully apply, attend and graduate college. With a population of approximately 100 students attending Youth Opportunities High School, a college counselor would be recruited to help meet student's individual needs, special circumstances and plan towards college admission. Student needs may range from special education placement, class requirements and credit recovery. Students with special circumstances may be identified as students with disabilities, of extreme poverty and out of home care. College planning needs consist of aid with college submissions, financial aid and course requirements. Research indicates that high school counselors greatly contribute to attaining the goal of increased college enrollment, which help provide programs and services that can assist students by individual planning (McKillip, Rawls & Barry, 2012).

College workshops from the program will provide students with the opportunity to have options after graduation. College workshops emphasizing financial literacy will give students an opportunity to learn the cost of college education and obtaining financial aid, which is an important component of any college preparation with the main purpose to increase student enrollment in college (Bergerson, 2009). College workshops will focus on financial aid/FAFSA, types of higher education and colleges. Lastly, college planning for students will consist of obtaining A-G class requirements, ACT/SAT testing and high school exit exams.

Visionary Leadership

Currently the Los Angeles Education Conservation Corps (LAECC) has a Board of Directors made of five members, including the Executive Director. There has not been any leadership changes within the past ten years within the Board of Directors. The

LAECC Board of Directors believes in an organizational visionary leadership style of providing an educational future for at risk youth living in an urban setting.

The Executive Director in particular operates the organization with the motto “My future matters” in regards to the students in the Educational Conservation Corps. The Executive Director believes in providing young people an opportunity to create a future path towards education with an emphasis on environmental conservation. The Executive Director has worked with LACC in some capacity since 1991; his main role is to run the LACC's charter schools and work closely with the teachers to create and refine an accredited student-centered high school diploma program. The Executive Director has an extensive education background, and has served on many nonprofit Boards.

Additional important visionary leadership involved with the success of YO students is provided by the Director of Education/school principal and the Dean of Students. The Director of Education believes in providing the organization a dynamic and enthusiastic leadership style, where hard work and commitment is valued. The Director of Education has a tremendous amount of success and experience in designing, implementing and maintaining non-profit programs that serve at risk youth populations.

The Dean of Students believes that everyone, especially in the educational setting should work as a team and have common views on the culture of the school. The Dean of Students has previously worked in several school settings in management teams and as direct service staff.

YO high school also has a supportive staff that provides direct services to the student body. There are approximately 13 staff members providing direct and macro

services for YO students. Approximately five to eight volunteers contribute 2000 hours annually.

Impact

The proposed program will have a positive influence on the community of Watts located in South Los Angeles, where many of the participants live. The program will be able to provide students with the necessary tools to graduate from high school and continue to higher education. Systematic change is possible within the community by empowering the youth with education. Research indicates college graduates are more marketable, have better health and a financially stable (U.S. Department of Education, 2012.)

Innovation

The program will establish a new practice of education planning for students attending YO High School, but also improve the success rates for a population of students accustomed to academic failure. Participants of the program have a history of academic failure, where traditional school settings were unable to help the students succeed academically. Along with the YO High School curriculum and this program, students will successfully graduate high school and further their education. The program will establish a new practice at YO High School, by providing students with graduation planning and college preparedness.

The program being proposed is innovative to the school system and the students participating due to the opportunities, skills and academic development provided. Students who participate in the program will be able to enhance their education beyond high school, by improving career opportunities, lifestyle and overall wellbeing.

Furthermore, the program can improve the community by enriching the citizens with education, opportunities to progress and break the cycle of poverty. Ultimately the program can help create a road of academic success for students at YO, as well as an atmosphere of a college going school versus a credit recovery school. The program is innovated due to its design targeting YO high school student population and the information will be provided to them exclusively.

Population Served

The population served for this program will be current high school students at Youth Opportunities High School. Youth Opportunities High School serves approximately 100 students every school year, who are former students in the local public school system who have many unexcused absences, significant course credit deficits, and behavior problems. Youth Opportunities High School student population majority are 16 and 17 years old; with approximately 56% of the student body identifying as Hispanic and 44% as African American. Students will be recruited for program participation based on grade level, educational need and referrals by school administrators. The LACC provides services for youth in Los Angeles inner-city communities, Youth Opportunities High School resides in the Service Planning Area six (SPA 6).

