

The Summer Humanities Institute Experience  
UCLA Bunche Center for African-American Studies

2009 Evaluation Report

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## Introduction

Once again, the SRM Evaluation Group is pleased to continue our working relationship with the UCLA Summer Humanities Institute (SHI) as external evaluators. The purpose of the evaluation is to investigate the strengths and weaknesses of the program primarily through participants' self-reported experiences and perceptions. The relationships between individual experiences and the program activities present a comprehensive account of how those activities work collectively to create the SHI experience. Mentor perspectives provide an additional vantage point from which to contextualize the program experience.

This report details our findings from the evaluation of the 2009 UCLA Summer Humanities Institute. Prior to the start of this year's program, the evaluation team collaborated with program administrators to revise the SHI Theory of Action Plan, which was originally created in 2005.<sup>1</sup> This action plan lists: the main learning activities of the program; a list of immediate outcomes intended to result from these activities; a list of intermediate outcomes that are intended to occur, not as an immediate result of the activities but over time and potentially as a result of the preceding outcomes; and, the program's ultimate goal. Revision of this plan allowed both evaluators and program administrators to review how the program is intended to work and what outcomes are intended to occur.

Building on our work with SHI from previous years, we utilized similar surveys, focus group, and individual interview protocols, with minor adjustments made to improve the quality of the data collected and to better align the instruments, data, and results with the revised theory of action plan. The following table below describes our data sources.

**Table 1. Data Sources for the 2009 SHI Evaluation**

Data Source	Type of Administration	Dates Collected
Pre-Program Student Survey	In-Person Paper, 100% participation N=10	Orientation Day June 22, 2009
Student Focus Groups	In-Person, 2 group settings, 90% participation <sup>2</sup> N=9 (5 in 1 <sup>st</sup> group, 4 in 2 <sup>nd</sup> )	End of program August 13, 2009
Student Interviews	In-Person, individual, 90% participation N=9	August 13, 2009
Post-Program Student Survey	In-Person, Paper, 90% participation N=9	August 13, 2009
Faculty Mentor Interviews	Telephone, individual, 100% participation N=6	August 18 - 26, 2009

Members of the SRM Evaluation Group conducted all individual and focus group interviews. The length of the individual interviews ranged from 15 to 25 minutes. Each focus group was approximately 60 minutes in duration. Each set of interview protocols consisted of semi-structured questions that included prompts for open-ended responses. All interviews concluded with an invitation for any final thoughts not addressed in the protocols. The focus groups and individual interviews were digitally recorded and transcribed. The pre-program and post-program surveys were administered on paper by the evaluation team and analyzed using MS Excel and SPSS computer software. The faculty mentor interviews were conducted via telephone and transcribed for analysis.

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix 1 on p. 27 for the comprehensive SHI Theory of Action Plan.

<sup>2</sup> One student had to leave prior to August 13, 2009 because of a family emergency.

This report is organized into the following four major sections:

- *Students' Backgrounds and Prior Experiences*  
The first section of the report provides a descriptive review of the students' home institutions and communities, previous experiences with academic research, relationships with their academic advisor at their home institution, familiarity with graduate school application processes, self-ratings of graduate-level skills, and pre-program collaborative learning experiences. Students' expectations for their summer with SHI are also summarized. The results in this section are drawn from survey data and student interviews.
- *SHI Program Activities*  
The second section provides a descriptive review of the students' evaluation of the various activities that comprise the SHI program. This section integrates student focus group data, student interview data, and pre-program and post-program survey data to provide a comprehensive view of students' experiences with each activity. For the mentoring and writing activities, mentor interview data are also integrated.
- *Related Themes, Outcomes, and Summary*  
The third section presents findings on related themes and outcomes generated from all data sources. These include students' anticipated challenges associated with pursuing graduate degrees, potential contributions to the academic community, collaborative learning experiences, perceived changes in skills, and challenges of program participation. General comments and suggestions for program improvement offered by students are also presented. The report summary appears at the end of this section.
- *Appendices*  
The first appendix contains the revised SHI Theory of Action plan which lists the program's activities along with the outcomes that are intended to occur as a result of these activities. The second appendix contains various itemized pre- and post-program survey results (Tables 3 through 6) that do not appear elsewhere in the body of the report. Tables 7 and 8 present the students' responses to various open-ended questions on both surveys.

## ***Students' Backgrounds and Prior Experiences***

The Summer Humanities Institute (SHI) primarily targets undergraduate juniors, seniors and recent graduates from historically Black colleges and universities (HBCU) who are interested in pursuing graduate studies in the humanities and social sciences. All nine of the students who completed the 2009 SHI cohort attended an HBCU. Six of the students came from home institutions located in the South (e.g. Georgia, Tennessee, North Carolina) and three came from institutions located in the East (e.g. Washington DC, Virginia). (The tenth student in the program decided to leave in the 7<sup>th</sup> week of the program due to a family emergency.) For the most part, college communities were different from the home communities of these students. At the time of this evaluation, seven students had graduated from their home institution and two were scheduled to graduate in Spring 2010. Major emphases of study included History (5 students), English (3), and Philosophy (1). Three students specifically expressed that their home school choice was based on scholarship funding. Three other students chose their respective schools based on family, teacher, or pastor connections. Two students chose their schools based on location or size. One student explained

that there was no particular reason for his/her choice. One student shared his/her reason for choosing an HBCU:

“At the time, I didn’t know what type of school I wanted to go to. I just know I wasn’t ready for a big school and I know I was not prepared for a predominantly white school. I was not mentally ready to deal with isolation so I wanted to expand intellectually cause no one ever taught me different dynamics or different cultures so I wanted to learn it in that kind of environment.”

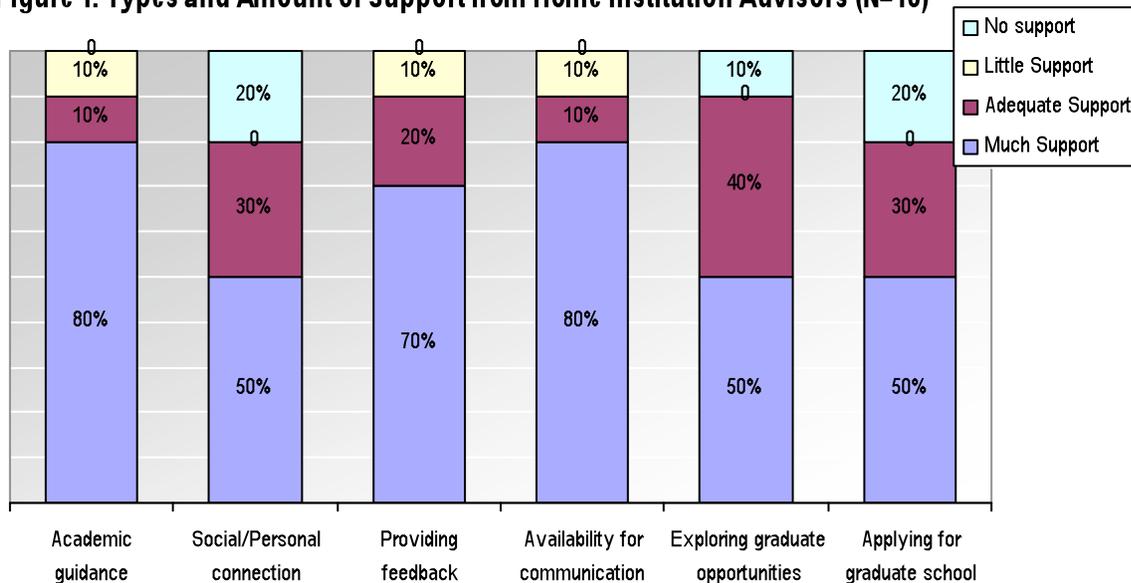
The primary motivations among students for attending the program, once accepted, was to conduct their own research (4 students), to develop new academic skills (2), learn more about graduate school (1), meet/collaborate with peers with similar interests (1), and for writing opportunities (1). One student chose “other” but did not specify their response.

### Student Experiences at Home Institutions

Results from the pre-program survey provide evidence that the majority of the 2009 SHI cohort perceived themselves to have prior experience with research and the academic skills needed to be successful in graduate school. When asked how much exposure to research students had at their home institution, 100% of students replied either ‘quite a bit’ (6) or ‘some’ (4), meaning they had participated in one or more research projects. Of the six students that reported having participated in at least two long-term research projects, four of them reported presenting their research at conferences in such venues as universities, national associations, and other foundation-type programs.

Students were also asked a series of questions regarding the support they have received from their academic advisors at their home institution. Figure 1 shows the distribution of responses ranging from ‘much support’ to ‘no support’ in areas related to academic guidance, social connections, communication, and graduate school information.

**Figure 1. Types and Amount of Support from Home Institution Advisors (N=10)**



As Figure 1 shows, the majority of students received ‘much support’ from their home institution advisor in the areas of academic guidance, feedback, and communication availability. Half of the students reported ‘adequate’ to ‘no support’ in establishing social/personal connections, exploring graduate opportunities, and receiving information on applying for graduate school. All of these areas of support correspond to outcomes of the SHI program and the mentoring experience.

Six students indicated that a faculty member other than their advisor had provided them with the most information about graduate school. The remaining four students listed their advisor (3) or a previously attended research program (1) as sources of this information. Students were then asked about their familiarity with the graduate school application process as well as the process for seeking out and applying for scholarships and fellowships. Although 70% of the students indicated they were very familiar with applying for graduate schools, only one student was very familiar with the scholarship and fellowship process.

Finally, two questions on this survey asked for students’ perceptions regarding their home institutions. For the first question, nine of the ten students ‘completely agreed’ (3) or ‘generally agreed’ (6) that compared to the other students at their home institutions, they were more motivated to achieve academic goals. One student generally disagreed with this statement. With regard to the perceived level of preparation they have received from their home institutions to be successful in a top-ranked graduate school, most students completely agreed (4) or generally agreed (5). One student was undecided as to the level of preparation provided by their home institution.

