

The Summer Humanities Institute Experience

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Program Evaluation Report

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Executive Summary

The following evaluation report represents the efforts of the SRM Evaluation Group in evaluating the UCLA Summer Humanities Institute (SHI) conducted in Summer 2010. The SRM Evaluation Group built on work conducted with SHI program administrators in previous years to collect data that is relevant to the program's intended outcomes. The purpose of the evaluation is to investigate the strengths and weaknesses of the program primarily through participants' self-reported experiences and perceptions.

This executive summary briefly describes the SHI program and its goals; evaluation design and methods; students' (program participants') backgrounds; the SHI program activities (faculty-conducted seminars, course materials, workshops, mentoring, extracurricular activities, writing a research paper, and presenting a research paper); related themes that emerged in the evaluation; and outcomes. The remainder of the report contains further elaboration on these topics.

About the Program and Its Goals

SHI is a residential program that takes place over eight weeks during the summer. Ten students, typically from historically Black colleges and universities (HBCU), are selected to participate in the program. Most students study humanities or humanistic social sciences at their home institutions. The program offers seminars, workshops, and field trips to the greater Los Angeles area. Over the eight weeks, students work closely with a program-assigned mentor to write and present a research paper on a topic of their choosing.

Evaluation Design and Methods

To conduct this evaluation, the SRM Evaluation Group built on our previous work with SHI and utilized a similar data collection plan. Data sources for this evaluation include pre- and post-surveys, focus groups, and individual interviews with students and mentors. Ten students were surveyed at the beginning of the program, and nine were surveyed at its conclusion (one student left the SHI program to seek a more individualized research experience; see Footnote 2 on page 1). Respondents answered both closed- and open-ended questions on the pre- and post-surveys that covered a range of topics relating to SHI's goals and desired outcomes. All students participated in focus groups and were interviewed individually at the conclusion of the program. Four program mentors participated in telephone interviews after the program ended. **(See pgs. 1-2)**

Students' Backgrounds

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. Of the nine students who constituted the 2010 SHI cohort, seven students came from HBCUs in the South and two students attended universities on the East Coast. At the time of this evaluation, two students had graduated, one student expects to graduate in December 2010, and six anticipate graduating in Spring 2011. Eight students studied English and one student double-majored in Political Science and History. Students' attendance was motivated by interest in conducting their own research, developing new academic skills, learning more about graduate school, meeting/collaborating with peers with similar interests, and making contacts at UCLA. **(See pgs. 2-7)**

SHI Program Activities

For the purposes of this summary and the following report, we considered SHI to be comprised of seven different components: faculty-conducted seminars, course materials, workshops, mentoring

experiences, extracurricular activities, writing a research paper, and presenting a research paper. These activities are designed to work together to expand students' academic skill sets and encourage personal growth within the students. Program participants' experiences in each aspect are highlighted below and detailed further in the report that follows. (See pgs. 7-19)

Faculty-Conducted Seminars (See pgs. 9-11)

- Students spoke very highly of their experiences in the seminars.
- Students particularly benefitted from exposure to different perspectives and approaches, the interrelatedness of the topics, interactions with the UCLA faculty, and having opportunities to lead discussions.
- Students reported that they felt more confident in their intellectual abilities after participating in these seminars.

Course Materials (See pgs. 11-12)

- Generally, students responded very positively to the course materials and assigned readings.
- While some of the students did not find the readings to be aligned with their particular interests, they still found exposure to them valuable.

Workshops (See pgs. 12-13)

- None of the students attended the optional SPUR workshops that were offered this year.
- On the one hand, many of the students enjoyed the writing workshops, and appreciated being exposed to new editing and writing process techniques.
- On the other hand, a few students indicated that the writing workshops were the least helpful aspect of the SHI program.

Mentoring Experiences (See pgs. 13-17)

- Students agreed that their program experience was enhanced by having a mentor and indicated that they would not have been as successful this summer without a mentor.
- Many students shared that their mentors directed them to resources that were helpful in supporting students' research.
- The four mentors acknowledged that the components academic guidance, feedback, and personal connections defined the mentoring experience and were typically interrelated.

Academic Guidance (See pgs. 15-16)

- Mentors described academic guidance according to four areas: 1) directing students to resources, 2) giving constant feedback about their ideas and thinking, 3) assisting students' preparation for graduate school, and 4) improving and focusing students' research.

Providing Feedback (See pg. 16)

- Feedback was integrated in all of the mentors' communications with students and mainly related to drafts of research papers.

- Feedback was also provided with respect to development of research topics, formulating cohesive arguments, and writing techniques.

Establishing Personal Connections (See pgs. 16-17)

- According to mentors, developing a personal relationship included putting the students at ease, talking to students about their personal experiences, and making connections before students arrived at the program.

Extracurricular Activities (See pgs. 17-18)

- Two students indicated that the extracurricular activities were the least useful aspect of the SHI program; however, during the focus groups, all of the students spoke very positively about their excursion into “Black LA” and learning about the “Black experiences” in Los Angeles.
- Students reported appreciating the ability to connect these excursions to what they were studying.

Writing a Research Paper (See pgs. 18-19)

- Students shared positive comments about the writing workshops, and their interactions with their mentors related to the writing process.
- Students appreciated editing techniques introduced to them in the writing workshops.
- Students credited the feedback they received from their mentors as instrumental to the development of their research papers.
- Mentors generally believed helping students to be more conscious about their writing through positive feedback and reinforcement helped to build students’ confidence.

Presenting a Research Paper (See pg. 19)

- All students considered presenting a research paper to be a very positive experience.
- Students highlighted the constructive feedback they received as the most important part of their presenting experience.
- Students learned to anticipate how others would critique their argument and how to adjust their presentation accordingly.

Related Themes (See pgs. 20-21)

Related themes discussed in this report include collaborative learning, students’ potential contributions to the academic community, and anticipated challenges to attending graduate school.

Collaborative Learning (See pg. 20)

- Data collected on students’ commitment to collaborative learning revealed patterns that were difficult to interpret and any effort to do so should be carried out with caution.
- Pre-survey data suggested that not every student in the 2010 cohort was interested in collaborative learning. On the other hand, post-survey data indicated that a few students were more inclined to engage in collaborative learning after participating in the program.
- Data collected through focus groups revealed that students valued collaborative learning even though not all students engaged in it.

Potential Contributions to the Academic Community (See pgs. 20-21)

- Seven of the nine students indicated that they plan to attend graduate school.
- Students mentioned making contributions to disciplines including: film studies; law and critical race studies; African Americans and globalization; reforming educational policies; childhood socialization; and novels.
- Most students indicated that these ideas either developed or were enhanced or reinforced at SHI this summer.

Challenges to Graduate School (See pg. 21)

- Most of the students anticipated facing social challenges if they were to enter a non-HBCU for graduate school.
- Seven of the nine students felt that the experience at SHI will help them in the event that they attend a non-HBCU for graduate school.

Outcomes (See pgs. 22-24)

The outcomes detailed in this report concern students' perceived changes in skill areas, their perceptions of expected versus actual challenges of SHI program, suggestions and recommendations offered for program improvement.

Perceived Changes in Skill Areas (See pg. 22)

- More than half of the students reported improvement in all the skill areas.
- The most significant improvements, according to the students, were in “developing logical arguments in my writing,” and “articulating and sharing ideas within a group setting.”
- The areas that the highest relative percentage of students reported no difference in their improvement were “accessing and using primary resources correctly” and “using citations.”

Perceptions of Expected vs. Actual Challenges of SHI Program (See pgs. 23-24)

- The data suggest that students found the SHI experience more challenging than they had anticipated.
- The level of reported frustration felt during the experience at SHI varied by student, task, and time.
- Specific points of frustration for the students included issues with time management, and the lack of convergence between assigned readings and their research papers.

Suggestions and Recommendations Offered for Program Improvement (See pgs. 24-25)

- Some students recommended spreading out the course load more evenly across the eight weeks of the program.
- Some students would have liked to receive individually-focused support for the graduate school application process.