Organizational Information

The Los Angeles Conservation Corps (LACC) was founded on April 16, 1986 by Mickey Kantor, in order to provide work and service opportunities to 18- to 24-year-old youth from Los Angeles inner-city communities. Although known for their environmental and conservation work, in 2004 the LACC partnered with the Los Angeles Education Corps, an independent charter school authorized by the Nevada County (CA)

Office of Education, to offer a high school diploma program accredited by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC). In 2000, Youth Opportunities High School was inaugurated in response to the growing need for educational and supportive services for low-income young people from the South Los Angeles neighborhood. Youth Opportunities High School's mission is to create a safe, family environment that meets the educational and personal needs of students through small class sizes, emphasis on core academic skills, counseling, guidance, mentorship, environmental awareness, community leadership, and artistic endeavor.

YO High School maintains a commitment to the community by being able to provide the students and community the tools and links needed to succeed. Currently the school maintains an open door policy, where outside programs can come in to service not only students but the community living the surrounding of the school. YO staff also welcome parents of students enrolled to have tea with the principal to discuss any concerns, updates and dilemmas that can be addressed by the school. Keeping these two connections, outside programs and students' parents help YO High School provide relevant services to the community at large.

Although YO High School is a small portion of the Los Angeles Conservation Corps (LACC), there is a strong relationship between the school and agency that helps promote change in the service model. The LACC provides students academic options that enhance their academic careers. A major partnership YO High School has utilized is the internship programs with graduate schools. Graduate interns are able to deliver, aid and promote the proposed program through the guidance of the school and program staff.

The organization of LACC is unique due to the focus on youth being academically successful by completing their high school education while at the same time working to improve the environment with green jobs. The Los Angeles Education Corps also provides an educational component to its participants, however YO High School provides students that struggle in regular school another opportunity to finish their high school education at an accelerated speed, in smaller classes and with more attention on students. If YO High School were to close, students would be referred to adult, continuation or regular schools. It is unknown if the students would be able to succeed in a different school setting, however there is no other school in the area that provides the same services as YO High School.

Partnerships

Along with the educational component the LACC provides its corps members programs such as Recycling a Cross Los Angeles, Community Garden Construction & Management, Urban Forestry Tree Planting Programs, Community Enhancement Team, LA River Corps, Urban Park Construction/Landscaping/Irrigation, Vocational Training Program (Brownfields Job Training Program) and Vocational Training Program (Youthbuild). The LACC also provides corps members with supportive services such as: Case Management, Follow-Up Services, Youth Leadership Council, One-on-One Mentoring and Scholarship Programs. Special theme programs located in the school site include after school extracurricular programs focusing on physical development such as Mixed Martial Arts, Girls Volleyball and Basketball. There are after school small programs such as the Gardening Club, Cup Staking and Math Tutoring. Finally, YO High School also offers programs focusing upon fine arts such as Hip Hop & Poetry

Club, Street Poets Seminar, Dance Club, Watts Village Theater and Music Recording Club. YO High School also provides students life skills programs like Inspiration Club, Acceptance Club, Young Ladies Club, Young Men of Excellence and College Team.

YO High School also has partnerships with outside community programs that provide supportive services to the students such as: Tessie Cleveland Mental Health Services, Jordan for Kids Substance Abuse Treatment and Internship program. YO High School also partnerships with mentoring programs for its students such as, Fades 4 Grades for young men and Polish Girls Mentoring for young ladies.

YO High School has a positive reputation in the community, where the academic needs of its students are met and supportive services are also available for the community. YO High School is notable for providing emergency services, basic needs and supportive services for enrolled students.

Goals, Objectives and Outcomes

The goals and the objectives of the program will help Youth Opportunity High School students:

Goal 1: Academically prepare for college admittance.

Objective 1: In order for students to be academically prepared to enroll into college, students will have met with the school counselor for graduation check and college entrance requirements at the beginning of the school year.

Outcome: At the end of first school semester 90% of students will have met with the school counselor and have a completed graduation check list and college entrance requirements list.

Goal 2: Financial aid awareness and knowledge.