### *Self-Ratings of Skills*

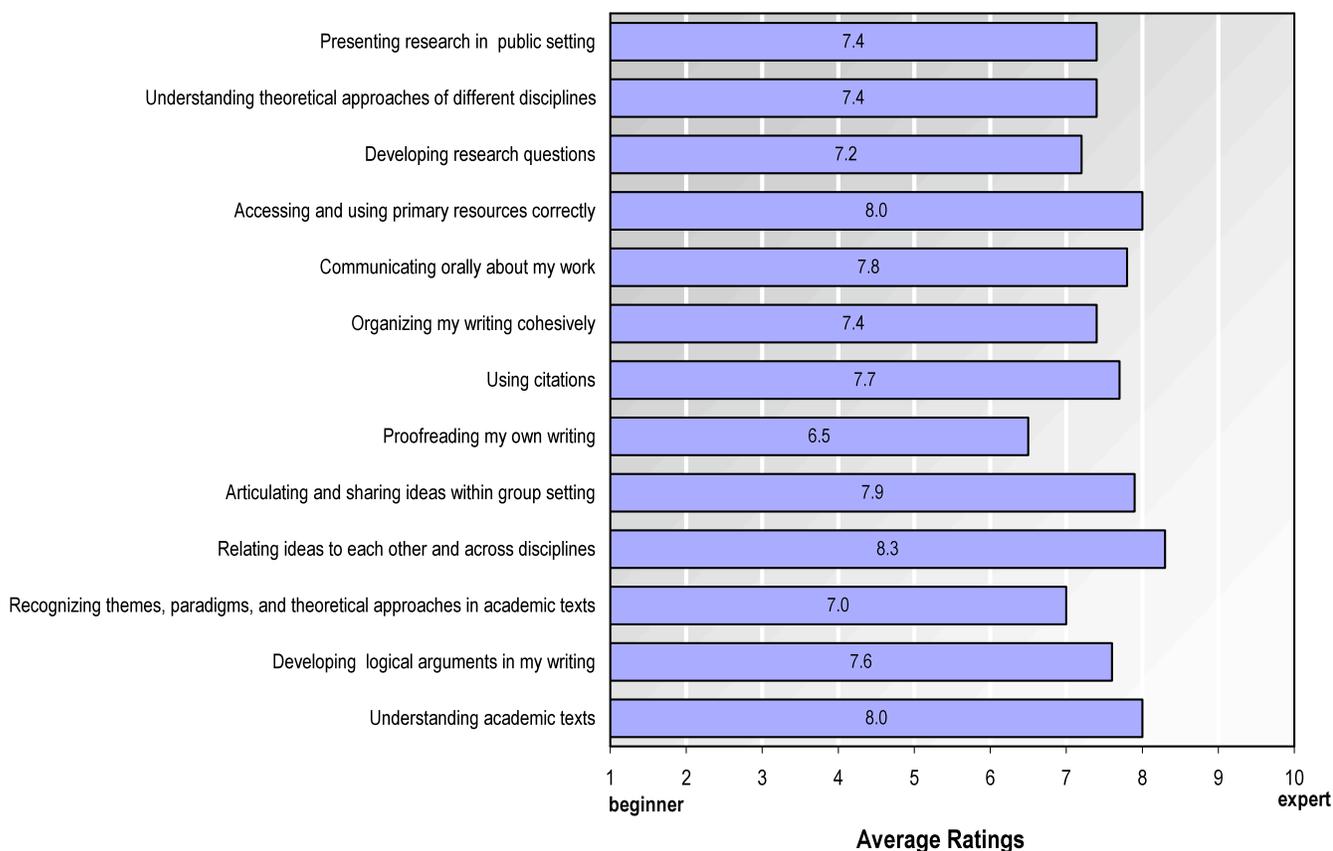
On the pre-program survey, students were asked to rate themselves on a scale of 1 to 10 (with 1 representing “beginner” or no experience and 10 representing “expert” or very skilled) with regard to their level of skill or expertise in a number of areas. The listed areas are a sample of the outcomes for the various activities of the SHI program and correspond to a selection of program outcomes on the SHI Theory of Action plan. In addition to being positive program outcomes, it is also expected by the program that development of these areas contributes to success in top tier graduate institutions and academic careers. Since the students rated themselves prior to the start of the program, these results represent the skill levels that students perceived they brought to the SHI experience. In the third section of this report, results of post-program ratings are presented as an indicator of change or “improvement” in these outcomes that may have occurred as a result of SHI participation.

The average ratings for each area are shown in Figure 2 on the following page. These averages ranged from a low of 6.5 (“proofreading my own writing”) to a high of 8.3 (“relating ideas to each other and across disciplines”).<sup>3</sup> There is one area, “thinking and reading critically in an academic setting,” that is not included in this figure. Only four students provided ratings resulting in an average of 8.5. A printing error on the survey made this particular area difficult to mark a response. On the whole, students rated their skill levels on all areas rather highly (7.0 or greater) and were confident of their skills.

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<sup>3</sup> Table 3, located in Appendix 2, contains individual response frequencies for this survey item.

**Figure 2. Self-Ratings of Skill Areas: Pre-Program**



*Prior Experiences with Collaborative Learning*

“Commitment to collaborative learning” is listed as an intermediate outcome of the program through which engagement in SHI, as part of a cohort, is intended to occur among the students. One question on the pre-program survey sought to gather information on the students’ experiences and preferences of working collaboratively prior to the start of the program. The first set of response options pertains to students’ prior opportunities to work as part of a collaborative group. Of the ten students, four reported that they had opportunities to work in collaborative peer groups in more than half of their undergraduate classes, while five students had such opportunities in less than half of their classes. One student indicated that s/he rarely had opportunities to work collaboratively. Furthermore, six of the ten students indicated that they had collaborative opportunities but chose to work individually. The second set of response options addresses students’ future preferences. Only two students would, if given the choice, work collaboratively in peer groups. Six students indicated that they would prefer to work individually. Included in this group of six are students that had prior collaborative opportunities but chose to work alone as well as those that reported fewer prior collaborative opportunities. Also included in this group is the student that had little to no such prior opportunities. These findings suggest that for this 2009 cohort, the commitment to collaborative learning is not the overall inclination and that its achievement would be a positive outcome of the program.

## *Student Expectations for their Summer at SHI*

When asked to describe their general expectations for the summer at UCLA, all of the students listed multiple responses. These expectations are organized into themes with the numbers of students shown in parentheses.

- Develop skills in graduate-level research, including writing (7)
- Produce an exemplary, graduate-level research paper (3)
- Become familiar with their own area(s) of research interest (3)
- Gain a better understanding of what graduate student life is like (3)
- Develop relationships and network with faculty and mentors (2)
- Become familiar with the graduate school application process (1)
- Develop practical skills, including public speaking/oral presentation (1)

As reported earlier, all of the students reported having prior research experience. Nevertheless, it is clear that the majority of students are expecting to develop and enhance their research skills this summer, especially with writing research papers. Students were also asked which aspect of the summer program they were most looking forward to. Corresponding to their expectations, conducting research in their areas of interest was the prominent theme (4 students) which included learning how to conduct research (1). Working with faculty and mentors (3) and meeting new colleagues (1) were the next most common theme. Other responses included attending workshops (2), improving writing skills (1), and finding a focus for graduate school (1).

With respect to preparing for graduate school, students were asked to describe which aspects they believed they would need the most assistance with this summer. The major theme that emerged through the student responses pertains to preparation for the graduate school application process which includes: applying for funding (5), creating a personal statement, CV, and writing sample (3), studying for the GREs (2), and identifying appropriate schools and programs for application (1). The second prominent theme pertains to preparation for graduate-level work which includes: strengthening academic skills (1), developing research and writing skills (1), and balancing graduate course loads and other responsibilities (1). One student responded that s/he would require the most assistance with developing mentor/mentee relationships.

Overall, although student expectations and aspirations for their summer in the SHI program are generally research-related, it appears that the graduate school application process is an area in which these students may require the most assistance. This is an interesting finding given that 70% of the students reported that they were very familiar with this process. It is possible that students may be more knowledgeable about the overall process but still require assistance with specific components.

## ***SHI Program Activities***

There are seven key activities that compose the SHI program. These activities are:

- A. Faculty-conducted seminars*
- B. Use of Course materials*
- C. Workshops*
- D. Mentoring Experiences*
- E. Extracurricular activities*
- F. Writing a research paper*

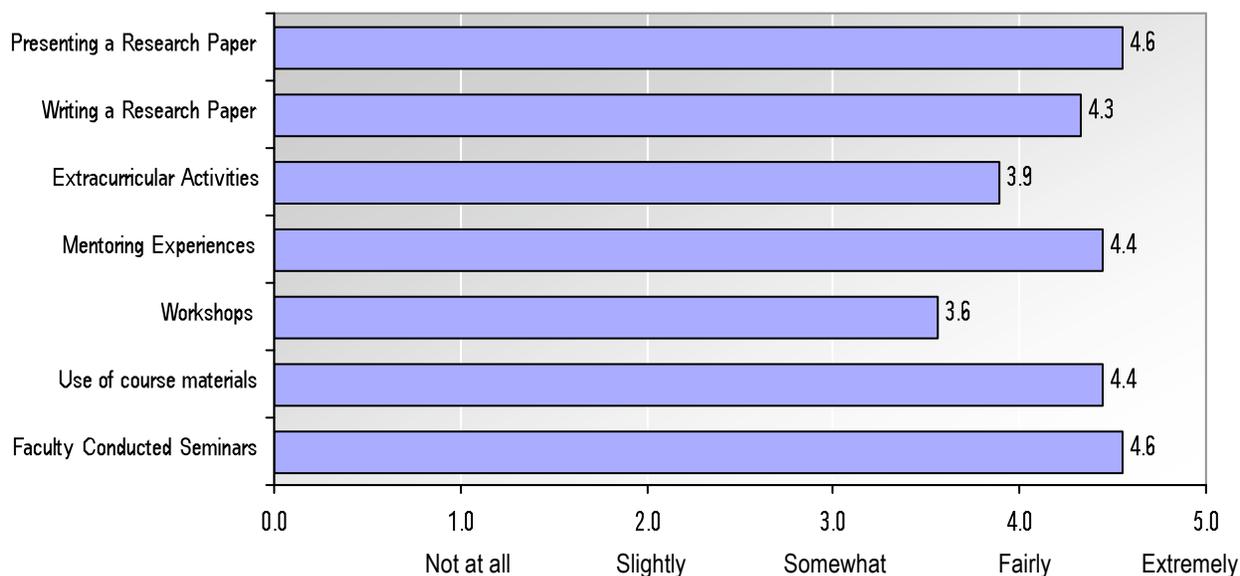
### G. Presenting a research paper<sup>4</sup>