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Table of Contents

Introduction	1
Students' Backgrounds and Prior Experiences.....	2
<i>Student Experiences at Home Institutions.....</i>	<i>3</i>
<i>Self-Ratings of Skills</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>Prior Experiences with Collaborative Learning</i>	<i>6</i>
<i>Student Expectations for their Summer at SHI.....</i>	<i>6</i>
SHI Program Activities	7
<i>Usefulness of Program Activities.....</i>	<i>8</i>
A. <i>Faculty-Conducted Seminars</i>	<i>9</i>
<i>Confidence Development.....</i>	<i>11</i>
B. <i>Use of Course Materials</i>	<i>11</i>
C. <i>Workshops.....</i>	<i>12</i>
D. <i>Mentoring Experiences.....</i>	<i>13</i>
<i>Academic Guidance.....</i>	<i>15</i>
<i>Providing Feedback.....</i>	<i>16</i>
<i>Establishing Personal Connections.....</i>	<i>16</i>
E. <i>Extracurricular Activities.....</i>	<i>17</i>
F. <i>Writing a Research Paper.....</i>	<i>18</i>
G. <i>Presenting a Research Paper.....</i>	<i>19</i>
Related Themes, Outcomes, and Summary	20
<i>Collaborative Learning</i>	<i>20</i>
<i>Potential Contributions to the Academic Community.....</i>	<i>20</i>
<i>Challenges to Graduate School.....</i>	<i>21</i>
<i>Perceived Changes in Skill Areas.....</i>	<i>22</i>
<i>Perceptions of Expected vs. Actual Challenges of SHI Program.....</i>	<i>23</i>
<i>Suggestions and Recommendations</i>	<i>24</i>
<i>Summary.....</i>	<i>25</i>
Appendix 1 – SHI Theory of Action Plan.....	26
Appendix 2 – Itemized Pre- & Post-Program Survey Results.....	27

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 2010 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 2005.¹ 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 consider 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. We made minor adjustments 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 2010 SHI Evaluation

Data Source	Type of Administration	Dates Collected
Pre-Program Student Survey	In-Person Paper, 100% participation; N=10	Orientation Day June 21, 2010
Student Focus Groups	In-Person, 2 group settings, 90% participation ² ; N=9 (4 in 1 st group, 5 in 2 nd)	End of program August 13, 2010
Student Interviews	In-Person, individual, 90% participation; N=9	August 13, 2010
Post-Program Student Survey	In-Person, Paper, 90% participation; N=9	August 13, 2010
Faculty Mentor Interviews	Telephone, individual, 100% participation; N=4	August 17 - 31, 2010

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.

¹ See Appendix 1 on p. 26 for the comprehensive SHI Theory of Action Plan.

² One student elected to transfer to the SPUR Program, which was designed to provide a more individualized research experience, before the end-of-program activities took place on August 13, 2010.

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 the 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. Of the nine students who constituted the 2010 SHI cohort, seven students came from HBCUs in the South (e.g., Georgia, South Carolina, and Virginia) and two students attended universities on the East Coast (e.g, Maine and Pennsylvania). Six out of nine students indicated that their college communities were different from their home communities. At the time of this evaluation, two students had graduated from their home institution, one student will graduate in December 2010, and six are scheduled to graduate in Spring 2011. Eight students studied English and one student double-majored in Political Science and History. Of the students who majored in English, two students indicated that they also have a minor in Political Science. Students shared that the following factors influenced their school choice:

- Family (4),

- Funding package (3),
- Location (2),
- Support they anticipated receiving (2),
- Culture of the school (2), and
- School's reputation (1).

One student explained that there was no particular reason for his/her choice because this student had not intended to go to college, but chose to do so at their parent's urging. One student shared his/her reason for choosing an HBCU:

"I guess I just wanted to be in an all-Black educational environment for four years. I just felt like the rest of my life was going to be spent in the real world, which isn't an all-Black educational environment, so I just wanted that experience..."

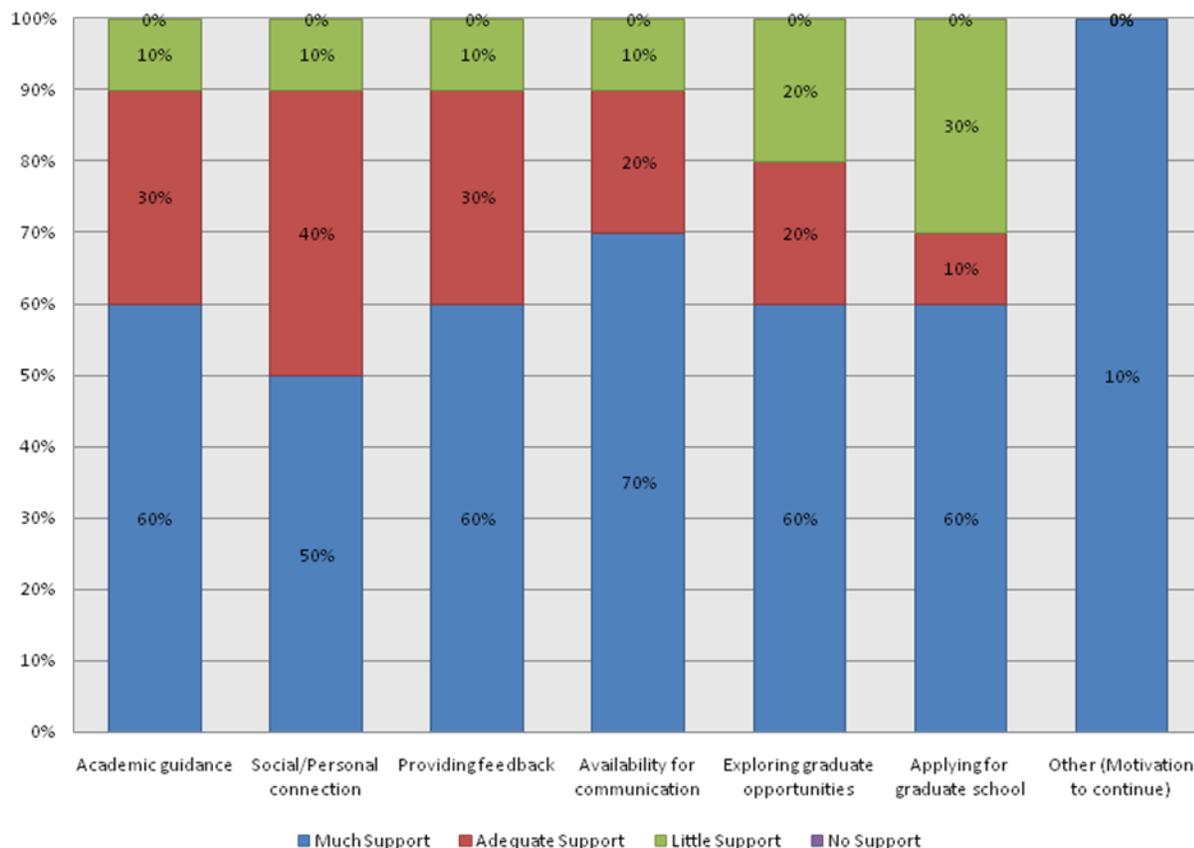
The primary motivations among students for attending the program, once accepted, was to conduct their own research (3 students), to develop new academic skills (3), learn more about graduate school (1), meet/collaborate with peers with similar interests (2), and make contacts at UCLA (1).

Student Experiences at Home Institutions

Results from the pre-program survey provide evidence that the majority of the 2010 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, 80% of students replied either 'quite a bit' (3) or 'some' (5), meaning they had participated in one or more research projects. Every student who reported having participated in at least two long-term research projects also shared that they have presented 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, on the following page, 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, communication availability, exploring graduate opportunities, and applying for graduate school. Half of the students reported ‘adequate’ to ‘no support’ in establishing social/personal connections. All of these areas of support correspond to outcomes of the SHI program and the mentoring experience. An additional area in which one student indicated receiving ‘much support’ was the motivation to continue pursuing his/her academic endeavors. This particular outcome is not explicitly stated in SHI’s Theory of Action Plan; however, this student’s comment appears consistent with what the program seeks to accomplish, especially when considering its overarching goals.

With respect to sources of information concerning graduate school, an equal number of students indicated that they relied on a faculty member other than their advisor (3) or the Internet (3). Of the students that remain, two students shared that their faculty advisor provided them with this information while two students obtained this knowledge by attending summer institutes hosted by other foundation-type programs. Students were then asked about their familiarity with the graduate school application process and the process for seeking out and applying for scholarships and fellowships. The majority of students (about 65%) indicated that they were somewhat familiar with applying for graduate schools and fellowships while one student was very familiar with these processes.

Finally, two questions on this survey asked for students’ perceptions regarding their home institutions. For the first question, seven of the ten students ‘completely agreed’ (4) or ‘generally agreed’ (3) 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 while two students were undecided. 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 (2) or generally agreed (5) that they had received adequate preparation. Three students were undecided as to the level of preparation provided by their home institution.

