

**Evaluation of Early Academic Outreach Program (EAOP)  
Parent Component  
2002/2003**

Sandy Taut<sup>1</sup>

Occasional Report #17

*Outreach Evaluation*

OCCASIONAL REPORT SERIES



**Graduate School of Education & Information Studies  
UCLA**

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June, 2003

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Evaluation of Early Academic Outreach Program (EAOP) Parent Component  
2002/2003

-- Executive Summary --

Sandy Taut<sup>2</sup>  
UCLA Outreach Evaluation

**Overview of evaluation study: Purpose, questions, methods**

The following executive summary summarizes an evaluation study conducted in 2002/2003 with the purpose of providing useful information for the continuous improvement of the EAOP parent component. The evaluation team applied a user-oriented approach, with an emphasis on involving the primary stakeholders (the program director and key program staff), especially at the beginning and concluding stages of the evaluation. That is, the evaluation questions and methods were jointly determined, and the evaluation results discussed and interpreted together with the primary users. An evaluation always has to find a balance of four standards of quality: utility, feasibility, propriety, accuracy. To optimally balance these standards in the given context, it was determined that the evaluation would focus on one particular parent event, the Parent College Conference, held at UCLA in March of 2003.

After discussions with the stakeholders, the following evaluation questions emerged:

- 1) Do parents understand and retain the substantive contents of the parent workshops? In answering this question, particular attention should be paid to the A-G course requirements.
- 2) Do the parent workshops have an impact on parents' a) opinions about the appropriate level of participation in and responsibility for their children's educational career, b) expectations regarding their children's level of education, c) beliefs about what contributes to their children's educational choices, and d) confidence in how to obtain information concerning their children's college career?

All parents of the then 3361 newly selected 9<sup>th</sup> grade EAOP students were invited to the parent college conference, and about 800 individuals attended. The parent college conference was a half-day event, offering a campus tour and 2-hour information workshops conducted by EAOP staff in either English or Spanish

Surveys in English and Spanish were constructed based on the workshop contents to provide answers to the jointly derived evaluation questions. One survey per family was delivered immediately preceding the workshops (baseline measure) (N= 243), and two

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weeks after the workshops (post-measure) (N=113). The return rate for the post-surveys was 46.5 percent. In addition to the surveys, the evaluation team conducted telephone interviews with parents for additional information. The interviews targeted attendees as well as non-attendees of the evaluated parent event (N=8 and N=7, respectively).

**Evaluation findings**

We first present the survey findings, following the layout of the actual survey (survey questions in boxes). In the tables, next to each item please find the percentages of correct responses, or the means – depending on the nature of the response options. For knowledge items, shaded dark grey are items with ten percent or more improvement, light grey are items with between one and nine percent improvement, white are items with no change or negative change. For the participation, responsibility, expectation, and belief items, changes were generally minor and thus, these items do not merit such differentiation.

*Parents’ knowledge about EAOP*

1. Please check **all** that apply. The main **goals** of UCLA’s Early Academic Outreach Program (EAOP) are:

Correct Response	Item	Percentage correct responses	
		Pre-test	Post-test
False	To provide financial assistance for high school students who were admitted to UC.	57%	73%
True	To promote UC-eligibility and competitive eligibility among high school students.	85%	95%
True	To increase the academic competitiveness of students in grades 9-12.	70%	80%
False	To provide after-school supervision to high school students interested in UC.	70%	71%
True	To support the responsibility of students and parents for learning and development.	65%	68%

2. Please check **all** that apply. **Activities** offered by UCLA’s Early Academic Outreach Program (EAOP) include:

Correct Response	Item	Percentage correct responses	
		Pre-test	Post-test
True	Standardized Test Preparation	53%	73%
False	Academic tutoring	51%	51%
True	Summer Programs	34%	81%
True	Saturday Academy Series	54%	78%
True	Academic advising	65%	75%
False	Financial support	59%	61%
True	College information	87%	87%

3. Please check **all** that are required. Who is **eligible to participate** in UCLA’s Early Academic Outreach Program (EAOP)?