In theory, these key activities work together to expand students' academic skill sets and encourage personal growth within the student participants, which encompass the immediate intended outcomes of the program.<sup>5</sup> The belief is that this skill expansion and growth will lead to increased intellectual self-confidence, motivation to achieve, enhanced academic ability, sense of institutional belonging, developed tolerance for diverse perspectives, and commitment to collaborative learning. Taken together, the presence of these intermediate outcomes is understood to be the precursor to the program's ultimate goal: Underrepresented students earn fellowships and doctoral degrees in the humanities and social sciences.

#### *Usefulness of Program Activities*

At the end of the program, students were asked to rate various program activities on the basis of their usefulness in contributing to their academic and intellectual development. All seven program activities were listed. The results are summarized in Figure 3 below. The distribution of participant responses is presented in Table 5 in Appendix 2.

**Figure 3. Average Ratings of Usefulness of Program Activities (n=9)**



As shown, all program activities were rated favorably, on average. Based on a five-point scale (from 1 = 'not at all useful' to 5 = 'extremely useful'), the average ratings ranged from a low of 3.6 to a high of 4.6. Five activities—faculty-conducted seminars, use of course materials, mentoring, writing a research paper, and presenting a research paper—received the highest ratings overall. Two

<sup>4</sup> Although Writing and Presenting a Research Paper is listed as one activity in the Theory of Action Plan, it is treated as two activities in this report. This is done primarily to comprehensively discuss the findings related to each.

<sup>5</sup> The full list of immediate outcomes is presented in the Theory of Action Plan, Appendix 1, p. 27.

components—extracurricular activities and workshops—received lower ratings, on average. One student wrote in “support from faculty” as an additional activity that s/he rated as “extremely useful.”

Students were also asked to identify one activity that was the most useful in contributing to their academic and intellectual development. Of the nine students, five cited that their mentoring experiences were the most useful in their development. In explaining their choices, students highlighted the guidance received both in terms of their research/writing skills and their future academic pursuits. Two of these students broadened their responses to include the “mentoring” provided by the GSRs and other faculty. Three of the nine students cited the faculty-conducted seminars as the most useful activity. Reasons included opportunities to learn about the faculty’s various areas of research and to engage in “real life” graduate classrooms and experiences. This was exemplified by one student’s response,

“The faculty-conducted seminars gave me an idea of what grad school classes are like. The seminars were very useful because I learned many new things and ideas.”

Finally, one student listed the workshops as the most useful in contributing to their development. S/he explained that the writing workshops, specifically, helped them to develop their writing skills.

When asked what program activity was the least useful in contributing to their academic and intellectual development, six of the nine students identified the workshops. These results are most consistent with the comparatively low ratings assigned to this activity. Content and organization were the primary reasons offered. Three students explained that, for them, the content was “redundant” and concentrated on aspects that they were already familiar with such as applying to graduate school and “how to use a catalog.” One student shared,

“Especially at the beginning, some workshops were rather redundant in presenting information we should have known as college students...we should have had workshops on strategic reading or how to TA.”

In terms of workshop organization, the three students explained that they believed the workshop facilitators were not “well-organized” or “properly prepared.” One student noted that there was an “assumption about what one needs help with, rather than ask.” It is important to note here that students may have been referring to a specific type of workshops (e.g. SPUR workshops) and not generalizing to all the workshops they engaged in through the summer program. Further discussion of the student experiences with the workshops is addressed in a subsequent section.

Writing the research paper (2 students) and use of course materials (1 student) were also cited as the least useful activities by the remaining students. For one student, this low rating was more a function of time. This student believed that although s/he “really enjoyed” writing the paper, s/he “would have liked more time to develop it.” The second student explained that it wasn’t the actual research paper but more related to the writing process; s/he simply relied on previous writing style,

“I have written several research papers so I followed the same protocol when writing this paper. I thought it would differ considerably from my undergrad research writing style.”

Finally, the student who listed the use of course materials as the least useful activity explained that s/he had already been exposed to the assigned readings.

Overall, the above survey findings provide an initial view into the students’ perceptions and experiences with the seven activities of the SHI program. The following sub-sections present more in-depth findings related to each activity generated through interviews and focus groups.

## *A. Faculty-Conducted Seminars*

The purpose of the faculty-conducted seminars is to prepare participants for graduate school by providing knowledge of conceptual approaches to scholarship in a range of humanities and social science disciplines, as well as various theoretical paradigms/interpretative approaches. This is done by engaging students in active participation, reading and critical thinking exercises, and the use of different discussion techniques.

During the focus group discussions, students were asked about their thoughts and experiences of the faculty-conducted seminars. Overall, students spoke very highly of their seminar experiences, their exposure to different ideas and disciplines as well as the opportunities for debates and intellectual dialogue. Students generally agreed that the debates were particularly influential in that “it was interesting for us to assert ourselves as we would be expected to do in graduate school” and that it helped reinforce that they could “debate stuff and not hate each other” or “take it personally.” These debates and the overall environment of the seminars gave students the “opportunity to learn to be collegial with one another.” Students also discussed the impact of the various research interests of the faculty. This one student’s comment emphasized the general consensus of the group:

“I thought the seminars were the most effective part of program, really gives an opportunity to see what graduate school is really going to be like. Maybe I see order in chaos but I thought the seminars flowed together nicely into one another having the whole theme of dealing with African-Americans and their different struggles, triumphs and how the evolving of the thought process and educational systems work in dealing with African-Americans was very impressive and interesting. Everyone brought their own piece to it so you could see the varied differences of what the wide span of African-American studies is about.”

Two students, with the agreement of the majority, commented on the interdisciplinary nature of the seminars:

“We had English, Sociology, History, Political Science – it’s different things and it all shows different ways to look at things because each discipline has a set lens, but looking at them together, it opens up different doors.”

“I learned theories related to my interests and able to introduce concepts that I hadn’t considered before. They weren’t just coming with information but with frameworks they use in their scholarship was very helpful.”

Additionally, students found discussions of theoretical paradigms most interesting during the seminars because they provided a different perspective with which they could examine various issues addressed in the readings. One student shared that s/he was given the opportunity to “read literature, outside of my major, more critically than in the past.” Students also provided examples of different terms to which they were exposed and found helpful, including social capital and ethics of aversion. Moreover, they commented that the seminars encouraged them to “critically engage the text and not just regurgitate what was previously taught or reflect on our personal experiences, but to contribute to new knowledge.” One particular student indicated that seminars led to changes in their reading and participation styles because they are now taking the initiative to locate topics and ideas with which they disagreed in the texts and raising those points in discussions. Only one student commented on the coherence of the courses as a concern: “Every [seminar] was what they wanted to talk about and was good but didn’t necessarily flow into next person’s seminar.” This student added that, personally, it may have been more effective if there had been a theme that tied the courses together.

In comparison to their home institutions, the students varied in their responses. About half of the students expressed that the SHI seminars did not particularly differ from those in their home

institutions. The remaining students spoke positively about the differences, including the smaller class settings and the opportunities for greater interaction and discussion. One student shared,

“In my undergrad, the professors would set up their curriculum as seminars but it didn’t follow through...but it was nice to see it in action here.”

Overall, students’ experiences in the faculty-conducted seminars were very positive. Some students added that they would have enjoyed more seminars from particular faculty toward the end of the program, rather than some of the workshops offered. For many, the seminars “challenged our ways of thinking and it was a good thing.”

### *Confidence Development*

During the individual interviews, various students expressed the development of confidence in their intellectual abilities that grew out of their experiences in the seminars and through the program in general. Confidence was the outcome of opportunities to express, develop and challenge ideas with both faculty and peers. Students spoke positively of being able to “come into classroom settings with others and their experiences, bouncing ideas off of them” and how it felt “good to be in a different setting and to be interacting with different people.” Two students described their confidence development in terms of trying new things and becoming “an active participant” in their own education. One student shared that the seminars gave them the opportunity to practice speaking and sharing ideas more in a classroom setting. S/he explained how this confidence was enhanced in the seminars:

“In undergrad, I participated in class but most of my time was spent in talking to the professor during office hours. They knew I was capable of participating in class but chose not to. I used the seminars to practice that skill.”

In many cases, these developments were expressed in contrast to their experiences at their home institutions and communities. The following quote from one student exemplifies many of the sentiments shared by several of the other students:

“Over the last several weeks, I’ve really been introduced to so many disciplines – sociology. We had a political science seminar. It really reflected my liberal arts education at my school. I was never introduced to some of the concepts that I was introduced to here so I really appreciated the conversations that I had here. One thing I learned in the political science seminar was the ethics of aversion. I never heard it termed that way, but it’s basically when African Americans avert when they think they were isolate or when they think they may be discriminated against. That really resonated with me. In sociology, one of the mentors mentioned social capital – certain things that you want to get to get far, like knowledge in classical music. That really resonated with me too because in my community, they have a completely different sort of social capital which is different from the dominant group. I got to meet with different students and we got to bounce ideas off of each other without judging, it’s a really intellectual atmosphere and I came from a background where I would be teased for that. In my particular neighborhood and school, I was ridiculed for that, for getting good grades so I did not want to share my ideas, but that’s what I had to interrogate when I got here. It was very hard in that atmosphere so it was a relief to come here.”