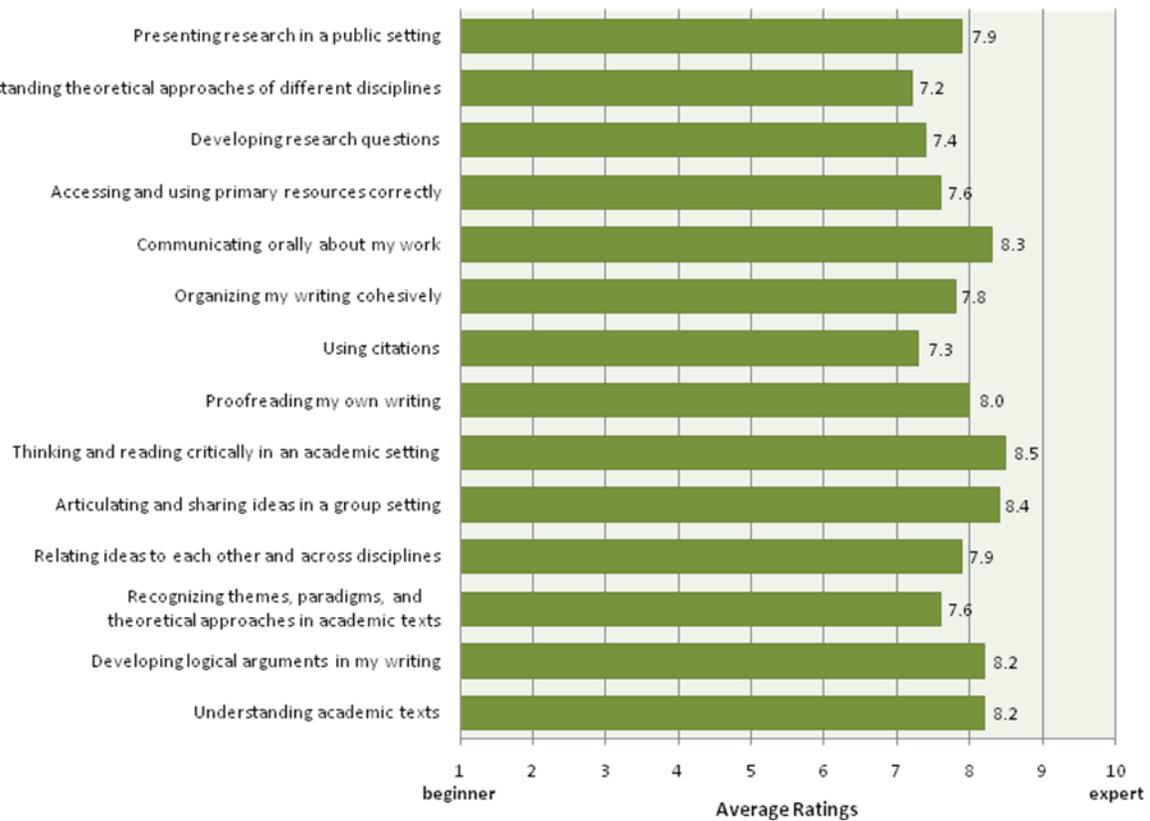
Self-Ratings of Skills

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 represent 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. Because 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 7.2 (“understanding theoretical approaches of different disciplines”) to a high of 8.5 (“thinking and reading critically in an academic setting”).³ On the whole, students rated their skill levels on all areas rather highly and were confident of their skills.

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

Figure 2. Self-Ratings of Skill Areas: Pre-Program (n = 10)



Prior Experiences with Collaborative Learning

“Commitment to collaborative learning” is listed as an intermediate outcome of the program. Given the cohort model that SHI uses, it is expected that collaborative learning will occur among 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 who replied, six reported that they had opportunities to work in collaborative peer groups in more than half of their undergraduate classes, while three students had such opportunities in less than half of their classes. One student indicated that s/he rarely had opportunities to work collaboratively. Furthermore, one of the ten students indicated that s/he 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. Two students indicated that they would prefer to work individually. These findings suggest that not every student in the 2010 cohort shares an interest in collaborative learning 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.

- Gain research experience (3)
- Gain a better understanding of what graduate student life is like (3)
- Develop relationships and network with faculty, mentors, and peers (2)
- Produce an exemplary, graduate-level research paper/writing sample (1)
- Become familiar with their own area(s) of research interest (1)

As reported earlier, all of the students reported having prior research experience. Nevertheless, it is clear that students are expecting to further develop and enhance their research skills this summer in addition to working closely with faculty. Students were also asked which aspect of the summer program they were most looking forward to. Corresponding to their expectations, working with faculty and other mentors was the prominent theme (4 students). Conducting and finishing research in their area(s) of interests (2) and attending workshops (1) were the next most common themes. Other responses included meeting new colleagues, experiencing an academic challenge, improving their writing skills, and taking tours of historical sites.

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 (4), and studying for the GREs (2). The second prominent theme pertains to preparation for graduate-level work, including ways to balance graduate course loads and other responsibilities (1).

Overall, it appears that students' expectations and aspirations for their summer in the SHI program are generally related to fostering and building relationships with their mentors. However, the graduate school application process is also an area in which these students may require the most assistance. This is an interesting finding given that about 65% 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

The SHI program consists of seven key activities. These 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*⁴

In theory, these key activities work together to expand students' academic skill sets and encourage their personal growth—the immediate intended outcomes of the program.⁵ The belief is that this skill expansion and growth will lead to increased intellectual self-confidence, increased

⁴ 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.

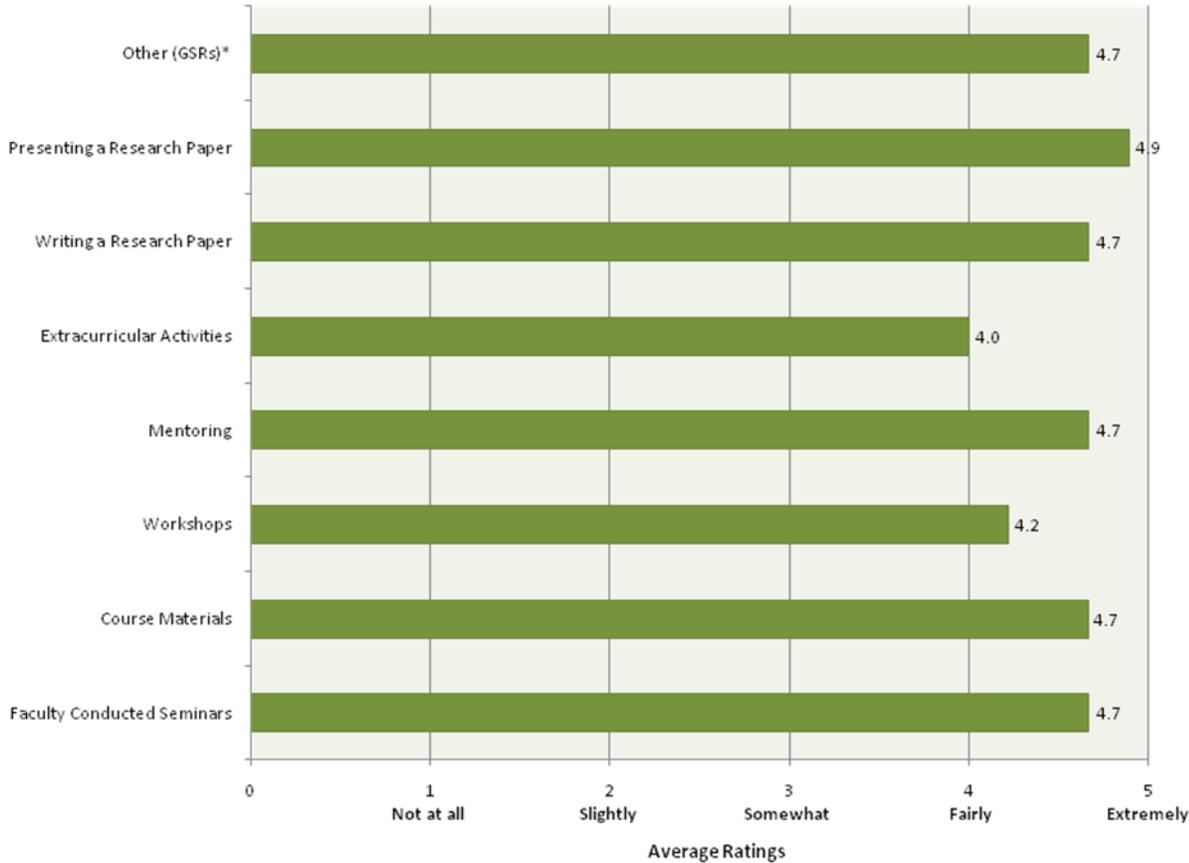
⁵ The full list of immediate outcomes is presented in the Theory of Action Plan, Appendix 1, p. 26.

motivation to achieve, enhanced academic ability, greater sense of institutional belonging, developed tolerance for diverse perspectives, and a greater 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 detailed distribution of participant responses is presented in Table 5 in Appendix 2.

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



* Only 3 students indicated that having GSRs was useful.

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 4.0 to a high of 4.9. Presenting a research paper received the highest rating (4.9) overall. Four other activities—faculty-conducted seminars, use of course materials, mentoring, and writing a research paper—received the second-highest ratings (4.7) overall. Extracurricular activities received the lowest rating (4.0) on average. Of the nine students who completed the “Other” category, three

students indicated that their Graduate Student Researchers (GSRs) were very useful and, on average, rated their usefulness at 4.7 points.