Correct Response	Item	Percentage correct responses	
		Pre-test	Post-test
True	Grade Point Average (GPA) of 3.0 or higher on 10-week or mid-semester report card	87%	90%
True	Enrolled in Algebra I or higher in 9 <sup>th</sup> grade, or Geometry or higher in 10 <sup>th</sup> grade	49%	58%
True	Enrolled in at least 3 A-G courses	43%	55%

*Parents’ knowledge about the college application process (particularly for UC)*

4. Please check **all** that apply. Which of the **four systems of higher education** could you explain to your child?

Item	Percentage of “yes” responses	
	Pre-test	Post-test
California State Universities (Cal State)	56%	68%
University of California (UC)	63%	76%
Community colleges	56%	68%
Private universities	37%	58%

5. Please check **all** that apply. Which are the sources of **college financial aid** potentially available to your child?

Correct Response	Item	Percentage correct responses	
		Pre-test	Post-test
True	Grants	85%	94%
True	Work study	56%	74%
True	Loans	70%	88%
True	Scholarships	81%	93%

6. Please check **all** that are required. Which of the following are the minimum requirements to become **eligible for admission** to a University of California (UC) campus?

Correct Response	Item	Percentage correct responses	
		Pre-test	Post-test
True	Fulfilling the A-G subject requirements	81%	91%
False	Having taken at least one AP course	69%	56%
False	Concurrent enrollment in at least one college course	82%	76%
True	Having taken the SAT I or ACT and SAT II exams	79%	89%
True	A minimum GPA of 2.8 in the A-G UC approved course list	56%	57%
False	Being engaged in extracurricular activities	57%	30%

7. Please check **all** that apply. What can contribute to making your child **competitively** eligible for admission to a UC campus?

Correct Response	Item	Percentage correct responses	
		Pre-test	Post-test
True	Leadership activities and community service	84%	93%
True	UC-certified Honors and AP courses	76%	93%
False	Political affiliation	94%	86%
True	Concurrent enrollment in college courses	54%	72%
True	Extracurricular activities	65%	83%

8. Please choose the **one** best answer. What are **A-G subject requirements**?

Correct Response	Item	Percentage correct responses	
		Pre-test	Post-test
False	A list of classes from which students have to take one class each year.		
True	A list of classes that students have to take for a specified number of years.	58%	79%
False	A list of classes from which students can choose a specified number.		

9. Please check **all** that apply. The A-G subject requirements concern the following **subjects**:

Correct Response	Item <sup>3</sup>	Percentage correct responses	
		Pre-test	Post-test
True	Social Sciences	80%	95%
True	English	89%	97%
True	Math	90%	99%
True	Laboratory Sciences	74%	87%
False	Computers	80%	83%
True	Language other than English	83%	92%
True	Visual/Performing Arts	58%	81%
False	Physical Education	73%	80%

<sup>3</sup> One item was deleted from the analysis of this question because its wording was considered too ambiguous.

10. To the best of your knowledge, which of the following statements are **true**, which ones are **false**?

Correct Response	Item <sup>4</sup>	Percentage correct responses	
		Pre-test	Post-test
False	GPA for college admission is determined by a student's grades earned in all classes taken throughout the student's high school career.	20%	28%
True	In order to earn extra points toward UC eligibility, students can take UC-approved Honors (H) or Advanced Placement (AP) courses in high school (if offered).	88%	90%
True	Concurrent enrollment refers to college courses that students can take while still in high school and that give credit transferable to the university.	79%	87%
False	Students must have been accepted by the college or university in order to apply for FAFSA.	38%	35%
True	The UC campuses may award additional financial aid to applicants based on merit and need.	82%	84%

*Parents' participation, expectations, responsibility, and beliefs*

11. To what extent do you feel it is appropriate for **you to participate** in each of the following:

Item	Mean (1: strong particip. to 4: no particip.)	
	Pre-test	Post-test
Choosing your child's classes	1.85	1.79
Monitoring your child's GPA	1.15	1.07
Monitoring your child's progress in A-G courses	1.18	1.14
Ensuring sign-up for SAT	1.23	1.14
Homework completion	1.31	1.28
Improving choice of classes at your child's school	1.62	1.62

<sup>4</sup> One item was deleted from the analysis of this question because its wording was considered too ambiguous.