Four students shared that although they came with great confidence in their intellectual abilities, their engagement in the seminars and the program served as reinforcement that they were prepared for graduate school. One student shared that “SHI helped me get more focused.”

## ***B. Use of Course Materials***

The purpose of the course materials used for SHI is to aid students with their analytical comprehension, help break down arguments by recognizing the themes and their organization in the materials, emphasize the inter-relationship between ideas, and assist in the incorporation of published works into students' own scholarly work.

Overall, students responded very positively to the use of course materials and assigned readings. All agreed that the materials were in line with their respective areas of interest given that they were all related to African-American studies and that "at the end of the day, they all talked about gender, class, and race." One student also added that these texts "spoke to the type of history that I wanted to get into." With respect to the ways students' utilized these materials, most students reported that they did not necessarily use the materials as primary or secondary sources in their own writing. Rather, students spoke of incorporating material such seminar notes from discussions into their research papers and used the readings as references. Furthermore, several students explained that although they may not have used the materials for this research, they intended on using it in the future.

Many students spoke positively about their experiences with analyzing these texts, expanding their comprehension, and engaging in dialogue related to the themes. At least four students described these experiences as "fun," "reinforcing what we had already done in undergrad," and opportunities to put skills "into practice." In particular, various students offered readings that they found to be most memorable. These included David Walker's *Response to Thomas Jefferson*, Dr. Nelson's *Black Leadership*, Dr. Sawyer's *Sex Tourism*, and Dr. Moore's *LBGT*. One student added,

"It was not just the reading, but it's also the discussion. That's what makes them memorable. You can't separate the two."

Another student added that s/he wished that there were more seminars with Dr. Nelson due to the "extreme" amount of engaging work and analysis in a short period of time.

## ***C. Workshops***

The purpose of the workshops is to provide comprehensive knowledge of the technical aspects of the graduate school/fellowship application process, and to teach various writing and research techniques. There were various types of workshops offered during the eight week SHI program. SPUR workshops, which were not facilitated by SHI faculty, covered the graduate school and fellowship application process (mandatory attendance, for the most part) as well as other topics such as "Community Responsibility" and "Research Abroad" (optional attendance). Writing workshops, conducted by SHI faculty, were also a mandatory component of the program. The distinction between the above workshops is necessary in that students' experiences and opinions differed greatly by the type of workshop under discussion.

Discussions about the SPUR workshops yielded the least positive comments overall. Half of the students had previously attended workshops on the graduate school application process and believed that these workshops did not add to their previous knowledge. Given the access to resources and information that the students reported prior to beginning the program, it was not surprising that many students perceived these workshops to be too general or in need of more focused information. Despite the fact that there were students that had already been accepted into graduate school programs, their comments focused heavily on the lack of organization in these workshops and the under-qualification of the facilitators. Two students shared,

“This was my greatest criticism of the program. None of the SPUR workshops were helpful because the facilitators were under-qualified. This becomes a problem when my colleagues are adding more to the conversation or have more knowledge and if you are going to facilitate a workshop, should have at least a ground, working knowledge. The participants may have more knowledge than you but you should still know enough to be able to have something for them being there.”

“Some of the people looked like they weren’t prepared to give them [the workshops] while other things were rushed.”

Students also suggested that some workshops, such as those that covered how to use a library catalog and how to create PowerPoint presentations, were redundant because “these are skills that we should already have as college students.” One student added,

“It seems they were assuming too much about what we didn’t know rather than just asking us whether we knew how to do these things. I think we are grown people and can communicate what we do and don’t need help with so it’s just weird.”

At least five students did indicate, however, that they thought the handouts they received were helpful along with information about the deadlines for eligible fellowships. Nevertheless, there were still some negative perceptions regarding the quality of the information and presentation. For example, two students added,

“Even if they were grad students [that facilitated these workshops], they could have been grad students that had fellowships. That had actually gone through the process. The facilitator actually told us the [fellowship] process was too long and exhaustive and that is why he had not gone through the process.”

“People were under-qualified. Seen the lists before and felt there could have been a different way of approaching the material...You could email me a list. I feel that UCLA had other people more qualified other than grad students.”

With respect to the optional SPUR workshops, most of the students reported that they did not attend. Reasons were primarily due to scheduling conflicts with other, sometimes informal, workshops or meetings scheduled by their mentors or other faculty or because they chose to spend the time on their research papers. One student added that s/he was “turned off” by the other SPUR workshops and therefore chose not to attend.

The SHI writing workshops were viewed in a slightly different light among the students. Although various students commented that skill reinforcement and feedback were helpful, it was also suggested that the scheduling could be improved. For example, it was suggested that writing workshops should be offered before the students had to turn in drafts of their research papers so that they could apply what they learned in the workshops to their writing. Many students agreed that they were “not able to put those skills into practice.” Other students expressed that it might have been more helpful if the program could assess each person’s strengths and weaknesses with respect to writing and ask mentors to provide more individualized attention to help them improve. Students also suggested that the writing workshops might have been improved if all resources (i.e., mentors, GSR assistants, etc.) were tapped and used to help students identify and work on their writing weaknesses. One student shared,

“For me it was good to go over these skills and we got a free book. But I also was expected some more sophisticated ways of talking about writing. We looked at punctuation, didn’t really go over grammar that much. I did want to talk more about writing style.”

Overall, those few students that initially expressed in the pre-program survey that they wanted assistance and information regarding the graduate school and fellowship application process, did receive some helpful information despite the general dissatisfaction with the organization and facilitation of the workshops. Many of the students reported that they received the most helpful information from faculty and mentors. Furthermore, those students that specifically stated that they wanted help with writing their papers also received assistance, although most reported greater assistance from their mentors in this area. Based on the general consensus, the writing workshops would have increased their usefulness greatly if the scheduling was more aligned to their draft deadlines.

#### ***D. Mentoring Experiences***

The purpose of the mentoring component of SHI is to provide one-on-one technical coaching, social support, and personal and professional role models for the participants. The mentoring experience is depicted below through both the students’ and mentors’ experiences and perspectives. Six mentors who worked with this 2009 SHI cohort were interviewed. All of the mentors have been associated with the program in one aspect or another; however, for two mentors, this was their first year in this particular role.

During the focus groups, students were asked to share their thoughts as to whether or not having a mentor enhanced their SHI program experience. Further, they were asked if they believed that they would have been as successful this summer without a mentor. All agreed that their program experienced had been enhanced by having a mentor; however, one student believed that his/her experience would have been better if paired with a different mentor than the one assigned. This student shared,

“I don’t think my mentor and I were matched very well. There was a lot of conflict with scheduling on [mentor’s] part, feedback wasn’t given to me in a timely manner or even conducive to me to put into paper. It wasn’t the best relationship.”

As stated, this one student was the outlier of the group as the majority of students reported very positive and rewarding relationships with their mentors. At least half of the students agreed that they would not have been as successful this summer without a mentor. Students offered such comments as,

“I feel like in grad school you would have this kind of relationship. Having a faculty mentor helped me to polish up on things that I needed before I go to graduate school.”

“If it wasn’t for [mentor], I probably would’ve left. I would’ve gone home after a couple of weeks.”

“My mentor definitely helped me structure my ideas because I didn’t know where I was going.”

“For some of us, SHI did a really good job with pairing us up with mentors. The ones that worked, worked really well.”

The individual interviews gave students the opportunity to elaborate on their mentor relationships and experiences. Overall, students positively described their mentor’s contributions

through interactions related to their research papers. This included providing literary resources, new theoretical frameworks and lenses, assistance with writing style and voice, and constructive feedback. Two students did describe different mentoring experiences. The first student spoke of his/her experience with not having a mentor during the first two weeks of the program. One outcome of this was that this student did not receive the initial feedback on his/her proposal that other students received. This student noted that although s/he greatly appreciated having a “substitute” mentor, there was some minor discomfort in terms of how much of a contribution would be made to this student’s topic of interest. In the end, this student was very pleased with the relationship once his/her assigned mentor arrived. The second student, described in a previous section, had a less than positive relationship with his/her mentor and is best described in the students’ own words:

“For me personally, I felt maybe I should have had a different mentor. Especially after seeing others’ relationships with their mentors. Other mentors seemed more interested in helping the students do what they would like to do rather than – I don’t think my mentor necessarily facilitated as well as [mentor] could have in some of the interactions between us. I think maybe it was different research interests. I thought maybe [mentor] could bridge it but as far as resources, [mentor] wasn’t that helpful – never had any suggestions like maybe I should look here, read this book, and look at this writing. With papers, some of the information [mentor] was giving was contradictory to what I was seeing in some sources. That was kind of a hindrance because I try not to be confrontational and did not have the kind of relationship that I could approach [mentor] with it.”

Students were also asked to describe the difference, if any, between their SHI mentor and their advisors from their home institution. Six of the students shared that although they had good relationships with their mentors, the relationships weren’t notably different from the relationships with their home advisors. This is consistent with the findings reported earlier in this report where the majority of students reported receiving “much support” from their home institution advisor in the areas of academic guidance, feedback, and communication availability and half reported similar support in establishing social/personal connections, exploring graduate opportunities, and receiving information on applying for graduate school.<sup>6</sup> The primary distinction appeared to be in the amount of time spent (8 weeks vs. an undergraduate term). For those students who reported differences, their responses varied. One student compared his/her home advisor to a guidance counselor and shared that his/her mentor was “more involved, more personal, guides you more.” Another student shared that s/he did not really have a home advisor and that any contact with faculty was on a “needs basis.” This student did appreciate the guidance and communication with the SHI mentor as well as other faculty. One final student reported that his/her relationship with home advisor was much more supportive, “even when we were doing different things.”

