

making a meaningful difference

September 2011

# The Teagle Foundation College–Community Connections Program

## Final Evaluation Report

SUBMITTED TO:

Donna Heiland

Annie W. Bezbatchenko



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## Acknowledgments

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This evaluation was conducted with guidance and support from the staff of the Teagle Foundation. They provided important information about the program, guidance on the development of protocols, and facilitated communications with the program partners. Several key staff—Donna Heiland, vice president; Cheryl Ching, former program associate; and Annie W. Bezbatchenko, program associate—were instrumental in guiding our thinking for the evaluation and understanding of the goals of liberal education and the College-Community Connections program. We admire their commitment to the Foundation’s mission and appreciate the support they provided to the evaluation.

We would like to thank the community-based organization staff and college faculty who participated in focus groups. We also thank the secondary students who completed surveys. These individuals provided important data on which we based the evaluation findings and recommendations.

The evaluation team from Metis was led by Claire Aulicino, senior research associate, with collaboration from Ryan Clarke, research associate and Donna Tapper, managing senior associate.



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## Executive Summary

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In 2009, the Teagle Foundation awarded grants to 12 partnerships of community-based organizations (CBOs) that offer college preparatory programs and private colleges and universities in the New York metropolitan area under the Foundation’s College–Community Connections (CCC) program. The three-year grants support the development of academically challenging programs that prepare underserved high school students for college. The CCC program was introduced in 2006 as a pilot initiative—these grants are the Foundation’s second funding cycle for the program.

The CCC program offers a valuable model for college readiness—it provides authentic college experiences for highly talented youth to expose them to the rigors, realities, and possibilities of a liberal education. Different from programs that are designed to increase access to postsecondary education on a broad scale, the CCC program prepares college-bound students to make informed choices about college and develop the knowledge and skills needed to succeed in a selective institution. The Foundation’s goals for the program are to:

- Enhance the college readiness of highly talented but disadvantaged high school students served by community-based organizations in New York City.
- Encourage these students to aim high in setting their academic goals, and to succeed in reaching them.
- Provide opportunities for faculty and students at colleges and universities in the New York City area to work with these students.
- Encourage academic departments at colleges/universities to commit to the partnership over the life of the grant.
- Encourage CBOs and colleges to explore ways in which such partnerships can be more fully integrated, and eventually institutionalized, at their institutions.
- Support college preparatory programs at community-based organizations.

To better understand if the program achieved these goals, the Foundation contracted with Metis Associates, a nationally recognized research and evaluation firm, to conduct a one-year evaluation of CCC during the second year of the program’s funding cycle. The evaluation was designed to examine the extent to which the partnerships are helping prepare young people for college and whether the programs are challenging and stimulating and support liberal education. The evaluation also explored what elements of the programs are most impactful and replicable, and if the grantees can sustain them. The main research questions focused on the characteristics of the program participants, elements of the program that were most influential to the students, the potential for sustaining the program, and the extent to which the program can be replicated and if the benefits are worth the investment. The methodology included focus groups with CBO



staff and college faculty, surveys of participating secondary students, analysis of participant data, and reviews of program documents. This report presents the findings of the evaluation.

## Evaluation Findings

### Profile of the CCC Participants

Twelve partnerships between CBOs and colleges or universities made it possible for 325 secondary students to participate in CCC programs. The program participants were predominantly minority and low-income students, and were from families with little or no college experience. Most of the students were juniors or seniors in high school (79%), African-American (62%), and female (62%). A majority of the participants (79%) were eligible to receive free- or reduced-price meals in school—an indicator of low income.

Most of the participants (86%) intend to complete a bachelor's degree or higher; 26 percent of them would be the first in their immediate family to attend college. The participants most frequently identified resources at their high school, such as teachers (77%) and guidance counselors (76%), as their sources of information about college.

### Program Impact

- **The CBO/college partnership is a highly effective model for introducing high school students to valuable information about college.** Overwhelmingly, the focus group participants agreed that the CBO-college partnerships were an essential component of the CCC programs. The partnerships gave the CBO students access to a network of college resources, including faculty and college students. In return, the colleges relied on the CBOs to facilitate administrative aspects of the programs and to recruit a racially and ethnically diverse group of secondary students. Most agreed that, while other models could produce similar results, the CBO-college partnership helped build a cohesive and impactful program.
- **The CCC program helped secondary students learn about the academic rigors of college coursework and the social responsibilities of being a college student.** The data from the focus groups and student surveys indicate that the CCC programs helped the participating students increase their understanding of academic and social aspects of college—including the college application process, the content and degree of difficulty in college courses, the amount of work that is required, how college students need to manage their time, and the types of student support services available on a college campus and how to access them.



- **The CCC program influenced students to be more thoughtful in their college search and to apply to selective universities and liberal arts colleges.** The CCC participants, according to the CBO staff in the focus groups, were making more informed decisions about what colleges to apply to as a result of their participation in the program. The staff noted that the participating students had a better understanding of the difference between selective and nonselective institutions. In addition, they learned the importance of considering factors such as school size, location, and availability of college majors when applying. They added that more students were applying to private universities and liberal arts colleges as a result of the program.
- **The programs exposed students to liberal education and helped them develop the knowledge and skills to succeed in college.** The secondary students in the programs participated in academic coursework that required them to think critically about broad issues and understand the social context of their ideas. They were challenged to learn new things and ways of thinking, understand new and different perspectives, and integrate ideas from multiple sources. And as a result of their participation, the students, according to focus group data as well as survey responses, increased their skills in areas such as developing and communicating their own ideas, deciding what ideas and information are important, connecting classroom learning to the real world, and communicating clearly through writing and speaking.
- **The most influential aspects of the CCC program were the on-campus activities and experiences, particularly the interactions participants' had with college faculty and students.** All of the evaluation respondents agreed that on-campus coursework and residencies were impactful because they gave the CCC participants an opportunity to experience a college student's life. The experiences showed them what it is like to take college courses, live in dorms, and be involved in a college community. Interactions with college professors and students were also extremely influential. The college faculty members are passionate about their subjects and worked to engage the students in academic discourse. In addition, college students, who served as real-life role models for college success, mentored the CCC participants.

### Sustainability of the Program

- **The CCC programs effectively enhanced the CBO college preparatory programs, but have not yet been fully integrated into programming or curricula at the CBOs.** The focus group participants agreed that the CCC programs augment college familiarization for the secondary students and offer authentic college experiences that the agencies are not able to provide. Staff at some CBOs reported that they had fully integrated the CCC program into their college preparatory programs, by aligning the curricula of the two programs, offering CCC activities throughout the school year, and offering the CCC program to all students. Staff from other agencies, however, suggested that the CCC program is less integrated because only some of the students participate and the content is different from the topics or skills addressed in the college preparatory curriculum.



- **The programs serve as tangible examples of the colleges' and universities' commitment to service learning and community engagement, but have not yet received a high level of institutional support from the college administrations.** All of the participants in the college faculty focus groups believed that the CCC programs were completely aligned with their institutions' mission to increase service learning and community outreach programs. Yet in the CBO focus groups, the respondents did not believe that the CCC programs had achieved much institutional support from the colleges and universities.

### Program Replicability

- **The CCC programs were successful in meeting most of the Foundation's intended goals for the program. In order to replicate the program model, an organization should be prepared to commit the level of resources provided by the Teagle Foundation.** In the focus groups, CBO staff and college faculty agreed that it would be very hard to replicate the program without strong partnerships and an adequate level of funding. They added that any organization wanting to replicate the program would need to ensure equality in the partnership between CBOs and colleges with clear communication and real collaboration about the characteristics and needs of the target population, the content and format of the coursework, and the qualifications and skills of the program staff. In addition, the partners need to understand how each functions administratively and professionally in order to work together effectively. The CBOs should also develop a broad network at the college so the program can take full advantage of the resources of the campus. Finally, an adequate level of resources, both financial and in-kind contributions, is required to design and implement an effective program.

### Recommendations

The following recommendations are provided to guide the Foundation in its thinking about the future of the CCC program.

1. **Continue to fund the CCC partnerships at a robust level to support the development of lasting and meaningful programs.**
2. **Consider targeting the program to colleges and universities that demonstrate a real understanding of the goals of the CCC program and the capacity to provide the resources needed to sustain the programs beyond the grant cycle.**
3. **Recruit CBOs for the CCC partnerships that serve the types of students who will benefit most from the program model—namely, highly motivated, college-bound students who are intellectually and socially prepared for an authentic college experience.**



4. Work to ensure that all of the CCC partners understand the mission of the Teagle Foundation so that the CCC programs are fully aligned with the Foundation's goals.
5. Consider building a pilot year into the grant so the partnerships can achieve effective collaboration before the three-year grant is awarded.
6. Provide regular opportunities for CBOs and colleges/universities to convene (both before and after the grants are awarded) to share best practices and have collegial discussions about college readiness and the CCC programs.



# I. Introduction

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## Overview

*“The Teagle Foundation aims to strengthen liberal education by providing the intellectual and financial resources necessary to ensure that today’s students have access to challenging, wide-ranging and enriching college educations, and that they succeed at the highest possible level.”*

The Teagle Foundation demonstrates an enduring commitment to this mission and to the New York City community by supporting programs that improve opportunities for the city’s young people. In 2009, the Foundation advanced their dedication by issuing a request for proposals (RFP) for *College–Community Connections* (CCC) program, for which they pledged to commit up to \$2.4 million to support the development of “*academically challenging and stimulating programs that will enhance the college readiness of talented but underserved New York City high school students.*”

The RFP began the Foundation’s second funding cycle for CCC. The program was introduced in 2006 as a pilot initiative to support collaborations between community-based organizations (CBOs) that offer college preparatory programs and private colleges and universities in the metropolitan area. For the pilot, the Foundation awarded grants of \$75,000 over three years to 10 partnerships. In the second funding cycle, the Foundation increased the number of grant awards to 12 and bolstered the level of support to \$240,000 for three years— for a total financial commitment of almost \$2.9 million.

With such a large financial contribution to CCC, the Foundation was eager to learn the value of its investment. They were interested to find out if the partnerships are helping prepare young people for college, whether the programs are challenging and stimulating, and if they support liberal education. They wanted to learn what elements of the programs are most impactful and replicable, and if the grantees can sustain them. And lastly, they looked to understand how CCC compares to other efforts to increase college access and readiness. To examine these and other important questions, the Foundation contracted with Metis Associates, a nationally recognized research and evaluation firm, to conduct a one-year evaluation of CCC. This report presents the findings of the evaluation.