Objective 2: Participating students in the program will learn how to navigate the financial aid system, programs and services for college cost. Students will learn the different financial options which include grants, scholarships and loans.

Outcome: At the end of the school year 98% of seniors and sophomore student will have attended Financial Aid/FAFSA workshops conducted by the College Coordinator.

Goal 3: Link students to adequate resources, linkages and programs that promote college preparedness.

Objective 3: Participating students will be linked to resources and programs that help promote college enrollment by participating in college field trips and individual meetings with the college coordinator.

Outcome: At the end of school year, 95% of students planning to attend college after school will receive a college resource package and be linked to adequate services and programs for college attendance.

Indication that the students are meeting with the school counselor for grad check requirements can be identified when the student has completed or has been referred to take the accurate classes to meet requirements needed. Evidence that participating students will be able to navigate the financial aspect of college preparedness will be determined by completing FAFSA, scholarship applications and distinguish aid versus loan. In order for students to be academically prepared to enroll into college, students will have met with the school counselor for graduation and college entrance requirements at the beginning of the school year. Confirmation that students are being referred to college preparedness can be measured by the number of students enrolling into college, being

accepted and continuing their education beyond high school. The proposed program will provide participating students the opportunity to acquire the necessary skills needed to prepare for higher education. Providing college preparedness will help high school students succeed in the higher education system, which will ultimately stimulate personal growth, wealth and health.

Budget Narrative

An estimated budget for this program is \$99,572 annually, not including in-kind support. This includes a full-time salary for a bilingual Spanish proficient School Counselor, a part-time College Coordinator, with additional funding resources for college workshops and trips.

The bilingual Spanish proficient School Counselor will provide YO students with direct services regarding graduation requirements and inquiries related to completion of high school or pre-requisite courses for college entrance. The School Counselor will be responsible for meeting individually with seniors, juniors and other students requesting aid for graduation and college pre-requisite planning. The School Counselor will be responsible for reviewing graduation requirements regarding class completions, A-G fulfillments and California High School Exit Exam. The full time salary for this staff will be \$50,000 annually, working 40 hours a week with employee benefits at 20% of salary, and a requirement of a Master's Degree in Social Work or School Counseling.

The College Coordinator will provide monthly informative workshops to a minimum of 20 students, but no more than 30 once a month. College trips will also be planned by the College Coordinator for a maximum of 35 students when there are at least two more adult chaperones, a ratio of 12.5 students per 1 adult. It will be the

responsibility of the College Coordinator to provide students with college information, college entrance testing applications and dates. The College Coordinator will also provide students with open Computer Lab hours to complete college applications, scholarships and financial aid federal application. The part-time salary for this staff will be \$22,000 annually, working 25 hours a week with a requirement of a Bachelor's Degree in Social Work, Counseling, Human Services or Liberal Arts, working under the School Counselor.

The direct services costs include college field trips, computers and direct college miscellaneous activities. College field trips cost will include (\$1,800) transportation, meals and a first aid kit. College miscellaneous activities include but are not limited to trainings, workshops and events related to college planning (\$400). The direct program costs include telephone, fax and internet (\$380), supplies (\$250) and copying and printing (\$300). The Los Angeles Conservation Corps will provide in-kind support which includes office space, utilities, a consultation room and office technology (\$2,500). In-kind technical support will also include a desktop for the school counselor office and notebooks for student use along with virus protection and Microsoft software (\$1,800). An administrative overhead cost will be added to manage the grant at 10%, which amounts to \$9,052 annually (see Appendix A) for line-item budget.

Line Item Budget

The Line Item Budget can be found in Appendix A.

Program Time Line Implementation Plan

The College Preparedness Program is detailed in the Program Time Line Implementation Plan found in Appendix B. The Program Time Line Implementation

Plan describes the twelve-month school year of service delivery and program development. The plan depicts program development services of the month-to-month scheduled trainings, reports and meetings between program staff and school administrators. The plan also explains the direct service delivery for students, which includes workshops, individual appointments and resources.