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 who responded, three cited that their mentoring experiences were the most useful throughout this process. In explaining their choices, students highlighted the quality of guidance and honest conversations that took place during the program. For example, one student shared that, “The one-on-one mentoring allowed for truthful conversation about the world of academic without pressures of being politically correct[; that is, they gave] the bad with the good” while another noted that, “Meeting brilliant professors gave me somewhere to aspire towards.” An additional three of the nine students who provided responses cited faculty-conducted seminars as the most useful activity. Two students shared similar sentiments that can be summarized as, “The seminars exposed me to material I had never been introduced to before, taught me new methods of analyzing and discussing the material, and allowed me to think on a higher level in the process.” All responses appear in Table 8 (see Appendix 2, pg. 30).

When asked which program activity was the least useful in contributing to their academic and intellectual development, of the seven students who provided responses, two students indicated the extra-curricular activities. However, it should be noted that the data seem to suggest students were not entirely clear on what was meant by “extra-curricular activities”. Two self-reported, conflicting comments on the post-program survey speak to this observation. Namely, one student responded, “I’m not sure exactly what is meant by extracurricular activities; however I haven’t engaged in much outside the seminars, workshops, etc.” while another shared that “The extracurricular activities were extremely helpful. (I had to pick one [least useful activity] tho).” Yet, when asked about extra-curricular activities in the focus groups, several students shared that “The most important thing we did was actually going to Black L.A. [...] you already have images of what you think it looks like from the media and society, but, just seeing how different it was than what I thought it would be [...] reinforced the importance of research for me.” These data suggest that students in the 2010 SHI cohort defined “extracurricular activities” differently. The misalignment in this understanding may account for the conflicting information that was collected and may require follow-up for added clarity.

Students also identified workshops as a program activity that they considered less useful. These results are consistent with the comparatively low ratings assigned to this activity when extracurricular activities are not considered. Content was the primary reason offered. Three students explained that, for them, the content was nothing new and concentrated on aspects that they were already familiar with, such as how to create a PowerPoint presentation and follow basic grammar rules. One student shared, “The workshops were not bad, but I feel they were too much. I already knew how to write and do power point as examples. So, in essence they took unnecessary time.” As with the responses for activities that students found most helpful, all open-ended answers to this particular question also appear in Table 8 (see Appendix 2, pg. 30).

Overall, the above survey findings provide an initial view into 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, theoretical paradigms, and interpretive approaches in a range of humanities and social science disciplines. This is accomplished

through 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 surrounding participation in the faculty-conducted seminars. Overall, students spoke very highly of their seminar experiences. They commented specifically on the exposure to different perspectives and approaches, the interrelatedness of the materials and topics, the UCLA faculty, and the opportunity to lead discussions. Students generally found that experiences in the seminars promoted more active scholarly participation, and provided good preparation for what they may face in graduate school. One student commented:

“For me, it was the fact that it was structured like at the graduate level. For someone who will be entering graduate school this fall, and for the rest of the people in the program who are considering graduate school, it gives them a perspective on what’s going to be expected of them and encourages us to think critically and analytically.”

According to the students, discussions of theoretical approaches and frameworks, and exposure to different perspectives were the most helpful aspects of the seminars. Students generally agreed that learning about various paradigms and theories provided them opportunities to become “better thinkers and writers.” One student shared:

“I think the positive thing is that you can pick and choose which paradigm you want to use. There are different avenues and approaches that you can use to support the claim that you’re trying to make.”

Additionally, students valued learning about each other’s and the faculty’s perspectives, and found that they benefited from discourse with one another. One student elaborated on this point, and the comment was illustrative of the sentiments of the group:

“I like hearing everyone else’s opinions including the teachers’. That was probably the best part because it pushed me on forming my opinion. It made me feel like I had something to actually bring to the table. Everyone is so smart. It made me want to step my game up.”

Four students commented specifically about the interrelatedness of the assigned readings. They talked about how the readings were “intertwined” and how ties between seminars “helped me to constantly be aware of the fact that they are connected.” Students also appreciated that “the readings [were] set up to where they were in discourse with one another.”

Working with UCLA faculty proved to be a highlight of the program for many students. One student captured the sentiments of the group in saying, “They have all of the status, brilliant [...] They seem like they care. I have nothing but good things to say about the faculty.” Students also indicated that leading discussions during the seminars was valuable, and a different experience from what they typically receive at their home institution. One student said, “[At SHI] they encourage students to lead, and that’s a good thing.” They found that professors played more of a “devil’s advocate” role, which helped students improve their analytical skills.

Several of the students shared that the seminars presented a time-management challenge, which was exacerbated by a perceived lack of connection between the assigned readings and the research papers. This idea was expressed as:

“I also feel like sometimes some of the readings got in the way of the research paper because I couldn’t get them to relate. I felt like I spent so much time reading these readings but I couldn’t use them in my paper.”

Generally, students' experiences in the faculty-conducted seminars were very positive. Students found that they were challenged and noted improvements in their work over the course of the summer. One student, with the agreement of others, said:

"By the end, we were analyzing the texts a lot better than at the beginning when we were just trying to read it all rather than trying to understand it, break it down, and critique it."

Confidence Development

During the individual interviews, eight of the nine students indicated feeling more confident in their intellectual abilities since participating in SHI. Increased confidence resulted from opportunities to express, develop, and challenge ideas with both faculty and peers. Students explained how, "Listening to other people—my cohort and my professors—approach the text and the things that they get from it, builds into your own understanding." Another student shared, "I liked the seminars and the way they allowed us to really expand the way we thought and really deconstruct some issues like race, class, sexuality, and gender." Students also mentioned development of certain specific skills, and their ability to envision themselves as graduate students as confidence-building results of the program.

Several students mentioned development in their reading, writing, critical thinking, and research skills that led to greater confidence. These observations were specifically stated:

"I am a better reader."

"I learned how to write a better paper."

"The program developed a more critical thinking side to my intellectual ability."

"Now I feel like I can do enough background research to make that point stronger based off evidence, rather than based off my personal feelings or biases."

Additionally, students gained confidence through observing role models in the academic community. Two students provided comments that were indicative of how observations of role models led to changed self-perceptions:

"Now I can imagine grad school. I can imagine being in a grad school setting. I can imagine being able to talk to a top of the line professor. It's changed my thinking."

"To see people who really enjoy what they're doing, and who aren't always academics or professors made me think I can really go for this higher degree and not be confined to a set path."

One student was reluctant to tease out the intellectual aspect of the change in confidence s/he experienced. S/he explained, "It was an overall growth experience, not [just] an intellectual growth experience."

B. Use of Course Materials

The purpose of the course materials used for SHI is to aid students with their analytical comprehension. This is accomplished through helping students break down arguments by recognizing

themes and their organization in the materials, emphasizing the inter-relationship between ideas, and assisting 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. Seven of the nine students agreed that the materials were consistent with their respective areas of interest given that they were related to African American studies, and examined themes of race, class, and gender. While the remaining two students did not find that the readings were aligned with their particular interests, they still considered the readings valuable. One student said, "I am glad I was exposed to all the ideas." The other student shared, "Now I have new ideas for where I can pull supporting evidence for my claims." With respect to the ways students' utilized these materials, most students reported that they did not use the materials as primary or secondary sources in their own writing. However, several students explained that although they may not have used the materials for this research, they intend to use them in the future.

Many students spoke positively about their experiences with analyzing these texts. Most of the students were English majors so the kind of deep analysis demanded by SHI was familiar to them. They specifically referenced valuable experiences at SHI relating to "draw[ing] parallels between the texts" and "considering the text in historical and societal context." Students mentioned Toni Morrison, Thomas Jefferson, Langston Hughes, and Oscar Wilde as memorable authors. Frequently, the readings were considered memorable because of the resulting discussions in the seminars. In general, students thought they benefited from the course materials. Specifically:

"The way that they structured the seminars with the coursework entices us to think broader so you can see how different things correlated with my interests that I didn't think would before. It was overall very effective."

C. Workshops

The purpose of the SHI 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 as well as other topics such as "Community Responsibility" and "Research Abroad". In prior years, SPUR workshops were mandatory for all SHI participants. However, many students who previously participated in the program shared during the evaluation that they did not find the SPUR workshops helpful and recommended that program staff make attending SPUR workshops an optional activity. In light of these past evaluation results, program staff implemented this recommendation and did not require students in this year's SHI cohort to participate in SPUR workshops. The writing workshops, on the other hand, were conducted by SHI faculty and were a mandatory component of the SHI program. The distinction between the above workshops is necessary given how students' experiences and opinions differed greatly by the type of workshop under discussion.