## Evaluation Methodology

The evaluation involved the collection of data on implementation and impact of the CCC programs using four methods—focus group interviews, surveys, analyses of participant data, and program documents. The methods focused on the second year of the CCC program, from early



summer 2010 through late summer 2011 (exact dates could differ for the different partnerships). This schedule allowed for each partnership to have gained a year's experience before the evaluation commenced.

**Research questions.** The evaluation was framed around four main research questions that were developed by researchers from Metis in consultation with the Foundation's program staff. The following questions, along with some additional subquestions, guided the development of the data collection tools, each of which is described below in the methods section:

- *What are the backgrounds of the youth who are being served by the CCC program?*
- *Which elements of the program model seem to be most influential and why?*
- *What is the potential for sustaining the program or aspects of the program and partnership?*
- *To what extent can the program be replicated and are the benefits worth the investment?*

**Methods.** Focus group interviews were held with one or more program coordinators, staff members, or faculty from each of the 24 partnering organizations. Four interviews—two groups with four to five CBO representatives and two with four to five college/university representatives each—were held on September 21, 2010 with partnerships that operated the second year of programming during the summer of 2010. Two additional interviews—one with eight CBO staff and one with five college/university faculty members—were held on August 3, 2011 for programs that conducted the second year during the 2010-11 school year or the summer of 2011. The focus groups were guided by semi-structured interview protocols that were developed by Metis researchers in consultation with Foundation staff.

Surveys were administered to all secondary students who participated in the 12 programs. The surveys were administered online or using a printed survey on or around the last day of each partnership's program (from July 2010 through August 2011). The survey asked program participants about their college-going ambitions and whether other members of their immediate family had pursued postsecondary education. The respondents were also asked to assess the impact of the CCC program on their awareness and understanding of various aspects of postsecondary education and on different skills that are important to succeeding in college. Lastly, the survey gathered information about the participants' satisfaction with various components or experiences in the CCC program and its impact on their college plans. A total of 226 student participants completed the survey, for a response rate of 70 percent.<sup>1</sup>

Participant rosters were completed by CBO program staff to record demographic information—name, age, gender, race, and eligibility for free or reduced-price meals in school—and other information—school, grade, expected date of graduation, and the number of days and types of CCC activities the students participated in—for all 325 program participants.

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<sup>1</sup> The response rates by partnership ranged from 23 to 100 percent. Four partnerships had 100 percent response rate.



Program documentation, including schedules, syllabi, reading lists, and calendars, were collected from the partnerships to provide contextual information about each program. The program proposals and annual evaluation reports that were prepared by the CCC partners were reviewed to augment the evaluation data collected through the focus groups and surveys.

Data from all sources were triangulated to identify common themes and opinions from college faculty, CBO staff, and secondary students. The findings were analyzed across the 12 CCC programs with an understanding that each program had a unique set of inputs and outcomes. Partnership-level data and individual quotations from the focus groups were synthesized to provide an overall assessment of the implementation and impact of the CCC program.

## II. The CCC Program

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### Program Model

The CCC program supports collaborations between CBOs and institutions of higher education to provide underserved high school students in New York City with enriching and academically rigorous college-level experiences. The collaborations augment the college preparatory programs that are offered by the CBOs, the intention being to expose students to the rigors of college-level coursework, facilitate genuine opportunities for them to interact with college faculty and students, and provide access to information networks that will help them to succeed in college.

The Foundation set six goals for the CCC program:

- Enhance the college readiness of highly talented but disadvantaged high school students served by community-based organizations in New York City.
- Encourage these students to aim high in setting their academic goals, and to succeed in reaching them.
- Provide opportunities for faculty and students at colleges and universities in the New York City area to work with these students.
- Encourage academic departments at colleges/universities to commit to the partnership over the life of the grant.
- Encourage CBOs and colleges to explore ways in which such partnerships can be more fully integrated, and eventually institutionalized, at their institutions.
- Support college preparatory programs at community-based organizations.

A model of the CCC program, including the program inputs, activities, and goals, is depicted on page 6.

**Partnerships.** Twelve partnerships were funded to offer “ambitious and imaginative academic programs” to secondary students based on the CCC program model. The Foundation encouraged partnerships to interpret the model in their own way and develop programs that matched the expertise of the partnering organizations and the needs and interests of the students they serve. This resulted in programs in a variety of formats, including on-campus college weekend experiences, intensive summer residencies, semester-long campus-based seminars, and high school-based courses to earn college credit. All programs included college-level coursework, but the content areas varied—literacy, history, environmental science, psychology, philosophy, democracy and citizenship, science, and multidisciplinary studies, were among the subjects studied. In all of the programs, the academic courses were taught by college professors, and in many, college or graduate students served as mentors, academic coaches, and/or residential



advisors. Most programs offered writing workshops to introduce students to the requirements for college-level writing and to help them prepare a personal statement for college applications. All of the programs included informational workshops on college access topics, such as admissions, financial aid, and student support services.<sup>2</sup>

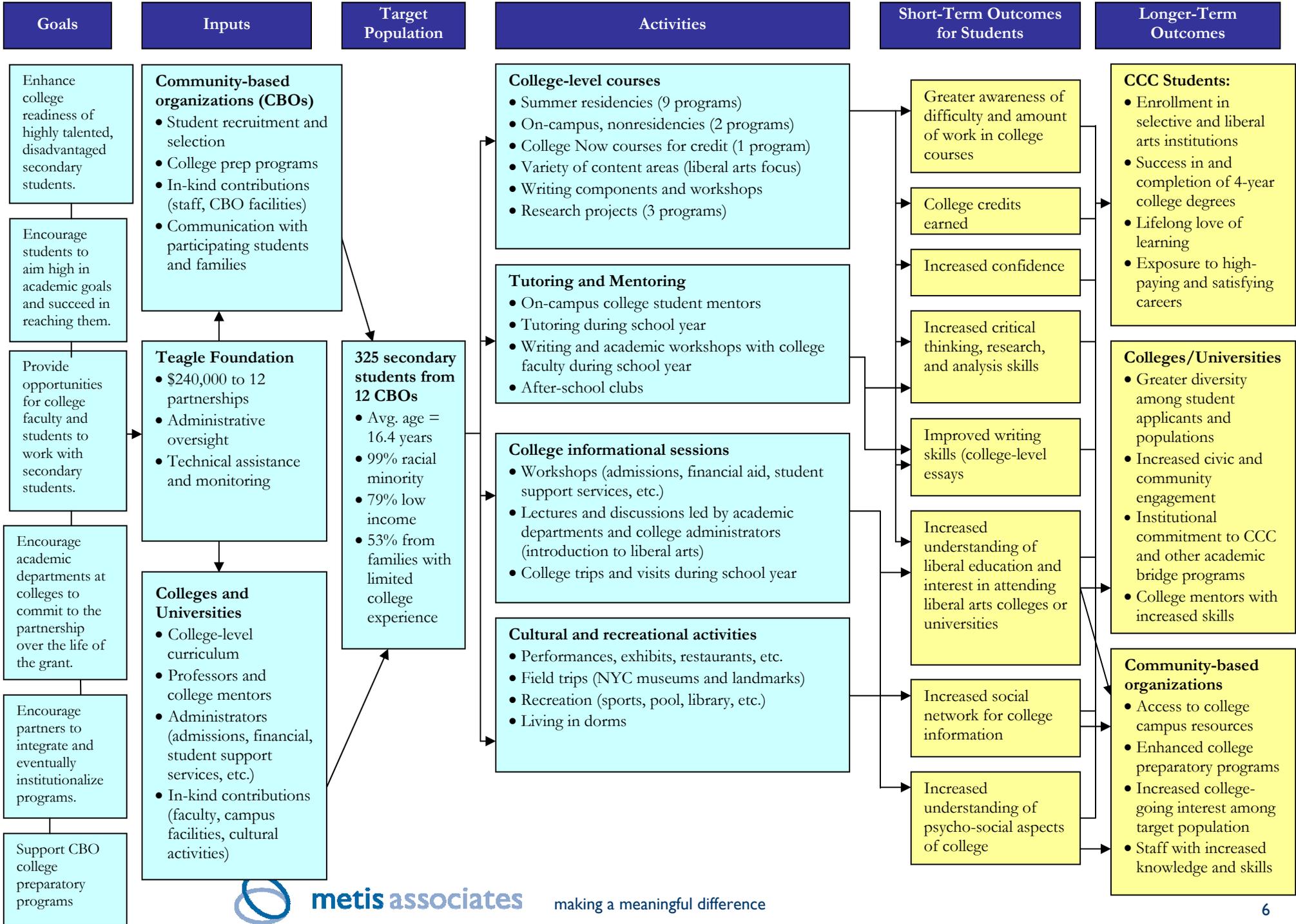
The 12 partnerships were:

- Barnard College and Harlem Education Activities Fund (HEAF)
- Brooklyn College and CAMBA
- Columbia University and Double Discovery Center
- Cornell University and Henry Street Settlement
- Drew University and Union Settlement Association
- Fordham University and Bronxworks
- Manhattan College and Kingsbridge Heights Community Center
- New York University and Children’s Aid Society
- Pace University and Groundwork, Inc.
- Polytechnic Institute of New York University and Urban Assembly Institute of Math and Science for Young Women
- Skidmore College and Sponsors for Educational Opportunity (SEO)
- State University of New York (SUNY) Old Westbury and Harlem RBI.

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<sup>2</sup> For a description of the each partnership’s CCC program, see <http://www.teaglefoundation.org/grantmaking/grantees/ccc2.aspx>.

**Teagle Foundation**  
College-Community Connections Program Model



## CCC and College Readiness Efforts

The CCC program model includes elements included in other college readiness and access initiatives such as the federal Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs (GEAR UP) and efforts of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and the Lumina Foundation for Education. Like these larger-scale initiatives, CCC provides opportunities for minority and low-income students and first generation college goers to gain access to information about college and financial aid and encourages them to set high academic goals. Similarly, it also introduces students to rigorous academic coursework to better prepare them for postsecondary education. However, the CCC program differs from other initiatives in a fundamental way—it seeks to expose college-bound students to the benefits of a liberal education and encourage them to pursue admission to highly selective liberal arts institutions.