In terms of communication and time spent engaged in one-on-one mentoring, each of the mentors communicated in person, via email, and, for some, by telephone. Meeting times averaged about once a week, according to the mentors, although three mentors stated that there were weeks during the summer where meeting times were three to four times in a week. Seven of the nine students’ reports were consistent with the mentors’ statements. However, two students’ reported different experiences. One student stated “We only met three times. No phone, maybe 2-3 emails. Feedback was illegible, only written and only received it twice.” The second student shared that s/he only met with his/her mentor once or twice and communicated only in “group meetings” and via email.

Academic guidance, feedback, and personal connections are identified as the key components that holistically encompass the approach toward mentoring. During the mentor interviews, each of the six mentors acknowledged that the components academic guidance, feedback, and personal

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<sup>6</sup> These findings appear on pp. 4 -5.

connections define the mentoring experience and are typically interrelated and as one mentor called “foundational.” In terms of whether or not mentors believed that these three components were equally valuable, two of the mentors elaborated on their perceptions. These mentors explained,

“Equality is a relative issue. Most important is the awareness of the mentor to emphasize one or another [component] depending on the mentee.”

“Perhaps feedback is higher on the list because of how the program is structured but it is always seen as the three [components] working together.”

When mentors were asked if there was an additional component to the mentoring experience that they believed was more or equally valuable, three of the mentors offered the writing component, which may be considered more relevant to the program as a whole than to the role of the mentors. Another mentor shared that there was an “emotional” component by which mentors provide support for students’ anxieties and, sometimes, personal issues. Similarly, one mentor added that mentoring “may require extra patience behind the scenes in order for the mentee to be comfortable.” This particular mentor described the whole mentoring role as an “inspirational” component of the program. In general, the mentors’ statements all reinforced the notion that academic guidance, personal connections, and feedback are essential to the mentoring experience. The remainder of this section is organized in light of these three main components from both the mentors’ and students’ perspectives.

### *Academic Guidance*

For the mentors, academic guidance incorporated four areas in which they worked to influence the student experience: 1) to challenge students academically and intellectually, 2) to help students focus their ideas and thinking, 3) to help students develop intellectual confidence, and 4) to encourage students in their expression both in a graduate school setting and in their writing. Two mentors elaborated on these areas:

“To assist students in comprehending level of research as well as depth of research that is required for the project that they will undertake through the program. They may or may not have been challenged to critique on a deeper level and provide substantive evidence. I as a mentor guide students to uncover additional texts, articles, and discuss with them ways in which they can challenge themselves to understand the material more thoroughly.”

“My role has been to improve their writing, give them the confidence that they can write, and give them academic challenges so that they will be capable of being very comfortable in a seminar setting and teaching them to think critically about everything they read and hear because that’s what graduate school is about.”

The above four areas were emphasized through the mentors’ guidance in preparing the students for graduate-level research, helping them focus their research ideas, providing sources, encouraging the development of conceptual clarity in their thinking and the development of questions to guide their research. All of the mentors used the students’ papers as the springboard to guide their mentees. The efforts described by the mentors were often intertwined with the individual feedback they gave to their mentees.

Also in the context of academic guidance, many of the mentors also shared with their mentees helpful ways to navigate the academic culture of graduate school, how to communicate with professors, and form networks. Two mentors shared their experiences:

“I talked to them about the relationships they would have with their faculty and graduate student cohort members once they get to graduate school, talked to them about dilemmas they may experience while in graduate school and how to resolve them.”

“Also, having conversations just about the culture of grad school, what to expect, how to find money, also pep talks, don’t be intimidated by those acting like they know more than you do. Also how to form a committee and how to negotiate weird faculty relationships.”

The students presented a picture of how the mentors were able to provide academic guidance primarily through their research projects, ideas, and writing. Many students emphasized how their mentors challenged them to deepen their understanding of their research topics, better articulate and defend their arguments, and develop and further their ideas and expand their ways of thinking. One student explained that his/her mentor pushed him/her to “think outside of the box.” Another student spoke of academic guidance in terms of conversations s/he had about the pros and cons of graduate school and possible deferment.

### *Providing Feedback*

All of the mentors agreed that providing feedback to the students is an important aspect of the mentoring relationship. One mentor described the importance of providing feedback as an essential component of mentoring:

“The art of feedback is one of the most challenging for some students, not all, depends on past experiences. Many have not had habit of rewriting a paper and many rewritten enough that they don’t take it personally. To nurture students during the traumatic experience (of a new program) then further challenged if they have to rewrite. It is helpful if the relationship can be as positive as possible so they see rewrite as an opportunity not as punishment. We had students that were extremely challenged with writing and finished at the last minute. We see a great development from start to finish among all students and they can see it themselves in what they were able to produce.”

Feedback was integrated in all of their communications with students and mainly corresponded to drafts of research papers; however, feedback was also provided with respect to development of research topics, cohesive arguments, and writing techniques. Mentors also provided feedback on conference presentations. One mentor also added that at times the relationship, and the feedback, “can get muddy” because the students also interact with other faculty and GSRs.

Responses generated from the focus groups and individual interviews with students all indicated that feedback from the mentors was also very important to the students. This theme was intertwined throughout the responses and emerged in the discussions of seminars, writing, presenting, as well as in discussions of their mentor relationships. Students, on the whole, were open and appreciative of the level of feedback they received from their mentors. The types of feedback from mentors varied from primarily written feedback on report drafts to one-on-one conversations. One student elaborated on the form of feedback s/he received:

“It was like a sandwich model where [mentor] would tell me what was really good, then tell me what was not so good and what I could improve on and then [mentor] would close it by saying in all this was good. [Mentor] knew how to give constructive criticism – I really liked that part.”

## *Establishing Personal Connections*

An important aspect of the mentoring relationship is the establishment of a personal connection between the mentor and the student. All of the mentors acknowledged the importance of establishing personal connections and is reflected in the comments of two mentors:

“Students are drawn from HBCUs and we have found in the past that some have very small campuses and mentors with close connections. So a challenge for them is to undergo culture shock and quickly bond with other people they don’t know very well. To reinforce my belief in the mentees that they can go farther requires that we establish a bond of mutual trust and cooperation.”

“I try to take away the mythology of it being so difficult and so trying that they can’t get through and I’m eager to convey my own personal experiences having been a graduate student to allow them to understand that if they have the tenacity, they will be able to get through a graduate program. So it’s a matter of conveying anecdotes and personal history.”

Two other mentors described actual efforts they made toward establishing personal connections with their mentees. One mentor explained that s/he gave out his/her cell number to help them “understand that I was there to help them and wanted them to succeed.” The other mentor shared,

“I call them at home before they arrive in LA. I talk to them from 10-15-30 minutes. I try to establish rapport so that when they arrive, we’ve already established a personal connection. I meet them as soon as they arrive and even before they do, I give them my home phone number.”

The data revealed, from a student perspective, that mentor/mentee relationships varied in terms of the personal connections established. The majority of students spoke positively of the level of comfort in their relationships, describing their mentors as “approachable,” “easygoing,” and “personable.” One student shared that the personal connection was established through a similarity in home backgrounds. Another student shared that s/he had similar undergraduate college experiences as his/her mentor. One student did report a less personal, but more professional relationship with his/her mentor. This student explained, “It’s not personal, it’s just how I am.” One other student only stated that there was no personal connection established and did not elaborate.

In addition to perspectives on the three mentoring components, students were asked two final questions about their mentors. The first asked students to share how, if at all, their mentors served as role models. The common theme was in how the mentors were established in professions and doing research that was both admired and respected by the students. Some students spoke of the mentors as “passionate” about their work, which these students found to be inspirational. The second question asked students if there was anything that their mentors did not do that they wished they had. Three students responded that they wished they had more time with their mentors. The student who was unhappy with his/her mentor shared, “I wished [mentor] could have been more helpful with the research - which was my main reason for coming.”

## ***E. Extracurricular Activities***

The purpose of the extracurricular activities is to provide an embodied experience (i.e., to bridge the knowledge gained in the classroom with practical application), to help students recognize the difference between primary and secondary sources, and to provide opportunities to socialize with colleagues. The primary emphasis in this section is on the field trip excursions.

All of the students spoke very positively about their excursion into “Black LA” and learning about the “Black experiences” in Los Angeles. They spoke of visits to Leimert Park, Watts, and Saint Elmo’s in addition. Students expressed that going on these excursions “changed their perception of the neighborhood” and mentioned the negative reputation that the Crenshaw area receives from the media as an example. Another student shared that s/he “never took the time to look at murals before so when you see someone express their activism on a wall through their writing or drawing, it’s just different.” The students agreed that the murals were particularly memorable. This student’s comment represented the students’ general sentiments of this excursion:

“[The trip] gave us a chance to put the reading into practice. [UCLA Senior Lecturer Paul Von Blum] Von Blum was really interactive and gave us a chance to see how artwork affects the community.”

More than half of the students suggested that they would like to see a community service component integrated into these extracurricular activities. Students specifically listed having the opportunity to talk to Black youth, serving food at the Salvation Army, and having some way of spending time in these communities rather than just passing through as examples of how they would like to be more involved and contribute.

### ***F. Writing a Research Paper***

The purpose of writing the research paper is for students to learn how to develop arguments based on critical thought and personal reflections, utilize research literature effectively, produce organized and cohesive writing, and properly use citations. The process of writing the research paper was ongoing through the program and students received support through writing workshops, mentors, and GSRs.

As discussed in the earlier section on workshops, the majority of students believed that although the writing workshops were generally helpful, the scheduling of these workshops were not always conducive to their research paper development. On the whole, students indicated that the techniques they were exposed to were not new; rather, in many cases, they gained a better understanding of what the techniques and how they should be used. Students were more likely to credit their mentors and GSRs for the constructive guidance and influence needed for their research papers. The following student comments are illustrative of this writing support:

“My mentor helped me to become more confident with my writing – the technique that I wanted to use was not working out and she told me to just write and use your own voice and she worked with me. Helped me to think outside of certain frameworks to use myself and to see how these frameworks apply to what I’m trying to do.”