12. Parents have different expectations about their children's **future education**. Do you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree with the following statements?

Item	Mean (1: strongly agree to 4: strongly disagree)	
	Pre-test	Post-test
My child will graduate from high school.	1.01	1.00
After graduating from high school, my child will look for a job.	2.94	3.10
After graduating from high school, my child will join the military.	3.61	3.75
My child will attend a community college.	3.04	3.19
My child will attend a California state university.	1.91	1.86
My child will attend the University of California.	1.39	1.20
My child will attend a private university.	2.42	2.52
My child will attend an out-of-state university.	2.71	2.83

13. Please choose the **one** best answer. Whose **responsibility** do you think it is to assist a child to get into college?

Labels	Item	Percentage "yes" responses	
		Pre-test	Post-test
1	Primarily a child's school	1%	0%
2	Mostly a child's school but somewhat a child's family	5%	4%
3	The school and the family are equally responsible	43%	50%
4	Mostly the family but somewhat the school	29%	26%
5	Primarily a child's family	14%	19%

If items are interpreted as a continuum from 1 to 5: mean pre = 3.54; mean post = 3.59.

14. Parents differ on what they believe will help their child **get into college**. Do you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree with the following statements?

Item	Mean (1: strongly agree to 4: strongly disagree)	
	Pre-test	Post-test
Students do better when their parents get involved in their education.	1.08	1.14
Parents' attendance of EAOP meetings is a valuable use of their time.	1.20	1.14
It is important that I talk to my child's college counselor several times a year.	1.49	1.44
My child's friends have great influence on my child's educational achievement.	2.30	2.06

*Parents' confidence in how to obtain further information*

15. How confident are you that you could tell someone **how to obtain** the following information?

Item	Percentage "confident" responses	
	Pre-test	Post-test
Your child's UC (competitive) eligibility	53%	74%
How to help your child become UC eligible	55%	75%
Details about college application processes	37%	43%
Details about financial aid applications	31%	35%
EAOP activities and EAOP staff hours at your child's school	26%	38%
A-G classes offered at your child's school	51%	64%

*Telephone interviews with attendees and non-attendees*

In the telephone interviews with eight *attendees* of the parent event, we investigated parents' satisfaction with the workshops and asked for ideas for improvement.

We first asked about the novelty of the information provided during the workshop. The contents were generally considered as new and as providing a comprehensive overview. Half of the interviewees did not recall hearing about the A-G requirements, the other half stressed them as new and important. Other contents that parents found of particular importance often related to financial aid. In terms of the usefulness and clarity of the information, the interviewees were unanimous: the workshop provided useful information in an interesting, clear, and understandable way. When asked what they particularly liked about the workshop, parents mentioned particular contents (A-G courses, financial aspect) (e.g., IA2: "I liked it, the man opened our eyes, especially about the A-G courses, that we should prepare for that."), but also the way in which the information was presented (slideshow; personal touch; information packet). Despite the generally positive opinions about the parent event (e.g., IA6: "We were well informed given the short amount of time."; IA1: "Make sure that I always get invited to the meetings, so that I keep myself informed."), some suggestions for improvement included more timeliness, location closer to home, and more details about the EAOP program itself.

The telephone interviews with seven *non-attendees* of the parent event were conducted to provide comparison data on some of the survey questions, and to find out about the reasons for non-attendance.

