

Academic Advancement Program (AAP)
FTSP Assessment
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Findings

When asked about the purpose of the Academic Advancement Program (AAP), many respondents believed that AAP functions to support students at UCLA from “minority,” “first-generation,” “underrepresented,” “socio-economically disadvantaged,” and “historically discriminated” backgrounds. Support, whether implied or stated, was believed to be predominantly academic; however respondents believed there were additional resources for “social” and/or “emotional support” to help transition to university life. The respondents also stated that AAP was meant to help students “adjust,” “transition,” and/or “acclimate” themselves to UCLA. This was believed to take place both via AAP programs and services, as well as through AAP helping students “become familiar” with the campus and its additional resources.

Student confidence levels varied, but tended to be at the lower end of the scale prior to completing FTSP. The primary concern for respondents was academic preparedness and even some students at the higher end of the confidence scale still stated similar concerns. These comments were largely due to “uncertainty” about upcoming course material and its potential difficulty, “writing skills,” “time management,” “competition” with other students, and the ability to “transition/adjust” to university life. Those who expressed confidence prior to FTSP mainly based that confidence on personal skills, such as “mental preparedness,” “determination to excel” and “academic capability.” The more confident respondents on the post-FTSP survey were less likely to base their confidence on personal attributes. Instead, they based their confidence on what they gained from FTSP. Specifically, FTSP made the students feel prepared academically and/or socially, supported by AAP and campus-wide resources, and comfortable with navigating the campus.

These sentiments overlap with what students mentioned on both the pre- and post- FTSP surveys as their greatest concern about entering UCLA. The majority of the respondent placed academic preparedness at the top of their concerns, and many continued to list concerns regarding time-management, competition, adjusting to college life, and study habits. Some students also expressed concern for “building professor-student relationships,” “paying for school,” and “graduating on time.” However, many respondents on the post-FTSP survey listed greater self-doubt regarding social and emotional issues, such as “making friends,” “homesickness,” “not being able to get involved in organizations,” and generally fearing feeling “emotionally overwhelmed” and/or “stressed.” Other post-FTSP respondents expressed concern for “culture shock,” “racial stereotyping,” “micro-aggressions,” and “feeling segregated.”

This coincides with the reasons given for attending the summer program as well as the expectations students had for the summer program as per the entry survey. Most of the comments indicated an interest in transitioning to UCLA, “preparing for the fall” and “the quarter system,” “learning the campus” and “available resources,” and “getting a head start academically” in terms of units, studying and writing skills, time-management, and GPA. Some students were interested in building a “support system” or “network” of friends and resources. When asked whether their expectations for the summer program were met in the post-FTSP survey, most students responded affirmatively and their comments reflected the expectations and reasons listed for entering the summer program. Those who responded negatively indicated that they were not prepared for what they presumed would be “difficult” and “competitive” academics, or that the summer program was difficult for them. Several students stated negative feelings about “segregation by race,” “limited group activities,” “not many like-minded people,” and “being surrounded by White people.”

When asked whether students had been interested in joining UCLA's College Summer Institute (CSI) and why they chose AAP's summer program instead, the majority of respondents indicated that they were never interested in participating in CSI. A significant number of respondents said they were initially interested in both, but ultimately chose FTSP over CSI. Respondents from both groups stated that they chose FTSP because it offered a "diverse community," "a community with people of a similar background," "a program geared toward helping [them] with [their] needs," and/or "a program offering better opportunities/benefits." Others stated they joined FTSP because it was recommended to them. Several students stated that they did not know about CSI.

Students compared Academic Counselors to Peer Counselors by distinguishing between their roles as well as their training and age. Respondents understood Academic Counselors to be those who help with academic issues, which may include "helping with classes," "scheduling classes," offering guidance to "help graduate" and/or to "achieve future goals," "finding resources," "choosing a major," and/or "keeping an eye on GPA." Peer Counselors, on the other hand, help with personal or social issues, which may include helping with "social life," "adjusting to UCLA," "living in the dorms," "navigating the campus," and/or providing "study tips." They also serve as "a mentor," "someone to talk to," and/or offer "perspectives from personal experience," and "emotional support." Respondents also believed that Academic Counselors are "professionals" who are "paid." They are "adults," "have more experience," "have masters or Ph.D.'s," and "counselling is their career." Peer Counselors are "students" who are "a friend," "trained to help fellow students," and "offer a student's perspective."

The majority of respondents believed that the purpose of Peer Facilitated Learning (PFL) is to help students "learn collaboratively" and/or "provide tutoring." Learning collaboratively

can mean “effectively engaging students,” “spark discussion,” “teach each other in a group setting,” and/or “learn teamwork,” in order to understand the material better and to “establish a sense of community.” This was thought to help “communicate more easily” and “to reduce anxiety.” Tutoring was described as “helping students learn at a college level,” “expanding” and/or “clarifying” course material or lectures, “answering questions,” “providing study tips,” “providing homework help,” “acting as a TA,” “promoting deeper thinking,” and offering a “different pace from lectures.” Pre-FTSP survey respondents were more likely to believe that PFL is for collaborative learning while post-FTSP survey respondents were more likely to believe that PFL is for tutoring. Other responses reflected the perceived AAP mission when describing PFL. Respondents said that PFL serves to mentor new students by “aiding with choosing majors,” “guiding students,” “providing resources,” “helping adjust,” and “being more relatable for students than other counselors.” Some students believed that PFL is meant to “provide peer advice” and “get insights and perspectives.”

When asked to rank the purpose of FTSP based on “Academic Preparation,” “Introduction to College Life,” “Broaden Life Experience,” and “Sociocultural and Political Development” the pre-FTSP and post-FTSP followed the same trend. In each case, Academic Preparation was first, Introduction to College Life was second, and Broaden Life Experience and Sociocultural and Political Development were closely ranked in either third or fourth place.