“My mentor helped with organization, especially with all my readings – to develop a chunk outline, research and write at the same time. Certainly that is something I will use in future.”

“GSRs were extremely helpful with that, making sure you write down main idea of each paragraph, make sure transitions were correct and that it actually flows. Having one on one time was helpful. GSRs were assigned to five students and responsible for helping us with research methods and library and finding sources, helping us to go over papers and presentations.”

“With the help of my mentor and the GSRs, I was able to be more analytical in my paper.”

“My topic was more complex than I originally thought and my mentor and GSRs told me that I was just scratching the surface and gave me things to consider and become more analytical.”

As seniors and recent graduates, the students all commented on their previous experiences with writing research papers and the strategies and techniques used. Students spoke of the importance of focus in terms of effectively communicating ideas and how, in combination with writing skills, were necessary for quality papers.

“One way my writing has changed is that as an undergrad, you’re not really focusing on the writing because your professor is not looking at your writing so much as your ideas; whereas, here, if the professor has to look through your writing to get at your ideas, then they’d just hand you back your paper and say, ‘what’s this,’ so that mental note just clicked.”

Mentors were also asked to describe the ways in which they helped students to become confident, skilled writers. Many of the mentors spoke of writing strategies and techniques that they shared with their mentees. For example, one mentor spoke of giving his/her mentees guidance on writing formal outlines to help focus and clarify ideas prior to writing. Another mentor spoke of providing guidance with word choices, thesis statements, and grammar mistakes. Overall, the mentors agreed that writing to improve conceptual clarity was a key element. In terms of building confidence in the students as writers, the mentors generally believed that helping students to be more conscious about their writing through positive feedback and reinforcement helped to build confidence. These efforts were generally consistent with the students’ reports of the ways in which their mentors guided them with writing their research papers.

### ***G. Presenting a Research Paper***

The purpose of presenting the research paper is to give students the opportunity to further develop their arguments, to give them experience with presenting their own research, and to orally answer questions related to their work. At the end of the program, students present their research papers, in conference format along with PowerPoint slides, to their cohort as well as the larger SPUR audience.

Several opportunities for practice, or mock presentations, were provided to the students. These opportunities were perceived as very positive for all students. Constructive feedback was the primary reason for these positive experiences and is emphasized in the following student comments:

“It helped me realize the mistakes that I will not make in front of a bunch of people in my field. It helped a lot. It helped you get more comfortable presenting your ideas, talking it over so you’re not stumbling and then you got feedback...on problems that you didn’t see.”

“Constructive criticisms with our Powerpoints, how you presented the research and extracting the most important information and setting it up in a way that you could vocalize your research were the most helpful.”

“I liked how people gave feedback – definitely the most supportive environment that I have been in, also most critical, but really good and did help me feel more confident in some respects.”

Students also perceived these mock presentations as confidence-building, particularly for those that did not have presentation experience. One student added that they “made us more confident for the real one.” Additionally, many students shared that the process of preparing to present their work to prominent scholars in their areas of interest (i.e., Drs. Yarbrough, Nelson, Moore, etc.), including writing a script, rehearsing/practicing the talk, mapping their papers onto their presentations, added to their confidence and comfort.

In general, students believed the final presentation to also be a positive experience. However, several students explained that they thought the other SPUR participants and audience members were

somewhat “unprofessional” in that they did not stay for the SHI student presentations. Therefore, the majority of the presentations were given for their own cohort.

### ***Related Themes, Outcomes, and Summary***

Findings corresponding to related themes and outcomes are presented in this final section of the report. General conclusions as well as a report summary appear at the end.

#### *Collaborative Learning*

As described in an earlier section of this report, the students’ prior experiences with and preferences for collaborative learning were varied. The pre-program survey results indicated that, for this SHI cohort, the commitment to collaborative learning was not the overall inclination. A similar question on the post-program survey asked students to indicate the collaborative opportunities and their preferences over the eight weeks in the program. Six students reported that they had few opportunities to work collaboratively in peer groups over the summer, while two students reported that they had many such opportunities. One student reported no opportunities. When given the choice, three students chose to work collaboratively and three students worked individually. Three students did not choose a response.

Because of inconsistencies in how students responded to these questions on both surveys, analysis of the responses for change over time was difficult to interpret and therefore results should be interpreted with caution. One student did indicate a change in preference from working individually to working collaboratively. Another student also commented in the focus groups that learning to work collaboratively was one of the most important things s/he learned this summer. Future efforts to study the commitment to collaborative learning as an outcome would be better served during the interviews and focus groups for more detailed insight into student preferences and experiences.

#### *Potential Contributions to the Academic Community*

During the individual interviews, students were asked to describe their potential contributions to the academic community in their pursuit of graduate study. Two of the students expressed potential contributions related to educational reform in urban settings. One student spoke specifically in terms of culturally relevant curriculum while the other student spoke more of an academic approach, analysis and dialogue of urban education. Five students shared a common interest in contributing their knowledge and scholarship of history to the academic community. These ideas were presented in various frameworks (i.e. feminism, intellectualism). Several of these students emphasized a desire to contribute a new or alternative “voice” to the community in the forms of perspective as well as fact. One student described his/her goal in contributing to the historical community as “to highlight some things that are not known or has not been told or has been told in a way that has been obscured.” One student spoke of wanting to look at his/her potential body of historical research out of academia and gain “practical application of this knowledge.” Two students did not elaborate on their potential contributions. Although one student spoke of conducting research in specific aspects of Philosophy, there was no further contribution offered. The other student described a slightly different emphasis that s/he wished to pursue in graduate school and had yet to develop these ideas.

The majority of students acknowledged that the above ideas were expanded and “reaffirmed” during their time in the SHI program. Some of the students attributed conversations with faculty as

reinforcing their goals and intentions. Students also added that they were provided with new “things” to think about for their future work. Only one student explained that the program experiences directly influenced the formation of a new emphasis in his/her field of study.

### *Challenges to Graduate School*

Students were asked to describe potential challenges to pursuing graduate studies in non-HBCU institutions. Student perceptions of future experiences varied significantly. Beginning at a higher anxiety end of the distribution, one student described concerns with making connections due to his/her personalization of others’ perceptions. As s/he questioned, “Am I just an affirmative action case, will I be representing the whole African American race?” Two additional students spoke of issues related to “fitting in” and adjusting without having a support system ready for them. In the middle of the distribution, there were students that acknowledged that potential “differences” but did not speak of them in terms of real challenges. One student spoke of joining student associations as a potential solution. At the other end of the distribution, three students saw no real challenges to attending predominantly white or non-HBCU institutions. One student spoke of the diversity of their home community while another added that even at HBCU’s, there are diverse faculty. This student expressed, “Diversity to me is in the different views that people have.”

In general, students spoke of conversations with peers, faculty, and mentors regarding the graduate school culture and how to handle different situations. This dialogue was perceived as very positive and helpful to students, particularly those that appeared more anxious about future challenges. As one student shared,

“There may be instances where someone may say an offensive remark and how would I respond to that. That would be my biggest challenge. We had conversations – they gave really good advice about how to approach offensive remark without overly reacting. Conversation really opened up that dialogue.”

Several students also spoke about how their time spent at UCLA (and Los Angeles) provided them with some experience with greater diversity in an institutional setting. One student added that perhaps having a more integrated SHI cohort would have aided in his/her preparation.

### *Perceived Changes in Skill Areas*

In Section 1 of this report, the results of student self-ratings of skills are presented. These skills are a sample of the outcomes for the various activities of the SHI program and correspond to a selection of program outcomes listed on the SHI Theory of Action. These results were based on the pre-program survey. On average, students’ pre-program skill ratings indicated confidence in their skills. The post-program survey asked students to rate their level of improvement in the same skill areas as a result of their SHI participation. The response options included “great improvement,” “some improvement,” and “no difference.” Table 2 on the following page presents the response frequencies for each of the skill areas.

**Table 2. Students' Self-perceived Improvement with Various Academic Skills After SHI Participation**

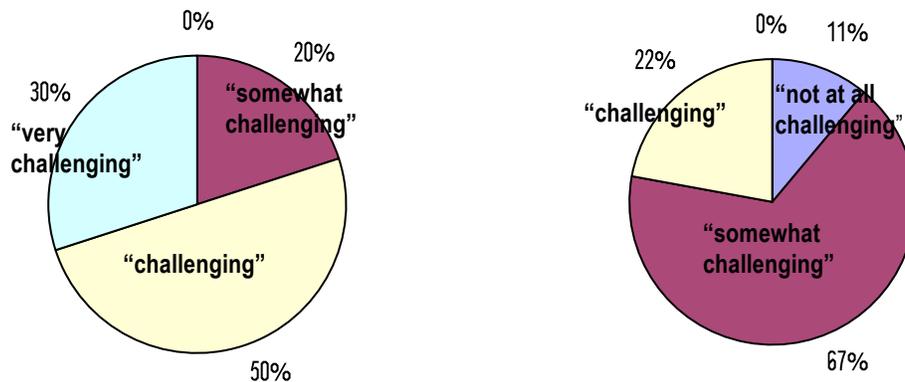
<b>Skill</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Great Improvement</b>	<b>Some Improvement</b>	<b>No Difference</b>
Understanding academic texts	9	11%	<b>44%</b>	<b>44%</b>
Developing logical arguments in my writing	9	22%	<b>56%</b>	22%
Articulating and sharing ideas within group setting	9	33%	<b>56%</b>	11%
Relating ideas to each other and across disciplines	8	<b>38%</b>	<b>38%</b>	25%
Thinking and reading critically in an academic setting	8	25%	<b>38%</b>	<b>38%</b>
Proofreading my own writing	9	33%	<b>67%</b>	---
Using citations	9	11%	<b>44%</b>	<b>44%</b>
Organizing my writing cohesively	9	<b>44%</b>	22%	33%
Communicating orally about my work	9	<b>56%</b>	44%	---
Accessing and using primary resources correctly	9	22%	22%	<b>56%</b>
Developing research questions	9	22%	<b>56%</b>	22%
Understanding theoretical approaches of different disciplines	9	11%	<b>78%</b>	11%
Presenting research in a public setting	9	44%	<b>56%</b>	---

As may be seen in the table, the more than half of the students reported improvement in all but one skill area. “Accessing and using primary resources correctly” was the only area in which more than half of the students reported that there was “no difference.” The most significant improvements, according to the students, were in “communicating orally about my work,” “presenting research in a public setting,” and “proofreading my own writing.” In fact, this last skill area was rated lowest in the pre-program survey, suggesting that the program strongly reinforced this skill among the students. Overall, all of the above results are consistent with the data presented from interviews and focus groups.