Program Evaluation

In order to provide evidence that the program objectives are being met, several methods will be utilized. The college preparedness staff will communicate with board members and management staff. College preparedness staff will attend the weekly staff meeting held every Friday after school to update the staff on proceedings and any student referrals. The college preparedness program staff will meet with the school principal biweekly to discuss plans for future workshops, field trips and student status. A report will be generated to document the programs schedule and goals. Detailing the number of students seen, both for college preparedness and graduation check, as well as future scheduled events such as field trips and workshops. The report will also include the volume of students utilizing the computers for college applications, scholarships, FAFSA and college research.

CHAPTER 5

LESSONS LEARNED

Host Agency Selected

Finding a host agency for the proposed program was not difficult for the grant writer. The host agency was the grant writer's internship placement, wherein the scarcity of the micro and macro college was witnessed. The grand writer was able to work directly with YO High School staff and school principal to identify the academic and program implementation needs for the school and student population. The grant writer learned the importance of professional networking.

Identification of Funding Sources

This was the grant writer's first experience searching for funders. Identifying potential funding sources for the proposed program was challenging due to the funder's criteria and limitations. The grant writer utilized various online search tools and ultimately found the adequate funding source that honored the proposed program's goals and population.

Strategies used to Increase Likelihood of Funding

Creating a budget for the proposed program was overwhelming. The budgeting for this program was constantly modified to meet the funder's financial eligibility and criteria. With limited experience in budgeting a program, the grant writer relied heavily on the advisement of the thesis advisor and examples of similar programs. The grant

writer learned the importance of maintaining a program within budget and the macro level cost a program needs to succeed.

Professional Development

The grant writer learned various aspects related to professional growth and program implementation. The process of grant writing was very overwhelming yet was the most important aspect of the whole project. On several occasions the grant writer struggled in completing the tasks placed to complete the project and it was difficult finding the answers alone. Although the grant writer lacked the experience in grant writing, there was vast support and professional consultation from the thesis advisor and the host agency staff. The grant writer's thesis advisor, Dr. Venetta Campbell was supportive to the grant writer's questions, concerns and feedback. Another source of support came from host agency staff that provided the grant writer with the necessary information needed to proceed. The grant writer learned to seek help, guidance and advisement.

The grant writer learned quickly that time management was essential for meeting deadlines and completing the project. This task was difficult for the grant writer due to full time employment, graduate school, internship, thesis and personal obligations. The grant writer managed to schedule space that was exclusively used for this project.

Accepting constructive criticism was also an invaluable lesson that will prove helpful in the field of social work. The grant writer believed that her writing skills and the passion for the proposed program would be sufficient to proceed to the next level in the grant process, however after several revisions the grant writer humbled herself to

recognize limitations in this skill set. The feedback provided by the thesis advisor and committee members strengthened the grant writer's writing and research skills.

Implications of Social Work Policy and Practice

Grant writing is an essential portion of social work macro practice and service delivery. The grant writing process informs social workers about the needs and how community resources are created, funded and implemented.

Important factors such as financial aid information, graduate requirements and exam preparation are essential in the educational process. These factors can be advocated through social service, policy changes and resources. Social workers have the ability to advocate for school policies that promote high school graduation, college awareness and preparedness.

Conclusion

Providing a college preparedness program to a disenfranchised community does not solve the issue of high school dropouts, poverty or violence, however it does provide equal deliverance in educational services and opportunity to all students in educational systems. The grant writing process provided the grant writer the skills to learn how to research funding agencies, view communities at a macro level and create a program that can cater to a specific population. As a social worker it is overwhelming to see the nation's youth fall in between the academic cracks of disservice and injustice, when there is so much that can be done to help them succeed. All youth are entitled to an equal chance to enhance their education regardless of their social economic background, race or gender.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A
LINE ITEM BUDGET

LINE ITEM BUDGET

Expenses	Amount	In-Kind Support
SALARIES		
School Counselor (FTE)		
\$26.04 per hr @ 40 hr/wk	\$50,000.00	
@ 20% Benefits	\$10,000.00	
College Coordinator (PTE)		
\$18.33 per hr @ 25 hr/wk	\$22,000.00	
Payroll Taxes		
@ 7%	\$5,390.00	
TOTAL SALARIES	\$87,390.00	
DIRECT PROGRAM COSTS		
College Field Trips (Transportation, Meals & First Aid Kit)	\$1,800.00	
Desktop & Notebooks		\$1,800.00
College Miscellaneous Activities (trainings, workshops & events)	\$400.00	
Telephone, Internet and Fax	\$380.00	
Supplies (pens, ink cartage, paper, envelopes, staples, etc.)	\$250.00	
Copying & Printing	\$300.00	
Office equipment expenses, rent, and utilities		\$2,500.00
TOTAL DIRECT COST	\$3,130.00	
TOTAL IN-KIND SUPPORT		\$4,300.00
INDIRECT PROGRAM COST (administrative overhead)	\$9,052.00	
TOTAL PROGRAM COST	\$99,572.00	