College readiness initiatives such as GEAR UP and the Gates and Lumina Foundation programs are designed to increase readiness and access to postsecondary education on a broad scale. The programs target underserved populations that include both high- and lower-achieving students. Participants, as a group, will likely enroll in different types of postsecondary institutions, including community colleges, professional certificate programs, two-year degree programs, or four-year institutions. Many may not enroll in college at all. These initiatives address college readiness as it is most simply defined, “the level of preparation a student needs in order to enroll and succeed without remediation in a credit-bearing general education course at a postsecondary institution.”<sup>3</sup>

The CCC program addresses college readiness on a more complex level. Similar to other initiatives, it targets students from underserved populations—minority and low-income students and first generation college goers. Yet, in the CCC program, many participants are high-achieving students who have strong college ambitions. These students are likely to enroll in college with or without the CCC program. However, because they are from low-income families with little or no college-going experience and attend high schools that may offer only limited college counseling, many participants lack a strong social network to help them in the college search process. This puts students at a disadvantage because social networks are an important means for students to obtain information about college and financial aid. Students use this information to assess the different colleges they can get into, to find colleges that match their interests and academic qualifications, and to learn how to pay for different college options. The CCC program helps students build a strong social network to prepare them to make informed choices when searching for and applying to college.

The CCC program also exposes students to the rigors of college-level academics—and more specifically to coursework at selective four-year institutions. This exposure helps pique students’ interest in college-level work and builds their confidence in their own abilities to succeed at a

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<sup>3</sup>Erisman, W., and Looney, S. *Corporate Investments in College Readiness and Access* (Washington, DC: Institute for Higher Education Policy, 2008).



selective institution. This is an important element of college readiness for low-income and first-generation students, who, as researchers from the Chicago Consortium found, “*have difficulty identifying the kinds of colleges they might like to attend, as well as the range of options that are available to them and how much they will be expected to pay for college. Because of these difficulties, many urban students, who are likely to be first-generation college students, focus their entire college search within the enclave college of the traditional feeder patterns—largely public, two-year or non- and somewhat selective four-year colleges.*”<sup>4</sup> By exposing students to selective colleges and universities, the CCC program helps students broaden their college search. This is important because, as the Chicago study also found, “*there is evidence that low-income and urban minority students often enroll in colleges, such as two-year colleges and less selective four-year colleges that provide significantly lower probabilities of completing a four-year degree.*”<sup>5</sup>

In this way, the CCC program not only readies students for college, but it encourages students to enroll in colleges that match their abilities and interests. The program model addresses college readiness with a holistic approach. It offers valuable experiences to help students gather important information and develop social networks, and helps raise their interest and confidence in pursuing rigorous college-level coursework. This program model, however, requires substantial resources. In fact, during the second year of the CCC program, the average cost per student was almost \$3,000—in terms of the Foundation’s contribution. When in-kind resources and contributions from the partnering organizations are added, the figure increased to over \$4,000 per student.<sup>6</sup>

This report presents data and findings that address the evaluation questions and program goals and examine the benefits of the program. The data presented include the backgrounds of the participating students; the impact of the programs on their college knowledge and academic skills; elements of the programs that worked best and are most replicable; and partnerships’ plans for sustaining the programs. Within these findings, an important question is also considered: What is the value of the investment in the CCC program? The data in this report seek to provide answers to this question and guide the Foundation in making important decisions about how to direct its efforts and investment in the CCC program in the future.

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<sup>4</sup> Roderick, M., Nagaoka, J., and Coca, V. College Readiness for All: The Challenge for Urban High Schools. *The Future of Children* 19, No. 1 (2009): 185–210.

<sup>5</sup> Roderick, M., Nagaoka, J., and Coca, V. College Readiness for All: The Challenge for Urban High Schools. *The Future of Children* 19, No. 1 (2009): 185–210.

<sup>6</sup> In comparison, the maximum federal funding per student in GEAR UP is \$800.



### III. Evaluation Findings

The CCC programs augmented CBO college preparatory programs by providing secondary students with tangible college experiences. The programs introduced the students to the academic rigors of college-level courses and showed them first hand what it is like to learn from college professors. The programs also offered valuable experiences in the social and cultural aspects of living on a college campus and, for some students, of being away from home for the first time. The experiences helped broaden the students' network of information about college and introduced them to effective ways to navigate the college search process. The programs also introduced students to the benefits of a liberal education, and equipped them with skills to help them succeed in college, such as writing, critical thinking, and time management.

The data and findings presented in this section address characteristics of the program's participants and the elements of the program that were most influential to the students; the potential for sustaining the program; the extent to which the program can be replicated; and if the benefits are worth the investment. The findings resulted from a synthesis of data from the six focus groups with CBO staff and college faculty, the student surveys, and the participant rosters. Individual quotations from the focus groups and surveys are presented when they express common ideas and themes.

#### Profile of the CCC Participants

**What are the demographic characteristics and academic backgrounds of the secondary students participating in the program?** The CCC program served 325 secondary students during year two of the funding cycle. Across the 12 partnerships, the number of participants ranged from 10 to 92 students. As a group, the CCC participants look much like the “disadvantaged” students who are served in college readiness programs such as GEAR UP or the Gates and Lumina initiatives. They are predominantly minority and low-income students, and about a quarter will be first-generation college goers. A majority are rising seniors who attend public high schools in New York City, and many rely primarily on resources at their high schools for information about college.

The following data provide a basic profile of the program participants—including their ages, grade level, gender, and race; their level of participation in the CCC program; and their college-going plans and family experience with college.

**Demographic data.** Most of the CCC participants were either 16 (31%) or 17 years old (43%)—the average age of the full group was 16.4 years. Younger students accounted for 15 percent of participants—which includes students who are 15 years old (7%), 14 years old (4%), or younger (4%). The remaining 11 percent were either 18 or 19 years old. Not surprisingly, as of



the fall of 2010, most (47%) of the participants were in twelfth grade, and 32 percent were in eleventh grade, 13 percent in tenth, 6 percent in ninth grade, and the remaining 3 percent were in middle school grades.

Almost two-thirds (62%) of the participants were girls. Just as many (62%) were African-American or Black; 31 percent were Hispanic or Latino(a), 3 percent were Asian, 3 percent were multiracial, and 2 percent were White. A large majority (79%) received free or reduced-price meals in school—which indicates that they are from low-income households.

**Participation data.** Most of the CCC participants were in the first (35%) or second year (40%) of attending their CBO's college preparatory program. Yet, 14 percent had attended the CBO program for three years, 5 percent for four years, and the remaining 7 percent had attended for five or more years.

Two-thirds of the students (66%) participated in a CCC summer residency or program. Additionally, 61 percent of the students attended CCC workshops during the school year, 59 percent took CCC courses during the school year, and 12 percent participated in CCC tutoring during the school year.<sup>7</sup> A large majority of the participants (74%) had an attendance rate for the CCC program of 75 percent or higher—with 41 percent having attended all of the sessions or activities offered.

**College-going plans.** A very large percentage (86%) of the CCC participants, according to self-reported survey data, intend to complete a bachelor's degree (21%) or higher (65%). Of the remaining students, 12 percent plan to complete a professional certificate, while 1 percent each think they will end with a high school diploma only or a two-year college degree.

When asked about the type of college they plan to attend, more than a third (35%) of the CCC participants said they are interested in a public university, but almost as many (31%) said they plan to attend a private university. Additionally, 14 percent plan to attend a small liberal arts college, 5 percent said a community or other type of college, and 16 percent said they did not know the type of college they plan to attend.

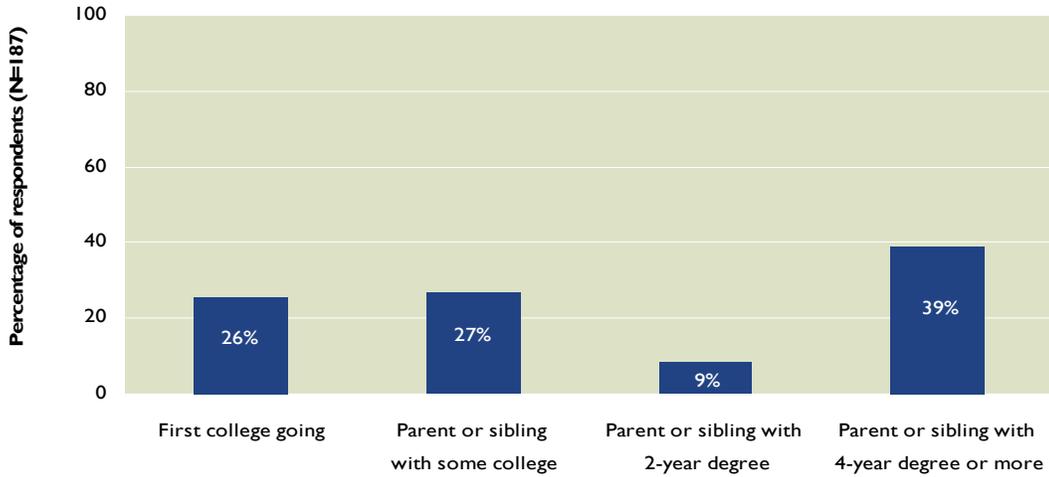
According to responses on the student survey, more than half (53%) of the CCC participants are from families with limited or no college-going experience—including 26 percent who would be the first in their immediate family to attend college and 27 percent who have a parent or sibling who attended some college but who did not graduate. These data are presented in Figure 1. The data in Figure 2 show the education levels of CCC parents or guardians and siblings separately.

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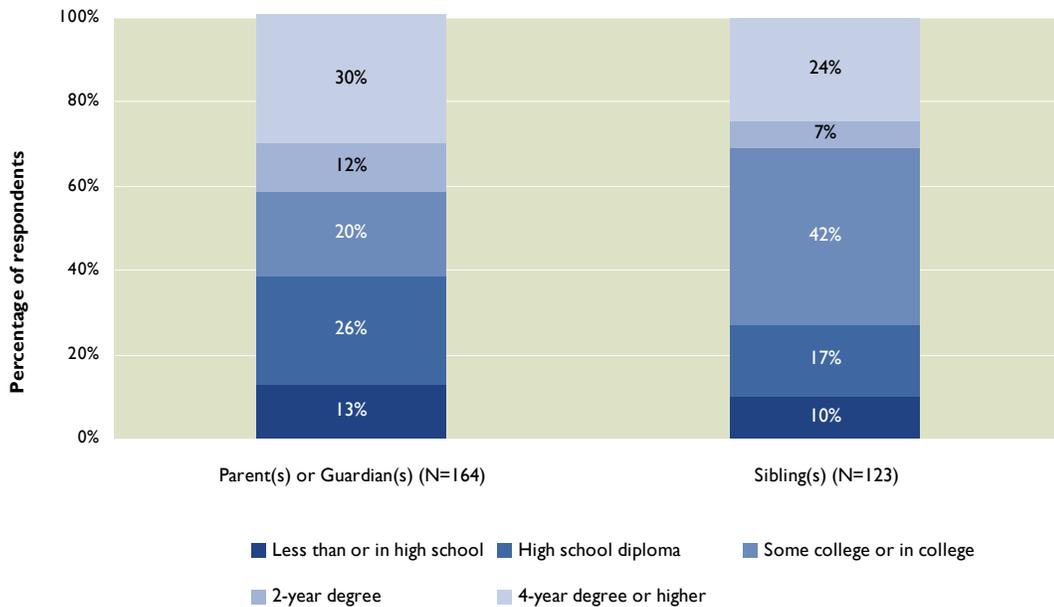
<sup>7</sup> Percentages add to more than 100 percent because most CCC programs offered multiple activities or components.