*Perceptions of Expected vs. Actual Challenges of SHI Program*

At the start of the program, participants were asked how challenging they expected the summer to be. At the end of the program, they were asked to rate how challenging the program had been. Figure 4, on the following page, summarizes the responses to these two questions. Overall, the perceptions of the group seemed to change slightly, in a less positive direction, of how challenging the program would be. Given the positive experiences of the students, it seems plausible that some students found the program to be less challenging only as compared to their original pre-program expectations. Initial perceptions may have been connected to confidence and limited knowledge of what to expect.

**Figure 4. Expected vs. Actual Challenges of Participation in SHI Program (Pre n=10, Post n=9)**



At the end of the program, students were also asked to assess their overall frustration level (on a scale of 1 (low) to 10 (high)) with regard to their summer experiences in the program. Responses included “1” (3 students), “3 to 4” (3 students), “4” (1 student), and “7” (1 student); one student declined to answer. Despite the variation in ratings, students listed the same types of frustrations and challenges. These included scheduling conflicts, the pace and sequence of activities, and their own frustrations with meeting deadlines. One student specifically stated that his/her frustrations were more related to applying for graduate school than the program itself. Other students, those who rated their frustration levels as low, also indicated that frustrations were more personal than academic or program-related. Nonetheless, many students expressed that they generally benefited from any frustration and challenge that they experienced over the summer. One student shared:

“... with every experience you take away something from it and I feel I definitely walked away with more skills in terms of writing and different viewpoints in terms graduate school, not as a result of it being challenging, but just being exposed to it so I appreciated that from the experience.”

### *Suggestions and Recommendations*

On the post-program survey, students were asked to describe anything that was not part of the program that they thought would have been useful to them. In addition, some students offered suggestions in their responses to related survey questions. Student responses are listed below:

- Additional workshops related to the work of graduate school to accent the fact that this is a research program (i.e. strategic reading, forming study groups)
- Classroom lectures and papers based on solving human problems.
- More seminars and more informal interaction with graduate students.
- More scheduled times to meet with the writing instructor.
- A mixed panel of graduate students and faculty that have received their Ph.D.’s so we can ask them about their journey.

- Allowing students to know up front the agenda of the program.
- Listen to the problems students have before program starts.
- Possibly separate groups in writing workshops by level or have more than one writing instructor.
- Better organization and more knowledgeable facilitators in the SPUR workshops.
- More practical courses.
- More intentional about working with students; assessing strengths and weaknesses prior to start of program.

Students were also asked to describe the most important thing they learned over the summer. Their responses included learning to aspire to be a professor so that they can be as giving and willing to help as the mentors and faculty they worked with during the program's duration, the importance of planning and organizing major projects, learning how to work collaboratively, best ways for applying to graduate school and communicating with professors, and learning how to share ideas more in ways that are expected in graduate school. Other responses included,

"Figuring what I want to get out of the program and grad school...and using the resources to make it the experience that I want it to be."

"Learning about interpersonal politics in grad school with your colleagues and administrations. This is the first time that I felt that I was in a more mature academic environment where people are bringing more personal ideas to the table and we are expected to consider these things very strongly. Made me think more about it."

"Actively participating in your education, being assertive, exercising agency."

Overall, despite specific instances and particular issues that students may have had throughout their program experience, the students comprising the 2009 cohort clearly recognize the important outcomes of their participation and how their experiences have influenced their development.

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## *Summary*

This evaluation of the SHI program yielded findings that support many of the intended outcomes in SHI's Theory of Action plan. Analysis of the data collected through interviews, surveys, and focus groups have shown that the program, as experienced through the major activities, has led students through academic skill set expansion and personal growth outcomes as well as growth toward orientation and socialization outcomes.

In summary, the 2009 cohort of students enhanced their critical thinking skills, developed their research and writing, and engaged in the graduate school experience over a period of eight weeks. All of the data show that, in general, the students' pre-program expectations and aspirations were fulfilled. On the whole, the two most useful activities were the mentoring experiences and the faculty-conducted seminars. It was through these two activities that students were able to expand on many skills such as, but not limited to, development of research skills, exposure to new conceptual frameworks and approaches, and enhancement of their writing. It was also through these activities that students demonstrated development of outcomes such as intellectual self-confidence, motivation to achieve, and enhanced academic ability. Conversely, the workshops were named as least useful by many students. Further elaboration revealed that, although some students did receive helpful information, most believed that they did not benefit from the experience as much as expected. Additional analyses also revealed that the SPUR workshops were found to be the least useful in providing new and relevant information. Overall, mentors and students shared positive relationship experiences in terms of academic guidance, personal connections, and providing feedback. For the one student whose experience was less than positive, positive outcomes were achieved as this student was able to benefit from the experiences through his/her relationships with other faculty. Students also found the presentation of their research projects to be a positive experience. The mock practices and constructive feedback enabled student to really benefit from this activity.

Three related themes and/or outcomes were analyzed for change over the course of the program. Student changes in their commitment to collaborative learning did not appear to demonstrate much positive change, although because of response inconsistencies, should be interpreted with caution. More than half of the students reported improvement in a number of academic skill areas particularly in those that dealt with oral communication and presentation of research. "Proofreading my own writing" was reported as the most improved, suggesting that the program strongly reinforced this skill among the students. Less than positive changes in the perceptions of the challenge presented by SHI appeared to be more a function of initial confidence and inexperience.

All students will pursue graduate school study and most have already considered their potential contributions to the academic community. Furthermore, their experiences at UCLA as well as informative conversations with mentors and faculty benefitted those students who may have had concerns about attending non-HBCU graduate schools. Furthermore, students were more likely to receive more relevant information from faculty and mentors about the graduate school application process than the workshops.

Finally, students offered several suggestions for the program that were related to a more personalized approach. Assessing and addressing the specific needs of the cohort as opposed to a generalized approach was the common theme. Overall, the 2009 SHI cohort had a very positive and memorable experience through their participation. Their ability to reflect critically on their experiences and demonstrate self-awareness of their own development adds to the value of the SHI program.

**Appendix 1 – SHI Theory of Action Plan (revised 6/09).**

Experiential Learning Activities	Academic Skill Set Expansion and Personal Growth (Immediate Outcomes)	Orientation & Socialization (Intermediate Outcomes)	Ultimate Goal
<b>Faculty Conducted Seminars</b>	Preparation Active participation Ability to express ideas orally Knowledge of: -conceptual approaches to scholarship in a range of humanities disciplines -theoretical paradigms/interpretative approaches -discussion techniques Critical Reading and Thinking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Intellectual Self-Confidence</li> <li>▪ Student Motivation to Achieve</li> <li>▪ Enhanced Academic Ability</li> <li>▪ Sense of Institutional Belonging</li> <li>▪ Developed Tolerance for Diverse Perspectives</li> <li>▪ Commitment to Collaborative Learning</li> </ul>	Underrepresented Students  Earn Fellowships and Doctoral Degrees in the Humanities and Social Sciences
<b>Use of Course Materials</b>	Analytical comprehension Break down arguments by recognizing the themes and their organization in the materials. Incorporation of published works into student's own scholarly work Enhanced Interdisciplinary thinking		
<b>Workshops</b>	Comprehensive knowledge of the technical aspects of the graduate school/fellowship application process Writing and research techniques		
<b>Mentoring Experiences</b>	One-on-one technical coaching (Academic Guidance/Providing Feedback) Social support (Establishing personal connections) Personal and professional role models		
<b>Extracurricular Activities (Field Trip) (Field Courses) (Conference)</b>	Embodied Experience (Bridging the knowledge gained in the classroom with practical application) Correct use of primary and secondary sources in library and internet Socializing with colleagues (i.e. social network development)		
<b>Writing and Presenting Research Paper</b>	Use of Citations Development of arguments based on critical and personal reflection Organization and cohesiveness of writing Answer questions orally related to work Incorporation of published works into student's own scholarly work		

## Appendix 2- Itemized Pre- and Post-Program Survey Results

The following tables and figures provide data for each item on the pre- and post-program survey not detailed in the body of the report. Tables 2 and 3 present the response frequencies for Self-Rating of Skills pre- and post-program. Related data also appear in Figures 2 and X in the report.