APPENDIX B
PROGRAM TIME LINE IMPLEMENTATION

PROGRAM TIME LINE IMPLEMENTATION

Academic School Year
August through July

August

Staff Recruitment
Staff Orientation and Training
-College Enrollment Basics Training
-Completing High School/Graduation and Navigating the School System
Training
-Identifying Special Needs Students Training
-Special Circumstance Students Training (ex. Foster care, undocumented, orphan)
-New Employee Training, includes Workplace Safety, Sexual Harassment, Benefits, Code of Ethics, & HIPPA
Student Recruitment/Referrals from School Administrators
Identified Student Report
Graduation Check List with Seniors
College Requirements Check List with Seniors
College Field Trip
Appointments for Referrals to Adult/Night School

September

Student Recruitment/Referrals from School Administrators
Staff Development Meeting
College Preparedness Program Conference
Program Curriculum Meeting
Updated Identified Student Report
Graduation Planning Check List with Juniors
College Requirements Planning Check List with Juniors
Appointments for Referrals to Adult/Night School
College Field Trip
College Prerequisites Workshop

October

Staff Development Meeting
College Preparedness Program Conference
Resourcing Special Needs Students Meeting
Resourcing Special Circumstance Students Meeting
Graduation Path Check List with Sophomores
College Requirements Planning with Sophomores
Appointment for Referrals to Adult/Night School
College Field Trip
College Application Workshop (emphasizes on CSU Applications)

November

Staff Development Meeting
College Preparedness Program Conference
Updates on Resourcing Special Needs Students Meeting
Updates on Resourcing Special Circumstance Students Meeting
Graduation Path Check List with Freshmen
College Requirements Planning with Freshmen
College Field Trip
College Application Workshop (emphasizes on CSU Applications)

December

Program Curriculum Updates Meeting
End of the Semester Program Report
-Achieved Goals
-Needed Improvements
-New Goals & Objectives
Staff Development Meeting
College Preparedness Program Conference
Graduation Status Check with Seniors (regular classes and adult/night school)
College Application Status Appointment

January

Staff Development Meeting
College Preparedness Program Conference
Mid-Year Program Evaluation Report
Financial Aid/FAFSA Training
Budget Review Meeting
Special Circumstance Students Training (ex. Foster care, undocumented, orphan)
Graduation Status Check with Seniors (regular classes and adult/night school)
College Application Status Appointment
Linkage Appointments for Special Needs & Special Circumstance Students
Student FAFSA Application Workshop
College Application Workshop

February

Staff Development Meeting
College Preparedness Program Conference
Student FAFSA Application Workshop
College Application Workshop
Individual Appointment for FAFSA Application

March

Staff Development Meeting
College Preparedness Program Conference
College Resources, Programs and Services

College Acceptance Appointments
Community College Applications

April

Staff Development Meeting
College Preparedness Program Conference
College Resources, Programs and Services
Getting Ready to Start College Workshop (Budgeting, Life Skills & Safety)
College Acceptance Appointments
Community College Applications

May

Staff Development Meeting
College Preparedness Program Conference
College Resources, Programs and Services
Getting Ready to Start College Workshop (Budgeting, Life Skills & Safety)
College Acceptance Appointments
Community College Applications

June

Staff Development Meeting
College Preparedness Program Conference
College Resources, Programs and Services
Getting Ready to Start College Workshop
College Resources and Services Applications
Community College Applications

July

Staff Development Meeting
College Preparedness Program Conference
Program Evaluation Report
Final Report
Connecting to College Accepted Students
College Resources and Services Applications

APPENDIX C
LETTER SECURING AGENCY PARTNERSHIP

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