**Figure 1: College-Going Experience of Parents and Siblings of CCC Participants**



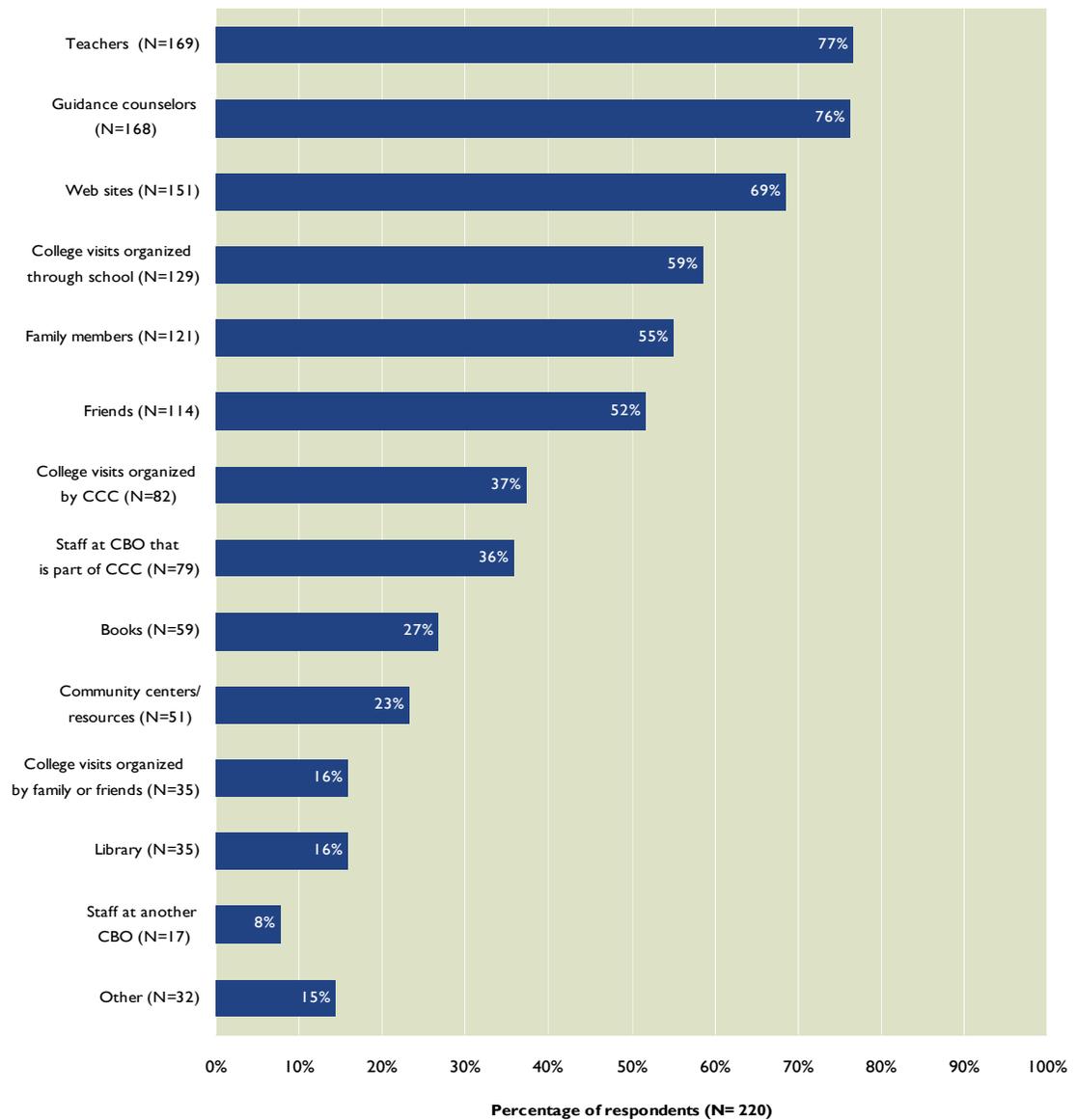
**Figure 2: Highest Level of Education Completed by Parent/Guardians and Siblings of CCC Participants**



Teachers and guidance counselors were CCC participants’ most frequent sources for information about college and college admissions (77% and 76% of the participants reported them as sources, respectively). High percentages of the CCC students also reported using Web

sites (69%), family members (55%), and friends (52%) to get this information (Figure 3). Just over three-quarters (76%) of the CCC participants said they have obtained information through college visits. Most often, the students reported that the visits were organized through their school (59%), while 37 percent said the visits were organized by the CCC program, and 16 percent said by friends or family (Figure 3).

**Figure 3: Sources from Which CCC Participants Obtain Information About College** (multiple responses accepted)



## Program Impact

**What is the value added of the CBO/college partnership?** A unique aspect of the CCC program model is the partnership between CBOs and institutions of higher education. The partnership was an important criterion when the Foundation granted the CCC awards—the proposals had to describe the contribution of each partner and how they would collaborate for a cohesive program. So, it is important to examine if the partnerships are an effective model and the extent to which they added value to college readiness programs. Alternatively, are there other models that might have worked better?

**Overwhelmingly, the focus group respondents agreed that the CBO-college partnership is a valuable—if not essential—part of the CCC program.** Staff from the CBOs reported that the partnership allowed them access—or as one respondent stated, “*an open door*”—to the resources of the colleges. The partnership helped the secondary students tap into a network of college professors to which they would not otherwise be privy. Professors assisted in the college search process by writing letters of recommendation, contacting colleagues at other institutions for information, and offering them advice and support. The CBO staff also believed that the partnership offered a unique opportunity for their students to interact with college students who acted as mentors and role models. One CBO staff member remarked, “*It is a great opportunity for honest mentoring. During the week, high school students are able to develop meaningful relationships [with college students], where they can ask real questions, not just superficial questions. They are able to get information about college and life that they do not have access to at school or home.*”

College faculty also valued the partnership. They depended on the CBOs to facilitate administrative aspects of the program—such as student recruitment and selection; communication with families; chaperoning residency programs; and providing individualized support to the students. The faculty also thought that the partnership brought a more diverse group of secondary students to the college academic bridge programs. A greater level of diversity in the bridge programs, they said, helped the institutions recruit a more diverse student body and build stronger community connections. The value of the partnership is aptly summarized in a statement made by one of the higher education focus group participants, “*Neither of our agencies could provide this kind of an experience for these young people if we were not working in collaboration.*”

**Focus group participants did not identify alternative program models that would better meet the needs of the target population than the CBO-college partnership.**

Participants in the focus groups felt strongly that the partnership model added strong value to the college preparation programs. When asked if there were any alternative models that might work as well or better, they said that collaborations between colleges and high schools may achieve similar results. However, they felt the group of students recruited by high schools would not be as racially or ethnically diverse as the CBO students and that the high schools would not be able to provide the level of individualized support that the CBOs can provide. One college faculty member in the groups had experience working with an academic bridge program offered through a high school, and she confirmed these opinions. She believed that the CBO-college



partnership allowed for a more cohesive program and meaningful experience for the secondary students.

**To what extent and how does each CCC model meet the needs and interests of the students?** As described in the participant profile, the target population for the CCC program comprises low-income youth, first-generation college goers, and students from families with limited college-going experience. Accordingly, many participants lack social networks to help them obtain important information about college and how to navigate the college application process. And yet, most of the students aspire to earn a college degree and are participating in college preparatory programs at the CBO to help them achieve this goal. The CCC program meets the needs and interests of these students by helping build their social networks for college access and exposing them to academic and social aspects of college, and specifically a liberal education.

**The CCC program has helped students gain a deeper understanding of what college is and how to prepare for it.** *“Before the program, students all said they want to go to college and plan to go. But they could not answer the more difficult question about where, what work they needed, etc. After CCC, students were able to answer questions about ‘Why do you want to go to college?’ ‘Where do you want to go?’ with greater certitude, with a sense of understanding—an understanding about what majors are, understanding about college with more depth, that you have to like your classes, you need to be passionate. It is not like high school where you can glide through in four years.”* This quote from one of the CBO staff focus groups clearly describes the impact of the CCC program in providing first-hand opportunities for students to learn what college is like and what to expect when they enroll. On a survey that was administered to all CCC students, 46 percent of the respondents said their understanding about *college life* increased substantially as a result of their participation in the program; and another 32 percent reported a moderate increase (Figure 4). The survey respondents also reported increases in their understanding about *the types of support services that colleges make available to students* (34% substantially and 38% moderately) and *how to access the support services on a college campus* (25% substantially and 31% moderately). Survey respondents were also asked in an open-ended question to describe how the CCC program influenced their college plans or interests. Of the 131 students who responded to this question, 26 percent said they have a better understanding of what to expect in college and 34 percent felt more prepared for what they need to do to get into college. Additionally, 23 percent said they are more motivated to attend college.

Focus group participants also reported that the CCC programs gave students a better understanding of how to prepare their college applications and personal statements. Additionally, they described that the programs exposed the students to the variety of social and cultural activities on a college campus—these experiences showed students how to become to be a more ‘well-rounded applicant.’ As stated by a CBO staff member, “[The program] gives them the language to use during the college application process...to help them articulate their goals.” On the student surveys, 67 percent of the respondents reported a substantial or moderate increase in their understanding of the *college application process*, and 60 percent about the *financial aid process* (Figure 4).

**CCC students gained a stronger understanding of the academic content and rigors of coursework in college-level courses.** A central component in the CCC program is college-level coursework. The courses gave the CBO students a concrete preview of the format and



content of college classes and the complexity and amount of work that is required. On the student survey, a majority of the respondents said that, as a result of their participation in the CCC program, their understanding about *the way college classes are taught* (79%) and *the amount of academic work that college students have* (75%) had increased moderately or substantially. Similarly, focus group participants reported that many students were surprised by how much work is expected of college students and how difficult the content is.