Reasons for non-attendance were expectedly diverse: transportation problems, other plans, child not really an EAOP participant (yet); only one parent said she did not receive the invitation. We asked interviewees to tell us about the main goals of EAOP; the most specific and appropriate answer we received was "to prepare kids to go to college" (IN2). Next, we asked some adapted survey questions about parents' expectations and beliefs regarding their children's education. The open-ended question about whose responsibility it is to ensure that a child goes to college provided interesting

answers: Three parents saw it as a joint responsibility of parents and children; except for one parent, none mentioned the school as having responsibility. Another interesting finding was that none of the interviewees had heard of the A-G subject requirements. And none had suggestions for improvement of EAOP's work with parents.

## **Discussion**

The following discussion emphasizes certain survey questions and interview findings that seemed to be especially important in terms of the feedback they provided.

*EAOP knowledge:* Related to knowledge about EAOP (see questions 1-3), there was substantial improvement on a majority of items. Parents correctly identified the official EAOP mandate and the UCLA-specific main goal (question 1, items 2 and 3). Many parents learned about the summer programs and Saturday Academies. After the parent event many parents remained unsure how to obtain more information about EAOP activities and staff presence at their child's school (see question 15). The telephone interviews, especially those with non-attendees of the parent event, imply that the need for information about the program is considerable.

*College admission process knowledge:* In terms of knowledge about college admission, 16 out of 37 items had at least a 10 % improvement (see questions 4-10). The seven items that showed no change or negative change were all distractors. It seems that parents were not as good catching these false items after the workshop as before. This concerns questions 6 and 7 in particular: It might be the case that the distinction between UC eligibility versus *competitive* eligibility resulted in some confusion. The differential results on the eligibility question make sense in the program context: "fulfilling the A-G subject requirements" and "having taken the SAT ..." get very high scores, and these are program priorities, whereas "a minimum GPA of 2.8 ..." gets comparatively low scores, because this criterion is not emphasized as much by the program. Another distractor item (question 10) stands out because of its unusually low percentage of correct responses: the precise way the GPA is calculated seems difficult to communicate to parents, especially because there are different GPAs to distinguish from one another.

As noted above, the A-G requirements are an especially important area of content. Therefore, questions 8 and 9 give some of the most crucial feedback about the success of the workshops. The pre-post comparison shows a high knowledge gain of 21 % for question 8 (definition of A-G requirements), bringing the level of correct responses to a high 79 %. There was also a high level of knowledge about the A-G subjects (see question 9); that is, even with the rather high level of knowledge shown on the pre-test, there were still gains on the post-test.

*Participation:* Generally, even before the workshop most parents "strongly agree" with the importance of their own participation in their child's education (see question 11). After the workshop, there were minor changes toward even stronger participation on all items, except one.

*Expectations:* All parents (except for 2 pre-test individuals) “strongly agree” with the statement that their child will graduate from high school (see question 12). Parents have high expectations regarding the future colleges their child will attend: Most “somewhat disagree” that their child will attend a community college, but they “strongly agree” to “somewhat agree” that their child will attend UC and Cal State. From pre-test to post-test, there is a minor shift in favor of Cal State and UC as future college choices, and away from out-of-state, private, and community colleges.

Of special interest to the program are the parents’ expectations with regard to a UC as the future college choice of their child. The pre-test shows the highest level of agreement with this particular college choice. From pre-test to post-test, this item displayed the highest change – change toward even stronger agreement that the child will attend a UC.

*Responsibility:* Most parents believe that it is the shared responsibility of parents and school to assist a child in getting into college, with a tendency to emphasize the role of the parents over the role of the school (see question 13). In the telephone interviews, some parents emphasized the child’s responsibility – an option not reflected in the survey items. Item four on question 14 speaks to the related issue of peer influence: there is some desirable change from pre- to post-test toward higher agreement with the influence of peers on children’s educational achievement.