**Table 3. Students' Self-perceived Experience with Various Academic Skills Prior to Attending SHI.**

Skill	N	Mean (SD)	Frequencies of Ratings								Total
			1-3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
Understanding academic texts	10	8.0 (1.5)	0%	0%	10%	10%	0%	<b>40%</b>	30%	10%	100%
Developing logical arguments in my writing	10	7.6 (2.0)	10%	0%	0%	10%	20%	20%	<b>30%</b>	10%	100%
Recognizing themes, paradigms, and theoretical approaches in academic texts	10	7.0 (2.3)	10%	0%	10%	10%	20%	<b>30%</b>	10%	10%	100%
Relating ideas to each other and across disciplines	10	8.3 (1.4)	0%	0%	0%	10%	20%	<b>30%</b>	10%	<b>30%</b>	100%
Articulating and sharing ideas within group setting	10	7.9 (1.6)	0%	0%	0%	<b>30%</b>	10%	20%	20%	20%	100%
Proofreading my own writing	10	6.5 (2.2)	10%	10%	10%	20%	20%	10%	10%	10%	100%
Using citations	10	7.7 (1.3)	0%	0%	10%	0%	30%	<b>40%</b>	10%	10%	100%
Organizing my writing cohesively	10	7.4 (1.6)	0%	0%	20%	10%	10%	<b>40%</b>	10%	10%	100%
Communicating orally about my work	10	7.8 (2.0)	10%	0%	0%	0%	20%	<b>40%</b>	10%	20%	100%
Accessing and using primary resources correctly	10	8.0 (0.9)	0%	0%	0%	0%	30%	<b>50%</b>	10%	10%	100%
Developing research questions	10	7.2 (1.5)	0%	0%	20%	0%	<b>40%</b>	30%	0%	10%	100%
Understanding theoretical approaches of different disciplines	10	7.4 (2.0)	10%	0%	10%	0%	10%	<b>50%</b>	10%	10%	100%
Presenting research in public setting	10	7.4 (2.3)	10%	0%	0%	10%	20%	<b>40%</b>	0%	20%	100%
Thinking and reading critically in an academic setting	4	8.5 (1.3)	0%	0%	0%	0%	25%	25%	25%	25%	100%

**Table 4. Response Frequencies of Types and Quantity of Home Advisor Support (Pre-Program), N=10**

	Much Support	Adequate Support	Little Support	No Support	Total
Academic guidance	80%	10%	10%	---	100%
Social/Personal connection	50%	30%	---	20%	100%
Providing Feedback	70%	20%	10%	---	100%
Availability for communication	80%	10%	10%	---	100%
Exploring graduate opportunities	50%	40%	---	10%	100%
Applying for graduate school	50%	30%	---	20%	100%

**Table 5. Response Frequencies of Usefulness of Program Activities , N-9**

Program Activities	N	not at all useful	slightly useful	somewhat useful	fairly useful	extremely useful	Total
Faculty Conducted Seminars	9	---	11%	---	11%	78%	100%
Use of course materials	9	---	---	11%	33%	56%	100%
Workshops	9	---	22%	33%	11%	33%	100%
Mentoring Experiences	9	11%	---	---	11%	78%	100%
Extracurricular Activities	9	---	---	33%	44%	22%	100%
Writing a Research Paper	9	---	---	11%	44%	44%	100%
Presenting a Research Paper	9	---	---	11%	22%	67%	100%
Other :	1					100%	100%

**Table 6. Response Frequencies of Graduate School Application Preparedness (Post-Program), N=9**

	Very prepared	Somewhat prepared	Not at all prepared	Total
Researching graduate schools and programs	89%	---	11%	100%
Applying for graduate schools	67%	11%	22%	100%
Researching scholarships, fellowships, and other funding	22%	67%	11%	100%
Applying for scholarships and fellowships	22%	67%	11%	100%

<b>Table 7. Pre-Program Survey Open-ended Responses</b>				
<b>Student</b>	<b>Describe your general expectations for your summer at UCLA.</b>	<b>Which aspect of the program are you most looking forward to?</b>	<b>Concerns/ Questions you have concerning the summer program.</b>	<b>Aspect(s) of preparing for graduate school will you need the MOST assistance with this summer</b>
1	I expect to produce a stellar research paper as well as learn how to research correctly. Additionally, I hope to gain a close relationship with my mentor in fostering my project.	I am most looking forward to is actually doing good research that will aid in my development of further research and writing, and to create something new.	Are there any workshops on the graduate school process?	I will probably need to work on a resume/CV and personal statement.
2	I expect to receive an insightful preview of what grad school will be like. I would like to network with a faculty member in my field. I would like to produce a solid writing sample for my grad school applications.	Research workshops on applying to grad schools, applying for fellowships/scholarships, grants, and writing a CV; GRE prep sessions; working with my mentor	I'm concerned about the tight time constraints for everything, but I think the program will be challenging but rewarding.	Application including personal essay and writing sample; applying for scholarships/ fellowships; GRE prep
3	I hope to improve my research and writing skills. Additionally, I hope to become better acquainted with the grad school application process.	I am looking forward to working on my research paper. It is something I have yet to explore. I hope to narrow down my focus for grad school.	Nervous about public speaking	GRE preparation (I am not good at standardized tests!); funding grad school is where I need the most assistance
4	My expectations for the SHI program at UCLA is to help me improve on research capabilities and to strengthen my writing and oral presentation skills.	I'm most looking forward to attending the workshops and working with my GSR, faculty mentors.	I look forward to this exciting opportunity.	Several aspects of preparing for graduate school that I will need the most are applying for scholarships/ fellowships and strengthen my academic skills.
5	To greatly improve writing skills (style, technique, vocabulary)	Doing research on my topic	None	Preparation for pursuing a PhD after graduate school
6	Produce a critical work of research to increase my familiarity with the process	I would like to further my understanding of research methodology	I was wondering as to the depth of support my research would receive.	Preparing for graduate course loads and responsibilities
7	I expect to become a better writer and gain some sense of what the PhD program I will be entering in the field will be like	Improving my writing skills	None	Finding external funding sources; grant writing; balancing research writing skills
8	To have an in depth understanding of my personal research	Los Angeles!; the opportunity to meet new colleagues and scholars	At this time, I am grateful to have the opportunity to be a participant in the program and look forward to a productive summer.	Finding additional funding outside of assistantships that cannot be adjusted
9	I expect that at the end of this program I will be able to produce a project that is comparable to graduate level work. I also expect to be exposed to the intensity of graduate. I would like to leave with a clearly perspective of where my research is going.	I am most looking forward to working with my mentor	BLANK	Writing a personal statement and finding adequate programs to apply to
10	Essentially, I look forward to creating and completing my very own research. I also plan to gain a more in depth understanding of African American Studies.	Conducting research	Actually, my only concern is that I will leave feeling like I wanted to learn so much more. Because I know that time will fly by during these 8 weeks.	Developing mentor/mentee relationships

**Table 8. Post-program Survey Open-ended Responses**

Student	Which program component contributed THE MOST to your academic and intellectual development? Why?	Which program component contributed THE LEAST to academic and intellectual development? Why?	Are there any things that were <u>not</u> a part of the summer program but that you think would have been useful to you?	Concerns or questions regarding the summer program.
1	Mentoring I received from GSRs and mentor aided in my academic and intellectual growth because they provided information, guidance and constructive criticisms to make me critically analyze and examine different components of my project.	The workshops were a little redundant and did not seem interesting	The support from the faculty was extremely important. They provided knowledge of grad schools, conferences and so forth that encouraged me to pursue an advanced degree.	There was not enough time to research and write the research paper. The page limit was too short. However, I thoroughly enjoyed my experience and I feel prepared to begin applying to graduate schools.
2	Just having access to all of the different faculty advisors was nice because I met with different mentors on everything from fellowships to my personal statement to my anticipated field in History.	Especially at the beginning, some workshops were rather redundant in presenting information we should have known as college students (like how to use a catalog or academic culture) - we should have had workshops on strategic reading or how to TA	To continue my answer, I would have liked to see more workshops that actually prepared us for the work of grad school to accent the fact that this is a research program. I'm thinking like an hour or so long workshop on strategic reading, forming study groups, or learning how to TA	I think students will continue to benefit from the program. The structure is very open which has pros and cons. If you have difficulty in writing and researching this allows more time to work. If you don't then you might become easily bored but I used time to research grad schools and fellowships and to meet with professors. Overall, my experience was worthwhile.
3	The faculty conducted seminars gave me an idea of what grad school classes are like. The seminars were very useful because I learned many new things and ideas.	I have written several research papers so I followed the same protocol when writing this paper. I thought it would differ considerably from my undergrad research writing style.	None	1. What is the clear purpose of the research paper? 2. Should the research paper have differed from my previous research? In terms of writing style?
4	It helped me to develop my writing skills	The workshops only concentrated on funding and applying to graduate school. I was already accepted into a graduate program.	BLANK	I learned a lot from my participation in SHI. My research and writing skills greatly improved and I have learned a lot from my mentor and SHI faculty and staff.
5	Help motivation for future activities (??)	Assumption about what one needs help with rather than ask.	Developing a classroom lecture and papers should be based on solving human problems.	Recommend more time for research and writing with mentor. Listen to the problems students have before program starts.
6	Provided real life graduate experience	Facilitators were not properly prepared	More seminars and more informal interaction with graduate students.	Overall, the program was valuable; however scheduling conflicts hampered the effectiveness of the program.
7	STUDENT LEFT PROGRAM IN WEEK 7 – DID NOT COMPLETE SURVEY			
8	The faculty mentor was able to fine-tune my ideas and writing ability.	I have already read some of the pieces. Furthermore, the curriculum was not smooth between instructor to instructor.	More structured or scheduled times to meet with the writing instructor.	

9	Being paired with individual who could guide me through my research enhanced both my research and writing skills	The workshops appeared not to be well-organized as far as the individuals who were presenting were concerned.	I think there should have been a mixed panel of graduate students and faculty that have received their PhDs so that we can ask them about their journey.	Overall SHI has been a good experience but there is always room for improvement. I would suggest allowing students to know up front what is the agenda of the program. The GRE course should be free considering the fact that it is an important component of the graduate school process. Lastly, use the faculty mentors as a resource in the area of providing information on fellowships, etc.
10	I appreciated learning about the faculty's area of research; quite enlightening.	Although I really enjoyed writing my paper, I would have liked more time to fully develop it. Or maybe, I should have made time in the beginning.	BLANK	I just think each student should leave SHI having gained a wealth of knowledge and experiences. With this in mind it should be stressed in the very beginning that students should not only depend on the SHI faculty to direct their paths but also students should be proactive in being certain that they acquire things they deem important.