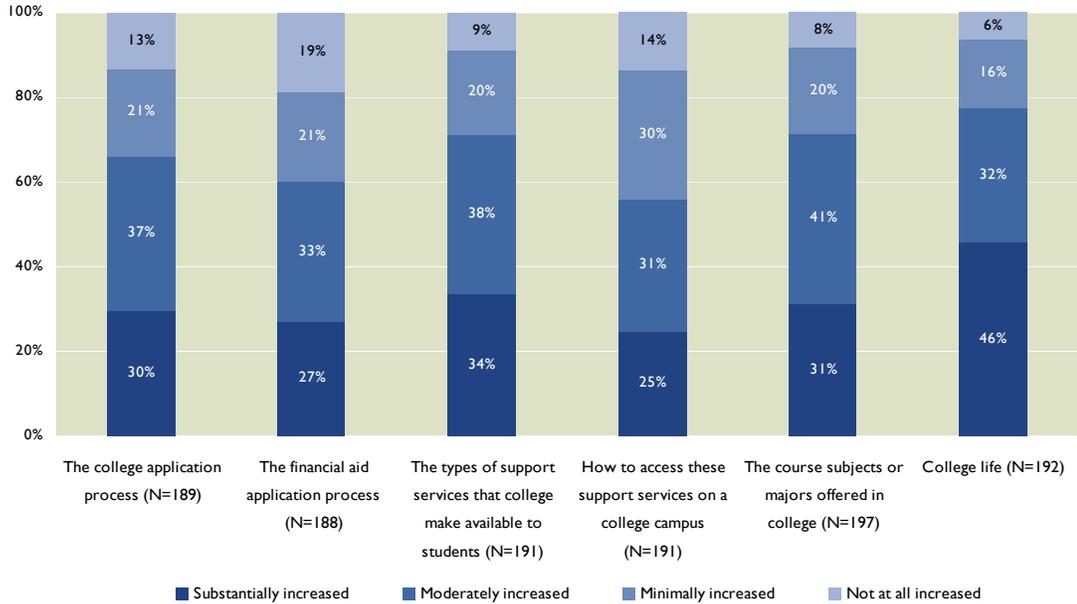
In the focus groups, program staff also said that students realized that, although they may be ‘academic superstars’ in high school, they will have to work hard in college. Other students, the staff added, learned that they need to work harder in high school to prepare for college-level coursework. On the surveys, a majority of the CCC students said their understanding about the *degree or difficulty expected of* (82%) and *degree of engagement in* (85%) *college-level academic work* had increased.

Students also realized for themselves that they need to take ownership of their work and manage their time effectively to ensure that they complete their work and pass their classes. Three-fourths of them (76%) reported an increased understanding of *how students need to manage their time in college*. These survey data are presented in Figure 5.



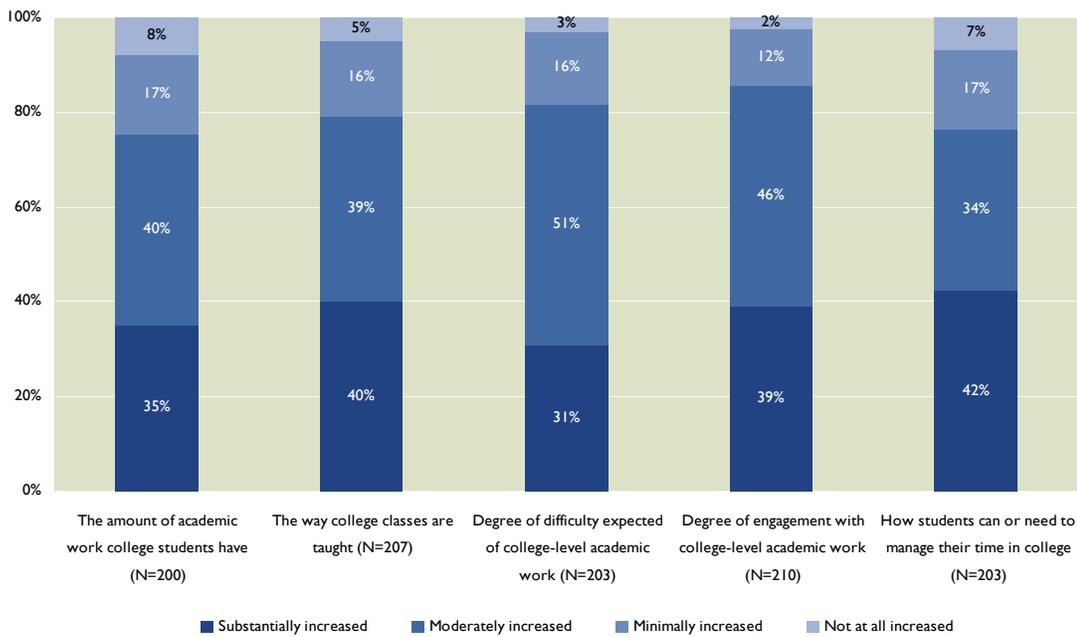
**Figure 4: Impact of CCC Program on Students' Understanding of College Life and Search Process**

Survey Question: To what extent, if at all, has your understanding or awareness of the following topics related to college increased as a result of your participation in the CCC program?



**Figure 5: Impact of CCC Program on Students' Understanding of Academic Requirements of College Coursework**

Survey Question: To what extent, if at all, has your understanding or awareness of the following topics related to college increased as a result of your participation in the CCC program?



**The CCC program has influenced high school students to be more thoughtful in their college searches and to apply to selective universities and liberal arts colleges.** In focus groups with CBO staff, the participants reported that students had become more informed in preparing their college applications. They felt that students had a better understanding of the difference between a ‘selective’ and ‘nonselective’ institution, and that they should consider the size, location, and academic programming of a college when applying. One CBO staff member attributed the heightened awareness to the self-reflection required of the students in the writing workshops. He stated that the program influenced students by *“having them prepare what would be a college essay and have them reflect on themselves and their self-identity as part of writing that essay, so they can identify where they want to go. ‘I don’t just want to go to a school because they have a great basketball team, I want to go to this school because it is going to meet my needs as a person’ with respect to their major or whether it is a big school or a small school.”*

Other CBO staff members noted that students were now more likely to apply to private universities or colleges beyond the tri-state area. One focus group participant remarked, *“Having looked at their college selections, looking at the list that they are going to, it is changing from some of the smaller schools or some of the CUNY or SUNY schools to now private schools. Students are now looking at higher [level] schools and saying ‘I can probably go to Yale, I know there is a lot expected of me’ but they are asking for the visits. They want to see these schools that a year and a half ago, they wouldn’t have.”*

Data from the student surveys confirmed this belief. As Figure 6 shows, 66 percent of respondents said their participation in the CCC program *influenced their college plans or interests* a lot. Additionally, Figure 7 shows that 53 percent of the respondents who have identified a college major to pursue stated that the CCC program influenced their choice a lot (23%) or some (30%). The following are some of the explanations given by survey respondents about how the CCC program influenced their choices.

*“It helped me want to experience more things and open up my options.”*

*“It made me want to go to a smaller, more involved college.”*

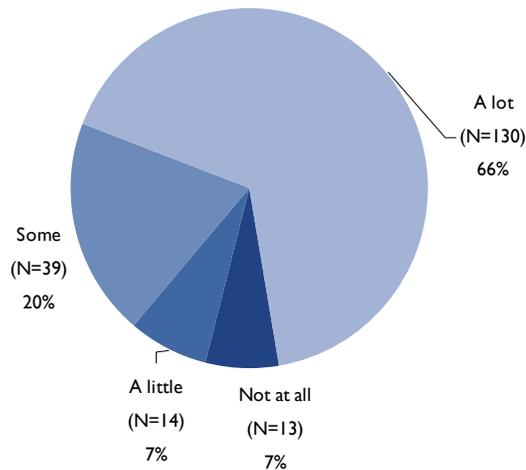
*“It has helped me by realizing who I am and what I can bring to a college campus. It has also helped me understand the type of school I should apply to in accordance with my personality and intellect.”*

*“It has influenced my college plans because now I’m actually thinking about what I want to major in and how I want to do it. It influenced me to have high standards for myself throughout anything I do. In addition, just to stay focused and do what I have to do.”*

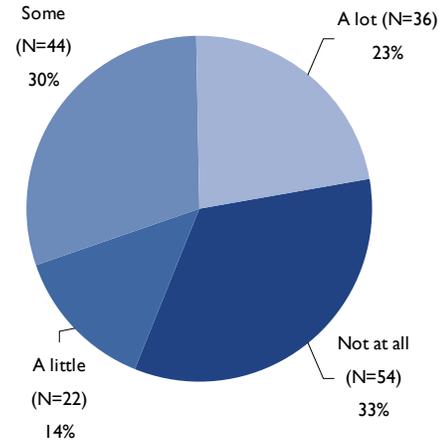
*“The program has opened my eyes to many new things such as the different types of degrees [that] college has to offer, and how I should not sell myself short and stick to what I know.”*