It should also be noted that none of the students in the 2010 cohort attended the optional SPUR workshops. Most of the students indicated that there were time conflicts with the workshops or that they were unable to fit them in to their busy schedules. However, SPUR and SHI activities did not overlap and students were free to attend SPUR workshops in which they were interested. A few students indicated that they regretted not attending the SPUR workshops and some would have liked to obtain more information about the graduate school application process. Several students also shared that had the workshops on the logistics of applying to graduate school, including how to prepare applications, write the personal statement, apply for fellowships and financial aid, been

offered towards the end of the program, they would have definitely attended. However, because these particular workshops were offered at the beginning of the program, during a period when students were deeply immersed in program activities that demanded a lot of their time (e.g., preparing for seminars, conducting research for their papers, etc.), they found it difficult to schedule them in. In fact, one student shared that, “If it was about applying to grad school at the end, I would have gone to that one. The one on writing personal statements and preparing applications I would have gone.” Rather, many students noted that the workshops that were offered towards the end of the program “were the ones about stressful [graduate student] life” and how to balance the responsibilities while in graduate school, which they did not find particularly useful. One student said, in response to this observation, “It was strange that we didn’t focus on actually applying for [graduate school].”

On the other hand, the majority of students found the SHI writing workshops useful. Students spoke specifically about the writing process and reviewing techniques practiced in the workshops. One student mentioned learning “how to just write out your thoughts and just talk your way into something” as being helpful as s/he was trying to develop a topic. Another student brought up the idea of employing outlines during the writing process, finding this process to be “really important.” A third student indicated that the writing workshops were helpful in teaching “how to structure a paper.” Several students mentioned that they enjoyed the editing/peer review process introduced at the writing workshops. Specifically, one student, with agreement from others, said:

“We would come with an outline or a first draft [...] and then our peers would read it and the questions that they had were kind of similar to how we had to present our research, and we had to answer their questions, and when we couldn’t answer, it showed how we need to develop our own thesis.”

However, two of the students did not find the writing workshops useful. Their specific comments related to the fact that they received feedback on their writing from their mentors, and therefore found the writing workshops to be redundant. One student further commented on differing information given by the mentor and writing instructor:

“It’s different because you have different writing styles. [The writing instructor] gave me her writing styles and my mentor was giving me his. So at the end of the day I was conflicted.”

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. All four mentors who worked with this 2010 SHI cohort were interviewed. Three of the mentors have served as mentors previously, and many were associated with the program in different roles in prior years.

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 experience had been enhanced by having a mentor, and additionally indicated that they would not have been as successful this summer without a mentor. One student offered the following comment that captured the sentiments of the group:

“I feel like once you get to this level and worrying about getting into grad school it’s definitely important to have guidance. Without it you really don’t understand. But to have someone there even when you fail or make a

mistake, it happens to everybody, but they have experiences in handling new upcoming graduate student. They know what to say and how to be helpful. I feel like it would have been chaotic without my mentor.”

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. Specifically, students described the feedback that they received and the resources that their mentors recommended. One student shared, “She gave me a lot of helpful suggestions [about how to] go about my research and how to approach it and be very clear in what I was trying to do.” Many of the students shared that their mentors directed them to resources that would be helpful in supporting students’ research. Overall, students described their relationships with their mentors as “productive,” “great,” “positive,” “good,” “cool,” and “professional.”

Students were also asked to describe the difference, if any, between their SHI mentor and their advisors from their home institutions. In comparing these relationships, most students highlighted differences. Specifically, five of the nine students described the relationship as different, two considered the relationships mostly similar, and two thought the relationships were both similar and different depending on the specific aspect of the relationship. Most of the students who found that the relationship differed, indicated that it did so in terms of breadth and depth. Generally, while students had not worked as closely with their mentor at their home institution on a single project, students had worked with their home advisors on multiple projects across years and situations. One student explained this as:

“Here, my mentor was with me each step of the writing stage; whereas, at home, she was with me since my freshman year through my senior thesis so she was able to see my thoughts develop and offer support outside of just academics or just the research.”

Another student reported a change in how s/he wishes to interact with future advisor(s) as a result of participating in this program. The student explained, “Now I am realizing it’s better to actually have a personal relationship with these people. I’ve got to do better with communicating.”

Regarding communication and time spent engaged in one-on-one mentoring, each of the mentors communicated in person, via e-mail, and, in some cases, by telephone. Students reported a range of frequency with which they met their advisors. Some met as often as several times a week, while others indicated that they met with their mentors once every other week. Some reported a shift in meeting frequency depending on the stage of their writing process. In addition to the face-to-face meetings, students reported communicating with their mentors by e-mail, phone, and text message. Specifically, all nine students mentioned e-mail, three mentioned communicating by phone, and two mentioned exchanging text messages with their mentor(s).

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 four mentors acknowledged that the academic guidance, feedback, and personal connections components defined the mentoring experience and were typically interrelated. In terms of whether or not mentors believed that these three components were equally valuable, two of the mentors indicated that they were, and two of the mentors indicated that they were not. One of the mentors who assigned equal value to the components elaborated:

“All three components are equally valuable, it just depends on the individual student, and even in the course of the eight weeks with the student, we are emphasizing different things. It is a constantly shifting mix.”

The two mentors who indicated that the components of the mentoring approach were not equal explained opposite views:

“Academic guidance and feedback are equally important, but the personal connection is less so; you can still get the work done without it.”

“I think the personal relationship is crucial. If you don’t have a personal relationship, everything else doesn’t work. [You] can give good feedback even if you don’t have a connection, but in a program like this, I think it is the single most important variable.”

Mentors were also asked if there was an additional component to the mentoring experience that they believed was more or equally valuable. Three of the four mentors raised additional aspects of mentoring or further highlighted a facet of one of the previously stated components of mentoring. The additional aspects mentioned were “sharing our own personal story with them,” “help[ing] them get a sense that they have established a rapport, that if they wish, can continue,” and “giving [them] motivation.” Another mentor shared that the field trips were a very important facet of building the personal relationships. 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 students’ experiences: 1) directing students to resources, 2) giving constant feedback about their ideas and thinking, 3) assisting students’ preparation for graduate school, and 4) improving and focusing students’ research. Three mentors elaborated on these areas:

“We give them ideas for what to improve about their specific research skills and topics, and provide information about academic resources.”

“We fill a vital role to ensure that they have up-to-date information about grad programs out there, and we use our expertise about giving them tips [about] selecting proper grad schools. We also tell them the best things they can do now to assure they become top graduate students.”

“They got constant feedback about how to research and how to formulate valid research questions.”

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 developing 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.

The students presented a picture of how the mentors were able to provide academic guidance primarily through working with the students on their research projects. Four students mentioned appreciating the content knowledge their mentors brought to the experience. Specifically, two students described their mentor as “knowledgeable” about the topic area, and four talked about how their mentors directed them to additional resources and “broadened [their] horizons.” One student elaborated:

“She assigned a lot of books that she thought were useful, not just in this research, but in ways that would be applicable in graduate school.”

Additionally, four students described how their mentors helped develop students’ reading and writing skills. One of these students discussed critical reading skills, and the other three referenced specific paper suggestions and critiques. Three students mentioned that their mentors offered a kind of emotional support—providing “comfort” and “encouragement.” One student explained:

“She tried to make us feel comfortable with the whole research process, making us feel comfortable with how our research would evolve and how our questions would be reshaped by the things we read.”

Two of the students also indicated that their mentors provided guidance about the students’ future graduate school plans. One explained, “He helped me narrow down my graduate school search, and that was really important.”

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 mentor on the one hand is working to help students get an idea about how to improve work, and at the same time, do it in as encouraging manner as possible so that the student doesn’t feel discouraged, so that they don’t feel they are receiving a barrage of criticism—the emphasis is on constructive criticism.”

Feedback was integrated in all of their communications with students and mainly related to drafts of research papers; however, feedback was also provided with respect to development of research topics, formulating cohesive arguments, and writing techniques. Mentors also provided feedback on conference presentations.

Student responses in the focus groups and individual interviews 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, in addition to the 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 described his/her feedback session as an opportunity to “throw around ideas.”

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; a sentiment reflected in the comments of one mentor:

“Helping a student bring out his or her potential requires having the students trust us, so in a way it is like being an academician and a coach.”

Three mentors described specific efforts that they made toward establishing personal connections with their mentees. These included putting the students at ease, talking to students about

their personal experiences, and making connections before students arrive at the program. Two mentors explained these actions:

“They weren’t from the area, so I wanted to ask them about their experiences. I want them to see me as more than a person who lives and breathes the subject matter.”

“When they arrive, I have already established contact. That personal contact is what has made SHI such a successful program.”