**Figure 6: To what extent has your participation in the CCC program influenced your college plans or interests?**



**Figure 7: To what extent has your participation in the CCC program influenced your interest or choice of a major?**

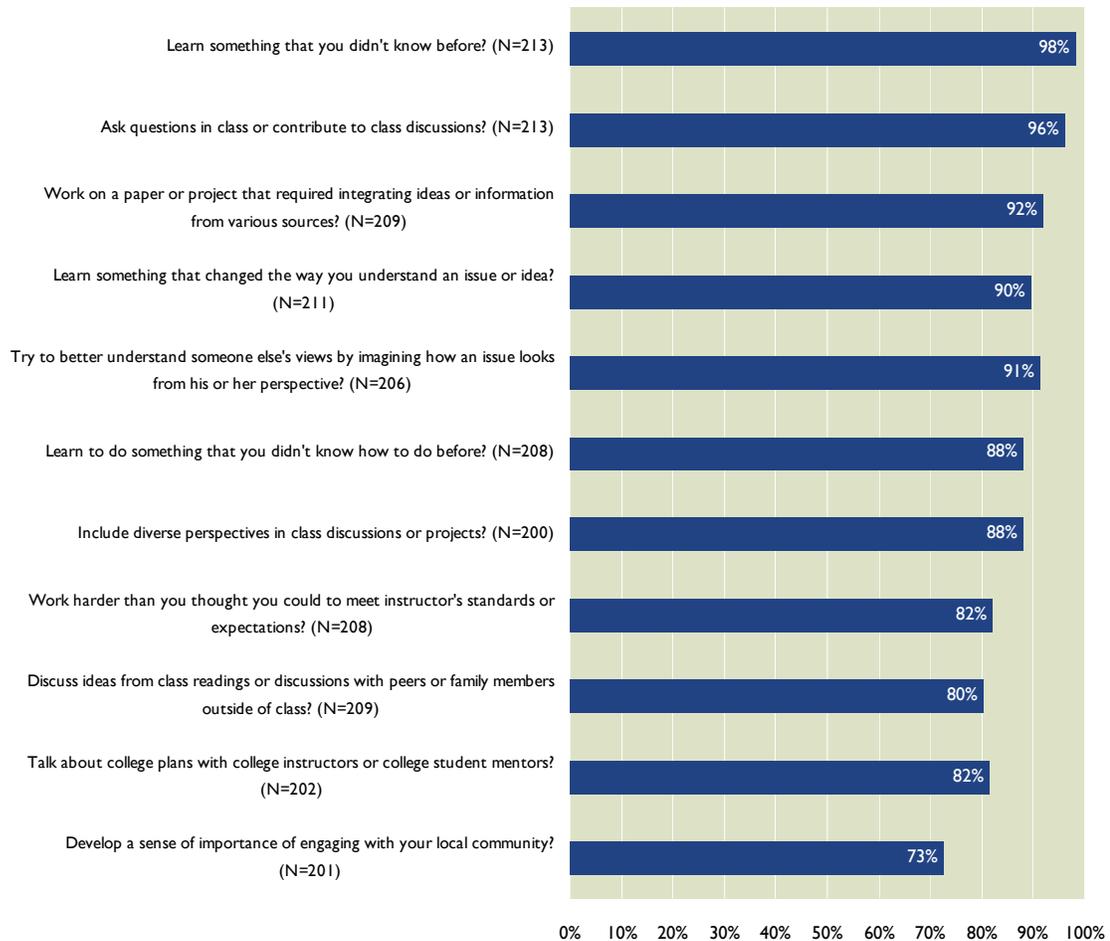


The programs achieved these impacts by offering students hands-on exposure to liberal education and engaging them in meaningful academic discussions. Through the CCC program, secondary students participated in academic coursework that required them to think critically about broad issues and understand the social context of their ideas. In some programs, students read ancient texts of Plato or Aristotle and were challenged to find modern-day relevance to these writings. Students in other programs debated social issues such as sweatshop labor, environmental pollution, and citizenship. Through the course readings and professor-led discussions, the students engaged in real academic discourse to understand how they are involved in a global conversation. Students were also challenged to find a purpose or voice in their writing and to better understand the value of the ideas they write about.

On the surveys, respondents were asked about the types of learning they experienced in the academic courses. Nine in ten respondents said that in the CCC courses, they *learned something that changed the way they understand an issue or idea* (90%) and *tried to better understand someone else’s views by imagining how an issue looks from his or her perspective* (91%). Most (92%) said they did *work that required integrating ideas or information from various sources*, and 80 percent *discussed ideas from class readings outside of class*. These and other responses are listed in Figure 8.



**Figure 8: Through your participation in the CCC program, which of the following did you do?**

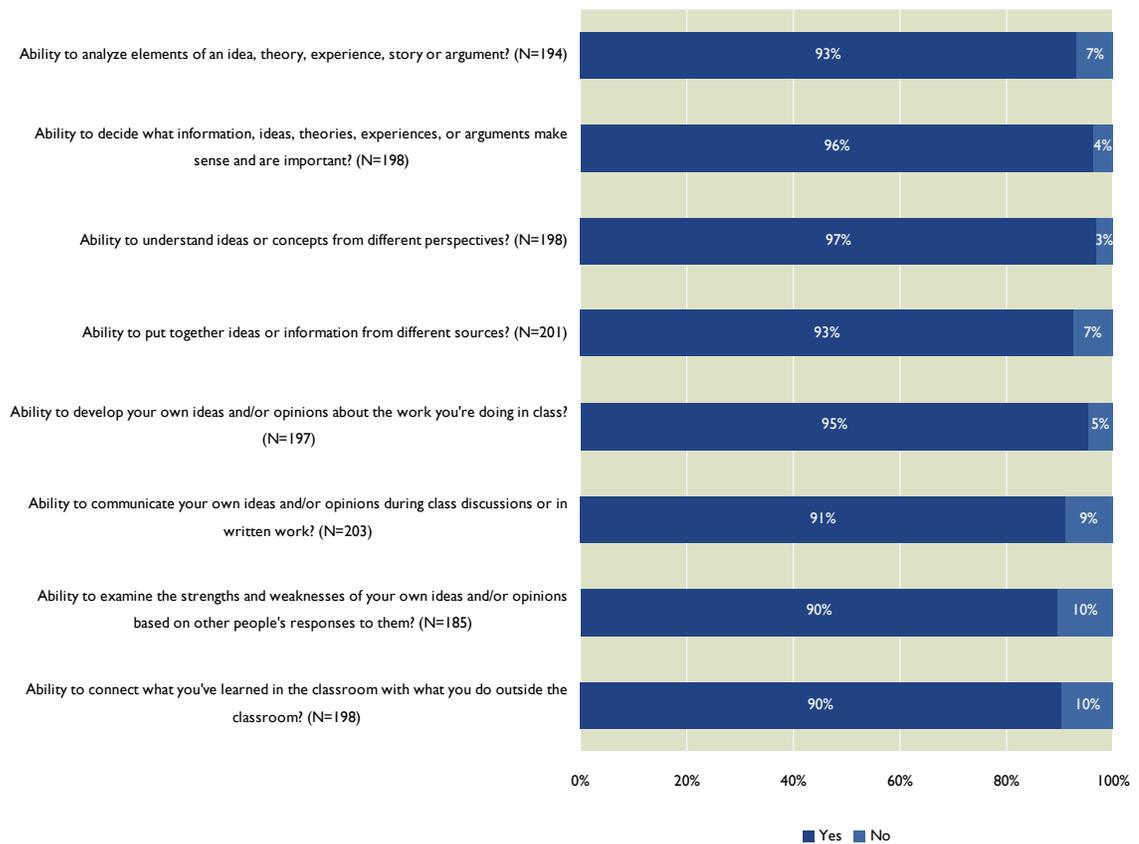


**Many CCC students improved their abilities to think and write critically.** Data from the focus groups and student surveys indicate that the CCC program helped the students improve higher order skills, such as the ability to analyze and decipher information, develop and write about their own ideas, and understand how to apply classroom learning to the real world. For example, as noted in one of the college faculty focus groups, “*Students enrolled in the program thinking about writing as a technical skill and not that you are writing because you have something to say. The writing course was structured around thematic content. Students saw that ideas matter.*” On the surveys, the CCC students supported this idea—almost all of respondents said their abilities to *develop their ideas and/ or opinions about the work in class* (95%) and to *communicate those ideas and/ or opinions during class discussions or in written work* (91%) improved as a result of their participation in the program. Furthermore, almost as many respondents said their abilities to *write clearly and effectively* (88%) and to *speak clearly and effectively* (87%) had improved. The students’ responses about the impact of the CCC program on their skills are shown in Figures 9 and 10.

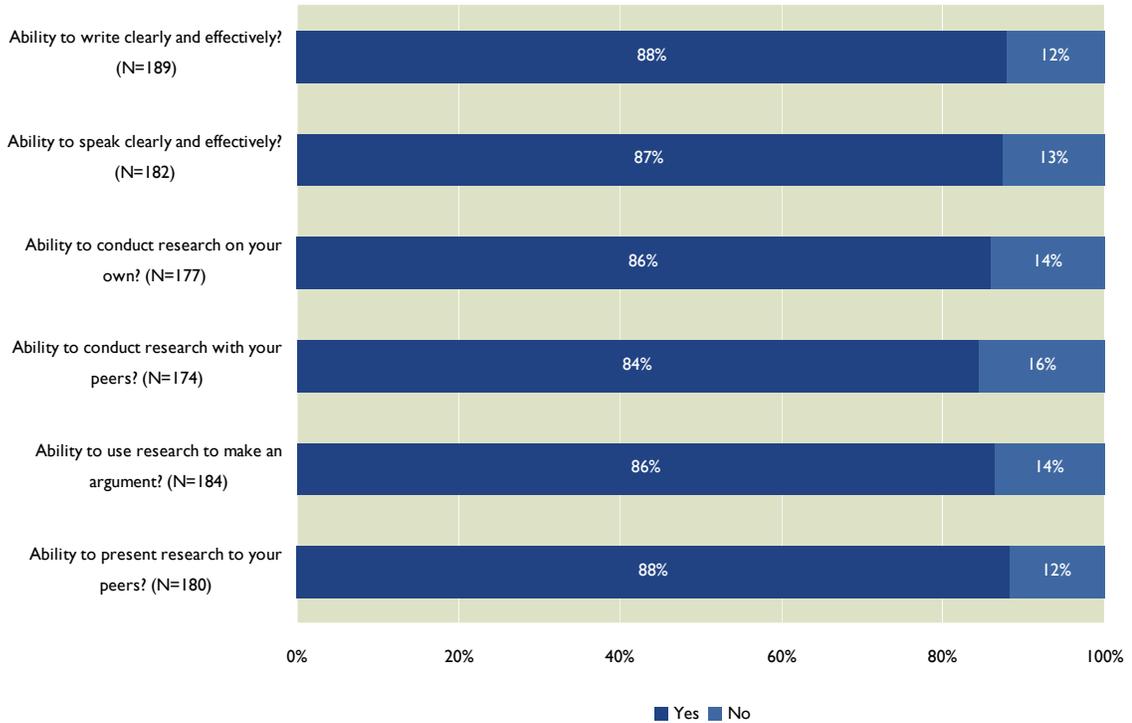


One way the programs influenced the students’ skills was by challenging them to take the lead in their own learning. As described by a focus group member, “*In real life, you are going to be presented with a problem and you are going to figure out all aspects [of the problem]. [We try to] Get the kids to know you are not going to get the answer right away, that we are not going to tell you [the answer.]*” Again student responses to the survey confirmed this finding. Ninety percent of the respondents said their ability to *connect what they learned in the classroom with what they do outside the classroom* had improved. In addition, most respondents said their ability to *conduct their own research* (86%) or *conduct research with peers* (84%) had improved.

**Figure 9: Have your skills in the following areas improved as a result of your participation in the CCC program?**

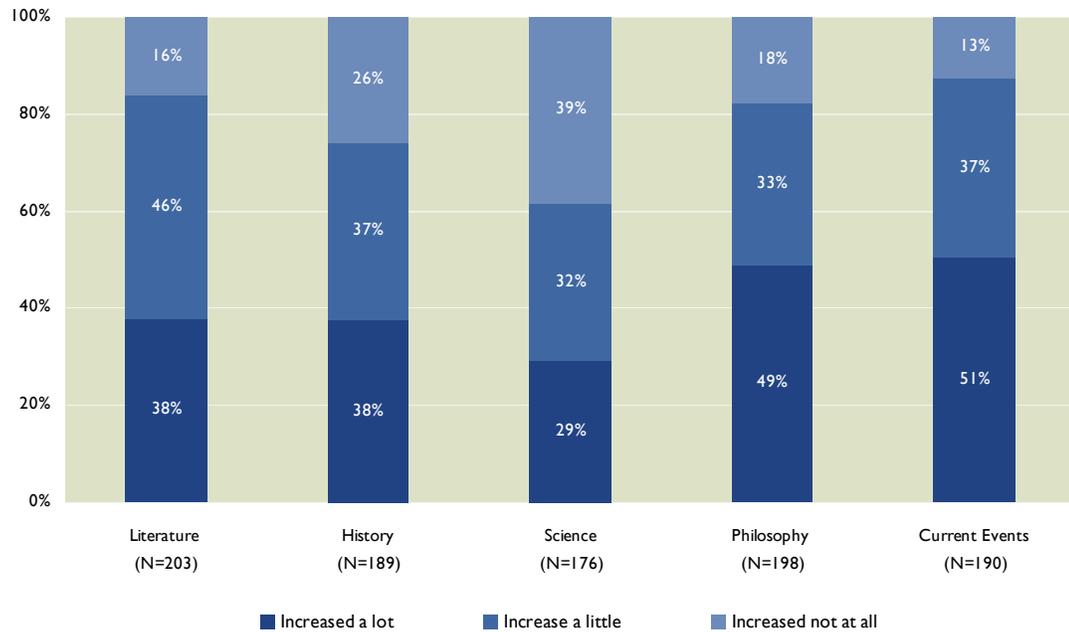


**Figure 10: Have your skills in the following areas improved as a result of your participation in the CCC program?**



The survey data also showed that the CCC students’ interest and curiosity about various academic disciplines increased as a result of their participation in the program. As shown in Figure 11, more than eight in ten survey respondents increased their interest in literature (84%) and philosophy (82%). Even more (88%) reported that their interest in current events increased, with 51 percent indicating that it increased a lot.

**Figure 11: To what extent has the CCC program increased your interest or curiosity in the following academic disciplines?**



**Are certain elements of the program model more influential?** The Foundation’s model for the CCC program provided a framework for the partnerships to develop unique college experiences. The RFP instructed prospective grantees to develop programs “based on challenging and stimulating subject material in an academic discipline” and “to monitor student progress with particular attention to their readiness to undertake college-level work and succeed in it.” Each CCC program met these criteria with a unique set of activities. And yet, across the 12 programs, the data show that program staff and participants identified the same program elements as the most influential.

**The most influential aspects of the CCC program model were opportunities for secondary students to take courses on a college campus, to interact with college professors, and to be mentored by college students.** Many college preparatory programs provide academic enrichment or SAT preparation classes at a community organization or high school and supplement these activities with day trips to local colleges and college fairs. The CCC program approaches college preparation in a different way—by giving high school students the opportunity to live a college student’s life. It is this aspect of the program that the focus group participants said was most impactful for students. They said the opportunities for secondary students to experience what it is like to take classes in college buildings, live in dormitories, make decisions about how to balance their academic and social lives, and navigate a campus had a strong impact. This idea was discussed by focus groups participants, who said, “*The residency program really opened their eyes in a different way. It wasn’t just a place to go to hang out, it was real structure*”



*and work to be done.” And, “the Saturday sessions were not real. Students didn’t see the purpose or urgency. When they got on campus, they saw that other students on campus acted differently and therefore, they started to act differently in how they talked with professors, walked in the hallways. They realized that college is serious.”*

Survey data from the CCC students show a similar viewpoint. *Living on a college campus* was the aspect of the program with which students were most satisfied—84 percent said they were either very satisfied or satisfied with being on campus. Furthermore, 87 percent of the respondents said that *living on a college campus* had changed their understanding of a college education either a lot (53%) or a little (34%). Additionally, even more respondents said that *completing college-level coursework* (95%) and *college courses* (94%) changed their understanding. When they were asked in an open-ended survey question to identify the most meaningful aspect or component of the program, 44 of the 149 students who responded to the question (20%) said living on campus or the college experience. Additionally, 58 respondents (39%) said the lectures, classes, or discussions.

The CCC students were also largely impacted by *interacting with college professors*—92 percent said this part of the program changed their understanding of a college education (63% reported that it changed their understanding a lot). One of the focus group participants reported that *“each one of them [students] got to interface with a professor about their subjects and I think that is really a unique opportunity for them to get some esoteric knowledge of something they might be interested in.”* Another remark on this topic suggested that *“we got our students in a classroom with actual college professors and, as much as I love graduate students and certified New York City teachers, there is something about the effect that people who love the literature they are teaching has on students.”*

On the surveys, the CCC students also expressed a high level of satisfaction with the *opportunities to interact with college professors*. Most of the respondents were either very satisfied (44%), satisfied (39%), or, at the very least, somewhat satisfied (13%) with these opportunities. Additionally, just as many of the respondents were very satisfied (39%), satisfied (40%), or somewhat satisfied (16%) with the *teaching style of college professors*. In open-ended survey responses, 13 percent of the respondents identified interacting with professors as the most meaningful element or component of the program.

The CCC students also benefited greatly from the opportunities to interact with college students. These students were *“real life role models who are succeeding in college.”* Furthermore, many of the college mentors were low-income and minority students from urban environments. Their success in college helped the CCC students see that they, too, can succeed. In fact, 88 percent of the student survey respondents said that *interacting with college students* had helped change their understanding of a college education (52% said it changed a lot). Similarly, when asked how satisfied they were with the *opportunities to interact with college students* in the program, 41 percent said very satisfied and 36 percent were satisfied. The survey data on student satisfaction and impact on their understanding of a college education are presented in Figures 12 and 13.

### **Are there populations with whom the program seems to be most influential?**

The CBO staff and college faculty who participated in the focus groups generally agreed that the CCC programs were impactful for the majority of students who participated. Yet, they highlighted that there were groups of students with whom the program seemed to have a stronger impact.



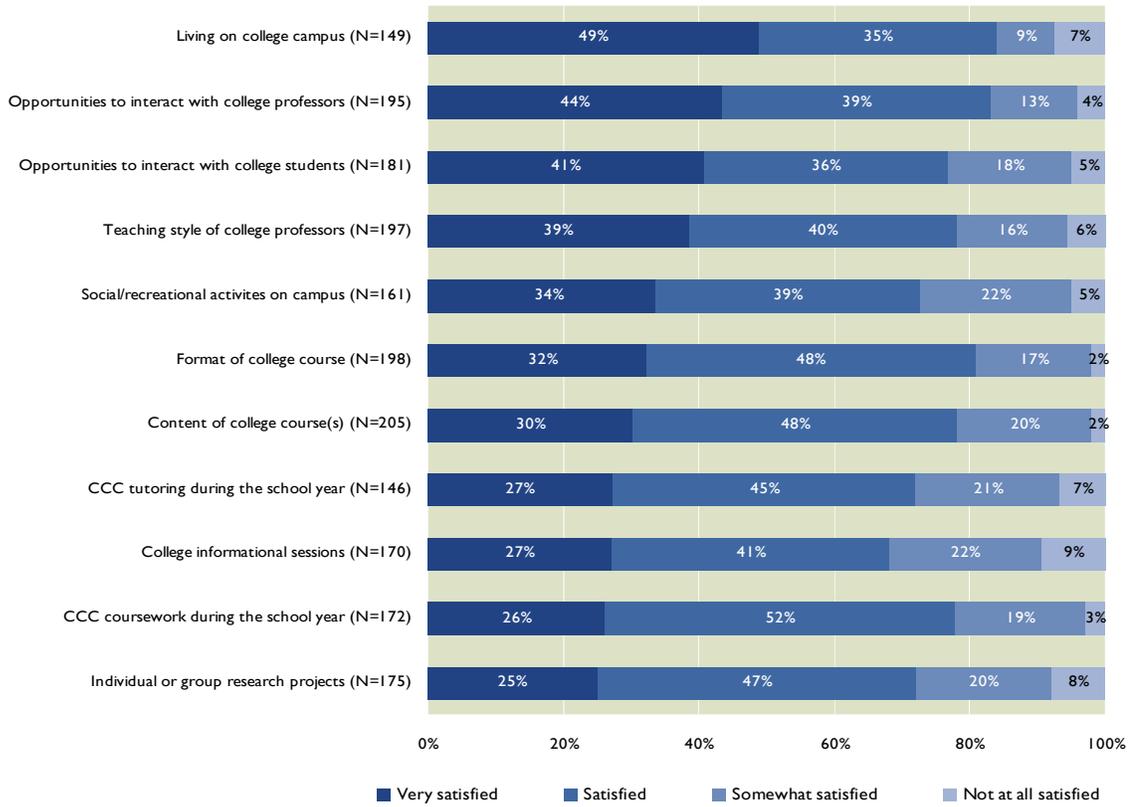
**Focus group participants noted that the CCC programs greatly influenced male students, students in their junior or senior year in high school, and academically driven students.** Staff from several of the CBOs remarked that the boys in their CCC program were engaged in a way that the staff had not seen before. They added that the girls in their college preparatory programs tend to be focused and driven, while the boys are less interested or motivated to participate. Yet, in the CCC programs, the male students “*stepped up*” and participated in the programs “*with a seriousness of purpose that you usually see more in the female students.*” The staff added that the content and format of the programs resonated with the male students. They also felt that the boys benefited from being in a new environment more than the girls did.

Some focus group participants also reported the programs had a greater influence on older students (grades 10 to 12) than younger students (middle school or ninth grade). They felt that the younger students did not function as well on a college campus, and the content of the coursework was too abstract for them. It should be noted that a majority of the CCC programs targeted older students, so this finding was not applicable for many of the programs.