The data revealed, from a student perspective, that mentor/mentee relationships varied by student according to whether or not a personal connection was reached. Six of the nine students indicated that their mentors were able to establish a personal connection with them. These students described their mentors as “open,” “hands-on,” “available,” and “supportive.” One student elaborated that their mentor “wants to be there. She loves it when you drop in.” Three students mentioned that their mentors shared stories and personal experiences as a means of building a personal connection. One student explained:

“He wasn’t afraid to share his anecdotes about how he had a lot of insecurities as well going in to graduate school. He wasn’t afraid to let me know some of the challenges that happen after you get in to graduate school.”

The students who reported a lack of personal connection with their advisor indicated that they did not attempt to foster this personal connection. One student explained, “I only sought her out for academic help, not really social or anything.”

In addition to perspectives on the three mentoring components, students were asked two questions about their mentors. The first asked students to share how, if at all, their mentors served as role models. The common themes that emerged in student responses spoke to students’ admiration of their mentor’s accomplishments and personal attributes. One student said of his/her mentor, “She is absolutely a role model. She has a Ph.D. She is accomplished. She is young. She is independent.” Another explained how his/her mentor was a role model, “He has achieved quite a few things I aim to achieve in my future.” Students also described their mentors as “intelligent,” “down-to-earth,” “an activist,” and a “good guy.” Two students also talked about how their mentors made graduate school seem possible. The sentiment was captured thus:

“Graduate school can often seem lofty or unattainable, but she shed a different light on it—it was completely possible.”

The final question posed to students concerned whether or not they would have liked anything to be different about their relationship with their mentor. While all of the students noted that their mentor contributed positively to their SHI experience, two of the students responded affirmatively, indicating that they would have liked something different from their mentor. They explained:

“I would have really really liked a mentor who could’ve directed me or given me advice for [how] I can find answers to some of the issues that I was grappling with. I wished I had a mentor whose interests were more closely aligned with mine.”

“I feel like sometimes it was a lot because she was very hands-on, so if she gave me a turnaround time of one day for me to re-write things; I feel like I need time to think things over [...] so sometimes I felt rushed, but that’s pretty much the only thing—that she expected a lot sometimes.”

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 also mentioned enjoying visits to Watts and Saint Elmo’s. Students reported appreciating the ability to connect these excursions to what they were studying, “The issues we were talking about in the seminars were just made visible.” One student reported, “It also gave us a different perspective on a lot of the things that we talked about. It put it into historical context and relevance as African Americans.” Additionally, some students felt inspired to become more involved or engaged in their home communities in different ways. One student explained this sentiment:

“I feel like I have to get more involved now. I have to take that back to home. I need to support more minority businesses when I get home instead of the big chain stores.”

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, their mentors, and the program GSRs.

As discussed in the earlier section on workshops, the majority of students found the writing workshops generally helpful. In particular, they appreciated editing techniques that were introduced. They also credited the feedback that they received from their mentors as being instrumental in the development of their research papers. The following student comments are illustrative of this writing support:

“Handing in a rough draft and getting good critique back saying yeah. You think this is good but it doesn’t flow here. You’re digressing here. You have to stay focused on the paper and the arguments.”

“You have to develop the outlines, having to meet with your mentor preliminarily, discussing your outline and introductions with your peers. It was mandatory here but I know when I go back to my home institution I’m basically going to utilize the hour and definitely go see my professors more.”

“Here, they helped me narrow my topic, because it was so broad and everyone kept telling me to narrow it. And I think that was how my writing style was before. I just talked and it didn’t have to be focused on anything.”

As seniors and recent graduates, the students all commented on their previous experiences with writing research papers and the strategies and techniques used. Responses varied when students were asked about how their experiences writing a research paper differed at SHI as compared to their home institution. Some students found the writing process to be similar, but others noted differences in the experience of writing at SHI beyond the level of feedback received (as discussed above). Some students commented specifically about how the writing process differed:

“When I used to write papers I didn’t work through it as much as I did this paper. I struggle now to make sure it’s coherent as possible and articulate.”

“For papers [I learned] there are steps that you can take. The outline, the abstract, going to see my professor, plans to ask friends to proofread.”

Additionally, some students talked about how they approached developing an argument differently at SHI. One student said:

“I never really sat down and said here is my complete well-rounded thesis and this is exactly what I’m going to do with the paper. I usually just write the paper and halfway through I say this is exactly what I am trying to point out. And then I finish it and then go back and edit it at the end. Here I basically had to figure out exactly precisely what I am saying before I write it. And that was the first time I ever did that.”

Mentors were also asked to describe the ways in which they helped students to become confident, skilled writers. Many mentors spoke of the writing strategies and techniques they shared with their mentees. For example, one mentor spoke of giving his/her mentees a handout detailing certain common mistakes that students make while writing. Many of the mentors offered suggestions to help the students with their writing process. Two of the mentors elaborated in the following comments:

“I let them know it is like exercise, like building a muscle. It hurts at first, but the more you do it, the easier it gets. I don’t know if anyone ever masters it. It is a tool for communication, and you do the best you can.”

“Of course, the first aspect to convince them is that having to write several drafts is something that happens frequently. It is not punishment, just part of the process.”

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. One mentor elaborated, saying:

“I tried to take the fear out of it and tell them it is not a reflection of them as a person if they struggle. I help them to create distance between who they are as people, and what they put on a page.”

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:

“Criticism that obviously made the presentation better and it gave me ideas on how in the future I can make the presentation better.”

“I also feel like they pointed out things that I had no idea I did. I think that a couple of people said that you look at the slides when the slides are already there. They were telling me to focus on the audience.”

Most of the students also perceived these mock presentations as activities that helped them build confidence. One student explained, “It taught me how to anticipate people breaking down my argument and really starting to just try to find any kind of inconsistency, so that really helped me.” Another student added, “the mock definitely helped me in the process of getting more confident.”

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. Seven students reported that they had many opportunities to work collaboratively in peer groups over the summer, while two students reported that they had few such opportunities. None of the students reported not having opportunities. Four students reported that they did not have opportunities to work collaboratively. As a result, they chose to work individually. And, when given the choice, four students chose to work collaboratively and three students elected to work individually.

Due to the inconsistencies of students’ responses to these questions on both surveys, analysis for change over time was difficult to interpret. Therefore, results should be interpreted with caution. On the one hand, the number of students who indicated they had the opportunity to work collaboratively increased by one person from the pre- to post-survey. Additionally, the number of students who, when given the option, still decided to work collaboratively doubled from two to four students between the two survey administrations. On the other hand, the number of students who, when given the choice, would rather work individually increased from two to three people between the pre- and post-surveys. A number of students noted during the focus group that they valued having the chance to work with each other and in groups because it was conducive to deeper understanding and helped them to save a lot of time. Given these observations, added efforts to examine students’ commitment to collaborative learning as a program outcome would provide further insights 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. Seven of the nine students indicated that they have plans to attend graduate school. Four of these students specifically mentioned UCLA, and one indicated that s/he planned on attending law school. Of the students who did not respond

affirmatively, one said, “I don’t know if I am cut out for grad school.” The other did not say specifically that s/he planned to attend graduate school, but talked about a potential career that would require post-graduate education. Eight of the nine students talked more specifically about the contribution they hope to make to the academic community. Six of these students mentioned a specific content area. Tremendous diversity was represented in these responses. The disciplines and areas of study mentioned by the students include: film studies, law and critical race studies, African Americans and globalization, reforming educational policies, childhood socialization, and novels. Another student did not mention a specific plan of study, but said, “I want to write. I want to write books, movies, comic books... just write.” Another student spoke of offering a different interdisciplinary perspective as a contribution.

Six of the nine students indicated that these ideas developed during their participation in the program this summer, and two students said that the SHI experience either enhanced or reinforced previously held ideas. This thought was expressed:

“It [the idea] kind of became generalized here from a broadened thing, but I basically had the underlying tenets before I came.”

Challenges to Graduate School

Students were asked to describe potential challenges they anticipated facing if they chose to pursue graduate studies at non-HBCU institutions. Eight of the nine students indicated that they believed they would face challenges in attending a non-HBCU. The majority of these students (six of eight) talked about the social challenges they may face:

“My fear would be how to relate to people and reach out to the ‘other’.”

“Sometimes I’m very slow to talk to people that I don’t feel like I can get an immediate connection with, or sometimes I will just sit—I’m very observant—I’ll sit back for a while, and then I might not put myself out there [...] that would be one thing that I would probably have to overcome.”

Another student mentioned feeling that there would be less of a support system. S/he elaborated:

“Now I sit in class and pretty much everyone else is black. If there is an issue or misrepresentation, I know that I will have support. In this type of institution, I’ve been told, I will most likely be the only Black person in the classroom, especially the only Black male. There wouldn’t be that type of support system [at a predominantly White institution].”

One student shared a concern that s/he would become complacent if s/he were to attend a non-HBCU:

“Like here at UCLA where it is like three or four percent [Black student population]. I think that would kind of keep me from my main goal of staying active because I would feel as if I had made it in some sort of way, but I feel like at an HBCU I would still be part of the struggle because I [would] see the struggle every day.”

Students were also asked whether or not they felt their experiences at SHI have prepared them to face these challenges. Seven of the nine students felt that the experience at SHI will help them in the event that they attend a non-HBCU for graduate school. The sentiments of the students were expressed both in terms of academic and social preparation:

“SHI has prepared me for these challenges by the intensity of the program; the high level of expectation that they have for us.”

“SHI has given me the chance to be on a predominantly White campus; to see the different dynamics and a way to navigate that, and [to] bond with people of different backgrounds.”

One of the students who did not find SHI helpful in preparing for the potential challenges of attending a predominantly White institution explained:

“I think that because of the fact that all of my cohort were African American from HBCUs, and that the readings were based on African American history and that all of our professors were African American, I think that it didn’t prepare us for those kinds of situations.”

Perceived Changes in Skill Areas

The results of students’ self-ratings of skills were presented in Section 1 of this report. These skills are a sample of the expected outcomes that are related to the program’s activities and correspond to a selection of program outcomes listed on the program’s Theory of Action Plan (see Appendix 1, pg. 26). 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 participation in SHI. The response options included “great improvement,” “some improvement,” and “no difference.” Table 2, below, presents the response frequencies for each of the skill areas.

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

Skill	N	Great Improvement	Some Improvement	No Difference
Understanding academic texts	9	50%	30%	10%
Developing logical arguments in my writing	9	60%	20%	10%
Articulating and sharing ideas within group setting	9	60%	30%	0%
Relating ideas to each other and across disciplines	9	30%	50%	10%
Thinking and reading critically in an academic setting	9	50%	30%	10%
Proofreading my own writing	9	40%	40%	10%
Using citations	9	20%	40%	30%
Organizing my writing cohesively	9	40%	30%	20%
Communicating orally about my work	9	50%	30%	10%
Accessing and using primary resources correctly	9	30%	30%	30%
Developing research questions	9	50%	20%	20%
Understanding theoretical approaches of different disciplines	9	40%	50%	0%

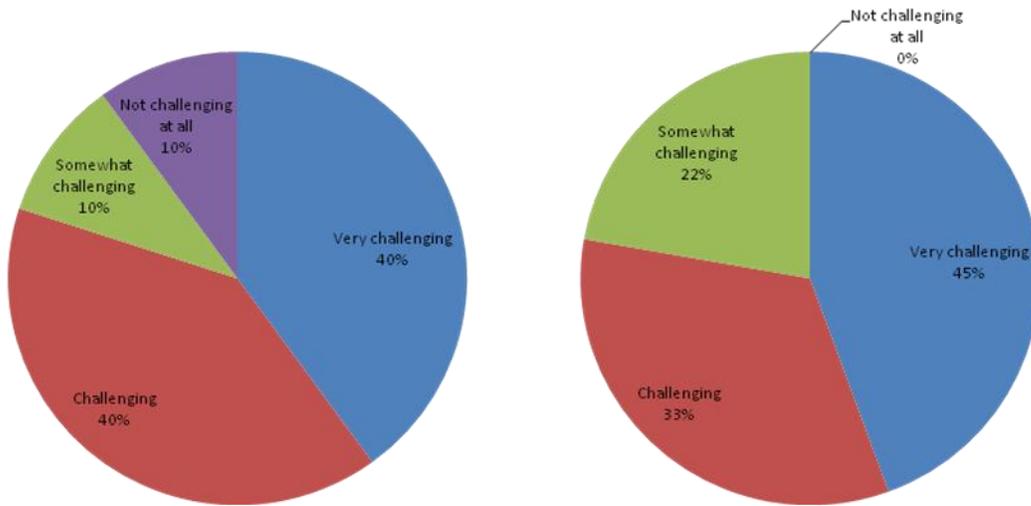
Presenting research in a public setting	9	50%	40%	0%
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As may be seen in the table, more than half of the students reported improvement in all the skill areas. Furthermore, students reported “great improvement” in more than half of the skill areas. The most significant improvements, according to the students, were in “developing logical arguments in my writing,” and “articulating and sharing ideas within a group setting.” The areas that the highest relative percentage of students (30%) reported no difference in their improvement were “accessing and using primary resources correctly” and “using citations.” 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, below, summarizes the responses to these two questions. Overall, the perceptions of the group seemed to change slightly, in a positive direction, of how challenging the program would be, suggesting that students found the experience more challenging than they had anticipated.

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)) regarding their summer experiences in the program. Students reported very different levels of frustration, ranging from 3 to 10. Some reported feeling different levels of frustration at various points in time during the institute or differences in frustration level according to task. One student explained the frustration thus:

“I think it was a combination of things – getting used to LA, at first thinking we had to do all the readings by ourselves. It wasn’t the course work specifically. What was frustrating was the combination of things.”

Despite the variation in ratings, students listed the same types of frustrations and challenges. Students reported issues with time management and the lack of convergence between assigned

readings and their research papers as points of frustration. One student explained his/her concern with the mismatch between readings and the writing assignment, stating:

“I think it was kind of counterproductive. You had a seminar for like two hours or even an hour and a half. You go and your advisor is like, ‘OK, work on your project, but we’re not going to talk about your project, we are going to read these random things that have nothing to do with anything else.’ So you have to read 30 pages for tomorrow, but you have 10 pages of this draft due with this many sources. Soon as the seminar is over that reading doesn’t matter.”

Nonetheless, many students expressed that they generally benefited from any frustration and challenge that they experienced over the summer. One student shared a comment that captured the sentiments of the group:

“It’s probably going to be this stressful when you go to grad school, so you have to get used to the level of stress that you might be under. It won’t be shocking.”

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:

- My only concern was with the way in which the schedule was made. It could've used a bit more balance.
- Mentoring on application process. For instance, a mentor who could take your interest and tell you good places to apply.
- GRE Test Prep incorporated into the program instead of outside.
- Help with the application process for graduate school on a more intimate level (i.e. personal statement, applying for grants and fellowships.)
- The seminars could have been more spread out.
- Maybe the seminars should start at 10am versus 9am and the course load should be spread out more so that the participants aren't as swamped in the beginning.
- I also hope the schedule will be altered for future students to spend more time researching and writing their papers.

Students were also asked to describe the most important thing they learned over the summer. They spoke generally about the skills that they gained through participation in SHI; the interactions they had with their peers and the faculty; how their self-perceptions changed over the course of the summer; and the lessons learned about social interactions. These thoughts were specifically expressed as follows:

“I think that the most important thing that I want to take away from this experience would be, probably just as far as literature, how to really look into it critically.”

“I feel like you can get knowledge anywhere or skills anywhere. I can sit here with a book and read, or I can stumble across these things. It was the fact that it was presented to us in a way by these people who had this knowledge and how they give it to us, and the people that we had in our group who were giving their input. The fact of these connections I made with these people.”

“The most important thing I learned was that I’ve come pretty far but I still have a long way to go. It empowered me when I talked to professors and grad students. Everyone gave me an optimistic outlook on my future but also let me know that there is a lot of work to be done.”

“To be by yourself, to me at times, was an interesting experience. You need to find your own niche. To be able to carve out your own space, and be able to figure out for your self, like you really realize a lot about your self in the span of the summer. You realize so much about like other people, and how people relate to each other and how people interact. It was more like a big social experiment.”

Overall, the students comprising the 2010 cohort clearly recognized the important outcomes of their participation and how their experiences have influenced their development. One student expressed a sentiment that was echoed by the other students:

“It was awesome. We all appreciate the experience generally.”

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 showed that participation in the program’s major activities promoted students’ academic skill set expansion and personal growth.

In summary, the 2010 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 including, 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 desired outcomes such as developing logical arguments and articulating and sharing ideas within a group setting. Conversely, many students considered the workshops to be the least useful aspect of the program. Further elaboration revealed that, although some students did receive helpful information, most were already familiar with the content presented. Overall, mentors and students viewed their relationships positively in terms of academic guidance, personal connections, and providing feedback. Students also found the presentation of their research projects to be a positive experience. The mock practices and constructive feedback enabled students to benefit from this activity.

Eight of nine students intend to pursue graduate school study and most have already considered their potential contributions to the academic community. Furthermore, students who may have had concerns about attending non-HBCU graduate schools reported benefitting from their experiences at UCLA and from the informative conversations that they had with mentors and faculty.

Finally, students offered several suggestions for the program that were related to scheduling and providing more assistance for applying to graduate school. Spreading out the course load over the eight weeks and providing individually-focused support for the graduate school application process were common recommendations.