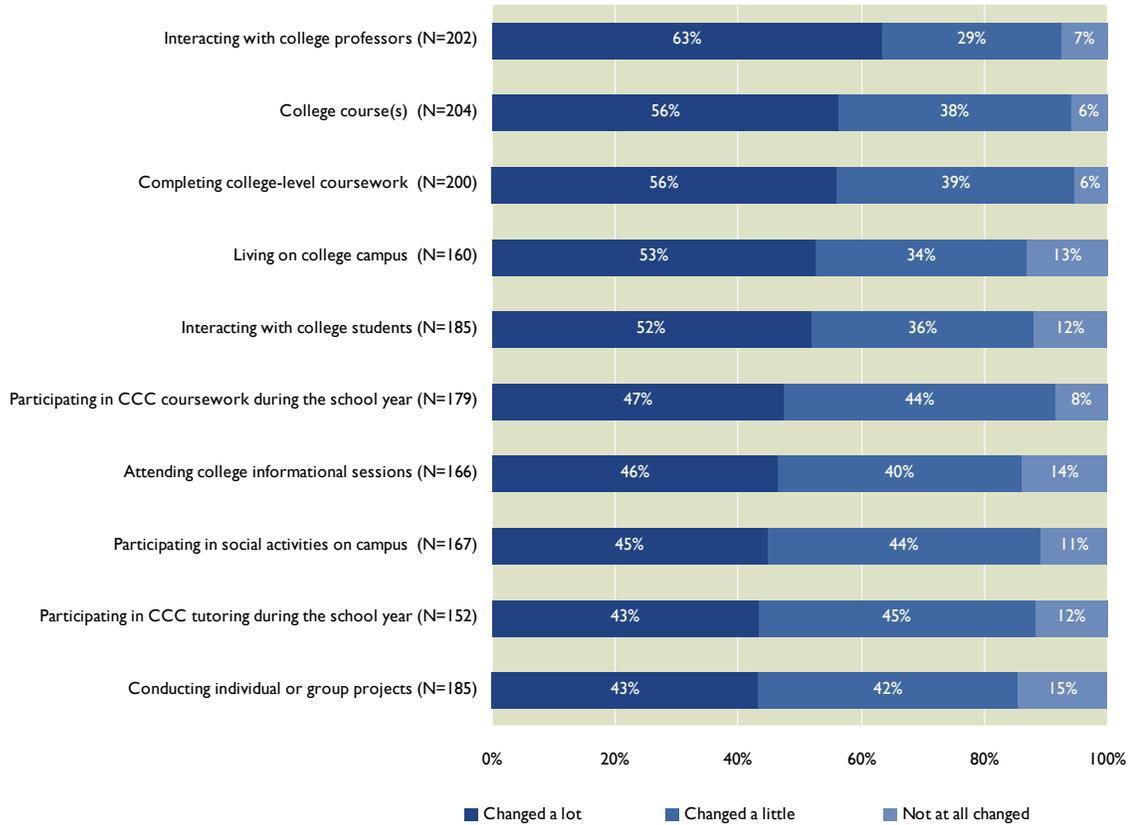
Lastly, some of the focus group respondents reported that the programs were most impactful with students who are academically motivated. They added that the influence depended less on the students’ academic abilities or intellect, but rather on their desire and willingness to learn and work hard.



**Figure 12: How satisfied are you with each of the following components or aspects of the program?**



**Figure 13: How much did each of the following components or aspects of the program change your understanding of a college education?**



## Sustainability of the Program

**How does the program fit into the CBO's college preparatory program and/or curriculum, and what value does it add to the youth and CBO?**

**Can the program be integrated into the CBO's existing programming? What additional resources are needed to make this happen?** According to participants in the CBO focus groups, the CCC program augments the college-going experience for the secondary students. They explained that the CBOs already provide general college preparation and exploration activities to expose their students to college and the application process. The CCC program builds upon these activities by providing students with access to the college campus, college faculty, and the academic and social realities of college. The value added by the CCC program is this authentic college experience. One CBO staff member explained, *"We could replicate it [the CCC program] and provide something similar but it will not be exactly the same. It is hard to replicate a college campus. That is where the value comes in, being on campus, acting as a college student."*

**All of the CBO staff members in the focus groups agreed that the CCC program is a valuable addition to the agencies' college preparatory programs. Yet, they did not agree when asked about how integrated the CCC program was in their programming and the extent to which it fit within the college preparatory activities.** In the focus groups, some of the CBO staff reported that the CCC program is fully integrated into the college preparatory program—all students participate, CCC activities are offered throughout the school year, and the CCC program content is aligned with the agency's academic curriculum. Staff from other agencies, however, suggested that the CCC program is a stand-alone component in their programming—it is offered only to some students and it is more of a one-shot experience in a student's high school career. These respondents, however, still talked strongly about the value of the program, even as a stand-alone component.

**How important is this program to the colleges and universities? How does it fit into their vision and existing college preparatory programs? Are there other academic bridges to college that might have more of an impact on higher education institutions?** The college faculty in the focus groups agreed that the CCC program serves as a tangible example of their institution's mission and vision for service learning and community engagement. They added that the program helped their institution *"walk the walk,"* in terms of providing experiences that are aligned with the institution's goals to promote diversity and community outreach. The CCC program also helped promote civic engagement within the college community. Some college staff mentioned that other faculty members had been encouraged to get involved in academic bridge and other community programs once they observed the benefits of the CCC program. Some of the focus group participants added that the CCC program helped build interest within the institution's administration to become involved with other college access opportunities—the program had *"named the need."*

Opinions on this topic differed in the CBO staff focus groups. The CBO staff members felt that the CCC programs generally did not have institutional support from the colleges and



universities. They were unsure whether the college leaders believed in the value of the program—especially not in the same way that their agency valued the programs. They acknowledged that the college professors worked extremely hard for the programs, however, they did not observe the institutional support for this work. They believed that the programs were *“just something that was going on at the campus.”*

## Program Replicability

**Is the program reaching the Foundation’s intended goals? Is the CCC program model a worthwhile investment?** In looking at the Foundation’s goals for the CCC program, it is clear that all six goals have been at least partially met. The data presented in this report support the following statements about the program goals.

- **The CCC programs have effectively and robustly enhanced the college readiness of highly talented but disadvantaged high school students served by CBOs.**
- **The CCC programs have successfully encouraged these students to aim high in setting their academic goals.**
- **The CCC programs have provided opportunities for faculty and students at 12 colleges and universities to work with the CBO students.**
- **The CCC programs have encouraged academic departments at the colleges and universities to commit to the partnership—although as discussed in the previous section the level of support from the institutions varied.**
- **The CCC programs have encouraged the CBOs and colleges to explore ways in which such partnerships can be more fully integrated and institutionalized at their institutions. However, most programs have not yet achieved a high level of integration into the academic programming or curriculum at the institutions.**
- **The CCC programs have effectively supported college preparatory programs at the CBOs.**

During the second year of funding, the Foundation invested almost \$1 million to support programs that served 325 secondary students. This level of investment computes to almost \$3,000 for each program participant—with a cost per participant that ranged from \$869 to \$8,000 across the 12 partnerships. Is it a worthwhile investment?

It is difficult to fully understand the value of the investment in the CCC program without knowing its lasting impact; for example, on participants’ enrollment and success in selective colleges and universities, their choice of college majors, or the residual effect on their peers and family members. A longitudinal evaluation is required to study these types of long-term outcomes. Yet, the data in this report present evidence of some important short-term outcomes. The evaluation findings suggest that the CCC programs provide unique opportunities for youth from under-resourced families to gain access to valuable information and social networks that



help in the college search process. The CCC programs provided stimulating and motivating academic experiences to prepare students with skills and knowledge that are important in pursuing a liberal education. The programs offered opportunities for high school students to interact with college professors and meet college students who served as role models and mentors. And for many students and their families, the CCC program opened their eyes to the possibility of attending a highly selective, private university or a liberal arts college outside of New York City. These impacts could have lasting effects on the college decisions of individual students and could influence their peers to make similar choices for their futures. The CCC students provided the following comments about the program.

*“I think that this program is a very good and productive [program] that helps the society be a better one. Because by this program, people get influenced by good things, like education, which is the base of a very good nation.”*

*“This was really great! I loved it. I wish it was more time since I want to stay here and have more fun and increase my knowledge. I am so excited for college now.”*

**What program models and/or elements would be most easily and effectively replicated?** In the focus groups, CBO staff and college faculty agreed that it would be very hard to replicate the CCC program without the strong partnership between the CBOs and the colleges and adequate funding. They talked about being able to provide similar programs, such as by getting college professors to teach high school students. However **they strongly felt that they could not replicate the CCC program impact without providing the complete CCC program model.**

**What do organizations need to know in order to replicate the program?** The focus group participants highlighted the following lessons learned that they would share with other organizations trying to replicate the program.

- **The CBO and college must have an equal partnership with real collaboration.** The partnership should establish clear goals and expectations for the program starting on day one, and the collaboration must include open and frequent communication between partners.
- **The program must have a clear definition of the characteristics and needs of the target student population.** It is important that the college partners understand the needs and abilities of the CBO students.
- **The program should offer college-level courses that engage the secondary students and inspire them to go to college.**
- **The CBO staff and college faculty should have the right professional qualifications and personal skills and must be able to devote adequate time to the program.**
- **The CBO program staff should develop contacts and relationships with multiple faculty and administrators at the college or university so they have a network of resources on campus.**
- **The partners need to understand each others’ organizations and how they function—administratively and professionally.**



- College student mentors need to be trained and mentored for their positions in the program.

**What additional resources, if any, are needed by partnerships to sustain and/or replicate the program?** Most of the focus group participants agreed that **an effective program needs “real resources to function well.”** The program must include a level of funding to pay college professors and staff for their time and efforts, provide stipends for college students and perhaps the secondary students, gain access to facilities and enrichment activities on college campuses, and cover the administrative costs for the CBO to conduct the program. Many respondents agree with the statement, *“this type of program is very labor and resource intensive without much explicit benefit to the institution.”* Furthermore, some of the respondents reported that the partners provided many pro bono contributions, such as staff time, space for program activities, and intellectual resources. They concluded it is important that the partners understand the level of direct and indirect costs required from the onset of the program.



## IV. Recommendations

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The results of the evaluation clearly reveal substantial benefits gained from the CCC program—to secondary students, CBOs, and colleges and universities. The program is an important undertaking for the Foundation. Yet, it is an expensive one. The following recommendations are provided to guide the Foundation in its thinking about the future of the CCC program.

1. **Continue to fund the CCC partnerships at a robust level to support the development of lasting and meaningful programs.**
2. **Consider targeting the program to colleges and universities that demonstrate a real understanding of the goals of the CCC program and demonstrate the capacity to provide the resources needed to sustain the programs beyond the grant cycle.**
3. **Recruit CBOs for the CCC partnerships that serve the types of students who will benefit most from the program model—namely, highly motivated, college-bound students who are intellectually and socially prepared for an authentic college experience.**
4. **Work to ensure that all of the CCC partners understand the mission of the Teagle Foundation so that the CCC programs are developed in full alignment with the Foundation’s intended goals for the program.**
5. **Consider building a pilot year into the grant so the partnerships can achieve effective collaboration before the three-year grant is awarded.**
6. **Provide regular opportunities for CBOs and colleges/universities to convene (both before and after the grants are awarded) to share best practices and have collegial discussions about college readiness and the CCC programs.**