Overall, the 2010 cohort had a very positive and memorable experience participating in SHI. Their ability to reflect critically on their experiences and demonstrate self-awareness of their own development adds further evidence supporting 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
Faculty Conducted Seminars	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"> ▪ Intellectual Self-Confidence ▪ Student Motivation to Achieve ▪ Enhanced Academic Ability ▪ Sense of Institutional Belonging ▪ Developed Tolerance for Diverse Perspectives ▪ Commitment to Collaborative Learning 	Underrepresented Students Earn Fellowships and Doctoral Degrees in the Humanities and Social Sciences
Use of Course Materials	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		
Workshops	Comprehensive knowledge of the technical aspects of the graduate school/fellowship application process Writing and research techniques		
Mentoring Experiences	One-on-one technical coaching (Academic Guidance/Providing Feedback) Social support (Establishing personal connections) Personal and professional role models		
Extracurricular Activities (Field Trip) (Field Courses) (Conference)	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)		
Writing and Presenting Research Paper	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.

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

Skill	Frequencies of Ratings										
	N	Mean	SD	1-4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Total
Understanding academic texts	10	8.2	1.1	0%	0%	10%	10%	40%	30%	10%	100%
Developing logical arguments in my writing	10	8.2	1.2	0%	0%	10%	20%	20%	40%	10%	100%
Recognizing themes, paradigms, and theoretical approaches in academic texts	10	7.6	1.7	0%	20%	10%	0%	40%	20%	10%	100%
Relating ideas to each other and across disciplines	10	7.9	1.3	0%	0%	20%	10%	40%	20%	10%	100%
Articulating and sharing ideas within group setting	10	8.4	1.3	0%	0%	10%	20%	10%	40%	20%	100%
Proofreading my own writing	10	8.0	1.3	0%	20%	0%	10%	20%	30%	20%	100%
Using citations	10	7.3	1.8	0%	20%	10%	20%	20%	30%	0%	100%
Organizing my writing cohesively	10	7.8	1.6	0%	10%	10%	10%	30%	40%	0%	100%
Communicating orally about my work	10	8.3	1.4	0%	0%	10%	20%	20%	30%	20%	100%
Accessing and using primary resources correctly	10	7.6	1.3	0%	20%	0%	10%	40%	30%	0%	100%
Developing research questions	10	7.4	1.5	0%	10%	0%	50%	20%	20%	0%	100%
Understanding theoretical approaches of different disciplines	10	7.2	1.2	0%	10%	20%	20%	40%	10%	0%	100%
Presenting research in public setting	10	7.9	1.2	0%	20%	0%	20%	10%	30%	20%	100%
Thinking and reading critically in an academic setting	10	8.5	1.9	0%	0%	10%	10%	20%	40%	20%	100%

Table 4. Response Frequencies of Types and Quantity of Home Advisor Support (Pre-Program)

	N	Much Support	Adequate Support	Little Support	No Support	Total
Academic guidance	10	60%	30%	10%	0%	100%
Social/Personal connection	10	50%	40%	10%	0%	100%
Providing Feedback	10	60%	30%	10%	0%	100%
Availability for communication	10	70%	20%	10%	0%	100%
Exploring graduate opportunities	10	60%	20%	20%	0%	100%
Applying for graduate school	10	60%	10%	30%	0%	100%
Other (Motivation to continue)*	1	10%	0%	0%	0%	10%

Table 5. Response Frequencies of Usefulness of Program Activities

Program Activities	N	Not at all useful	Slightly useful	Somewhat useful	Fairly useful	Extremely useful	Total
Faculty Conducted Seminars	9	---	---	---	33%	67%	100%
Use of course materials	9	---	---	---	33%	67%	100%
Workshops	9	---	---	11%	56%	33%	100%
Mentoring Experiences	9	---	---	---	33%	67%	100%
Extracurricular Activities	9	---	---	44%	11%	44%	100%
Writing a Research Paper	9	---	---	---	33%	67%	100%
Presenting a Research Paper	9	---	---	---	11%	89%	100%
Other: GSRs	3	---	---	---	11%	22%	33%

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	78%	11%	11%	100%
Applying for graduate schools	56%	33%	11%	100%
Researching scholarships, fellowships, and other funding	11%	89%	---	100%
Applying for scholarships and fellowships	11%	67%	22%	100%

Table 7. Pre-Program Survey Open-ended Responses

Student	Describe your general expectations for your summer at UCLA.	Which aspect of the program are you most looking forward to?	Concerns/ Questions you have concerning the summer program.	Aspect(s) of preparing for graduate school will you need the MOST assistance with this summer
1	I expect to learn many valuable lessons. This is the first major institution I've been close related with. I also expect my instructors, GRE's, and my mentor to motivate me in ways I've never known.	Looking around LA; exploring. Meeting people with similar interests. My mentors are a big reason why I'm excited.	I want to be more confident speaking in public.	Everything please!!
2	I expect growth. I expect to develop as an academic writer and I expect to leave with tangibles - a solid writing sample.	The opportunity to work on my project in a structured environment with access to resources.	I hope to enjoy LA.	Personal statement and writing sample
3	I expect to better my knowledge of the rigor of graduate school.	I am most looking forward to establishing a relationship with a research mentor being that I know this is what graduate school is about.	I am quite confident in the ability of the administrators of my program.	Applying for scholarships/fellowships
4	At the end of this program I hope to have gained better insight to what life as a graduate student will be like, developed better research skills, and make long lasting friendships through networking that I can utilize in the future.	I'm looking forward to the writing workshops so that I can improve my writing skills. This will prove to be an invaluable asset in my future scholastic endeavors.	I'm just concerned about how I will be able to handle the deadlines and workload. It will take a lot of time management.	Test preparation for the GRE
5	I want to leave with a better understanding of what will be expected of me in grad school and I want to be prepared to formulate a research topic for my Master's study.	I'm looking forward to getting the guidance from mentors and faculty members at UCLA.	Blank	Looking for fellowships
6	My expectations of this program include gaining research experience that will assist me in my pursuit of post graduate studies.	I am excited to have a mentor that can assist me in my research.	N/A	Application process, funding opportunities, course work
7	I expect to learn more about the graduate school experience.	The academic challenge	Blank	Blank
8	I generally expect to have a great (illegible) mentor.	One on one time with ... and professors	Nothing at all just excited to go	The application process/personal statement
9	I expect to gain research experience that will be beneficial for graduate studies.	Of campus tours of historical sites	N/A	Writing personal statements and finding funding
10	Finish my research	Blank	Blank	Funding

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	Meeting brilliant professors gave me somewhere to aspire towards.	The extracurricular activities were extremely helpful. (I had to pick one tho.)	No	I wish that it would continue forever, as opposed to ending after this year.
2	Blank	Blank	Mentoring on application process. For instance, a mentor who could take your interest and tell you good places to apply.	Overall, the SHI Program was wonderful and well-organized. However, my only concern was with the way in which the schedule was made. It could've used a bit more balance.
3	The one-on-one mentoring allowed for truthful conversation about the world of academic without pressures of being politically correct (i.e., gave the bad with the good).	The workshops were not bad, but I feel they were too much. I already knew how to write and do power point as examples. So, in essence they took unnecessary time.	GRE Test Prep incorporated into the program instead of outside.	I am concerned that the seminars were daily. The seminars could have been more spread out.
4	The seminars exposed me to material I had never been introduced to before, taught me new methods of analyzing and discussing the material, and allowed me to think on a higher level in the process.	While the workshops were helpful in some ways, a lot of the things we learned weren't new concepts, and so the workshops contributed the least overall.	Help with the application process for graduate school on a more intimate level (i.e. personal stmt, applying for grants and fellowships.)	No concerns... It was awesome! ..On second thought though the program was good maybe the seminars should start at 10am versus 9am and the course load should be spread out more so that the participants aren't as swamped in the beginning.
5	Faculty conducted seminars helped me to realize what would be expected of me once entering grad school.	Still was good overall just least academic.	No. Can't think of any.	Great program.
6	The faculty of the Bunche Center exposed me to a reading selection that helped me build upon some eras, and literature styles that I hadn't been exposed to and some I would have like to pursue in the future.	I'm not sure exactly what is meant by extracurricular activities; however I haven't engaged in much outside the seminars, workshops, etc.	No	It was very beneficial to my future plans of pursuing graduate studies.
7	The information was challenging.	Nothing useful.	No	The program assisted in my intellectual growth.
8	People matter.	I've written many research papers before.	Not that I'm aware of.	I had an awesome time, and truly appreciate the program and all those involved!

9	Offered an opportunity to partake in experiences similar to those typical of grad/professional school.	The workshops for power point and librarians seemed unnecessary.	Not that I can think of.	I hope there will be another opportunity for students to participate in this program as this was the last year it will be funded. I also hope the schedule will be altered for future students to spend more time researching and writing their papers.
10	STUDENT TRANSFERRED TO SPUR PROGRAM – DID NOT COMPLETE SURVEY (see Footnote 2, pg. 1).			