*Information:* While parents on the post-test were confident 1) how to obtain information on their child’s UC eligibility and how to help their child become UC eligible (three-quarters), and 2) how to find out about A-G classes offered at their child’s school (two-thirds), many were not sure how to obtain more detailed information on financial aid and the college application process (see question 15). Considering that the participants are parents of 9<sup>th</sup> grade students and thus, college applications are still a few years away, the workshop seems to rightly emphasize UC eligibility over application details.

*Satisfaction with workshop:* The telephone interviews indicate that there was high overall satisfaction of attendees with the workshops. Contents were considered new and relevant; the presentation was judged clear and interesting.

*Comparison data from non-attendees:* The telephone interviews showed that the interviewed non-attendees were generally rather uninformed about EAOP, particularly its goals. None of these parents had heard of A-G subject requirements. These two findings emphasize the high need for parent events / workshops. There do not seem to be many other ways in which parents are offered the information covered in these workshops, at least not at this stage in their child’s educational career (9<sup>th</sup> grade). And this stage is crucial in terms of the A-G course requirements.

*Potential limitations of the evaluation findings:* The event included parallel workshop sessions, in English and Spanish, which meant somewhat different implementation. Even though all presenters used the same Powerpoint presentation, they

placed different emphases on certain contents. Another note of caution relates to survey delivery. Program staff pointed out the unusually high levels of parental knowledge on the pre-test, compared to other parent groups they had worked with. We observed that on the pre-measurement before the workshop, the students often helped their parents fill out the survey. We suspect that on the post-measurement, which took place at home, parents were more likely to work alone. This could be one possible explanation for the lower percentage of correct responses on the post-test for the distractor items.

The survey was provided in both English and Spanish; notwithstanding a careful translation process (including a cross-check with program staff concerning the appropriateness and correspondence of technical vocabulary), translation and comparability issues cannot be ruled out entirely.

Moreover, we wanted to determine whether there was a selectivity bias in the post-sample of parents, in the sense that those parents who were more informed about and interested in their child's education would be more likely to respond, thus biasing the post-test scores. We investigated this assumption by creating a matched database, which only contained those respondents who filled out both pre- and post surveys. We found that this sample did not produce more favorable results than using the whole group as the basis for the pre-post comparison.

### **Where to go from here**

The evaluation study highlights the overall success of the workshops in effectively informing parents about college. Presentation and discussion of the evaluation findings at a meeting with key program staff led to consideration of several ideas for potential program development. Staff will undoubtedly expand and modify the following list:

- Distribute to parents a document listing the EAOP eligibility criteria, differentiating between 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grade.
- Further stress the difference between UC GPA and high school GPA and their respective calculation.
- Inform parents about EAOP activities through a calendar of events (but initially without specific dates to avoid frequent changes).
- Organize parent workshops by site team so that parents can talk to their school's contact persons. Staff hours on site could also be posted and updated on the website.
- Further clarify the distinction between eligibility and *competitive* eligibility. For example, clarify that AP courses, concurrent enrollment, and extracurricular activities contribute to competitiveness, but are not part of the minimum requirements.
- In talking to parents, further stress the influence of a child's friends (peers influence) on its educational achievement.
- It is a particular challenge to conduct the workshops in Spanish, because certain terminology and abbreviations do not translate well (e.g. A-G requirements, and GPA). The original English word should always be used in addition to any translation attempts.
- Mobilizing non-attendees of parent meetings is another challenge. What are effective incentives to get these parents to attend? How can information get out to them?

## Appendix A: Further Parent data analysis by language

After meeting with key program staff, it was recommended that we conduct further analysis comparing the survey results of individuals who completed the Spanish survey with individuals who completed the English survey. Results generally indicated that individuals who filled out the Spanish form tended to score lower on confidence items and general knowledge of information than individuals who completed the English survey. The following tables highlight some of the differences found (I should note that the following questions are related material covering the A-G requirements)

16. Please check **all** that apply. The main **goals** of UCLA's Early Academic Outreach Program (EAOP) are:

Correct Response	Item	Percentage correct responses By language	
		Spanish	English
False	To provide financial assistance for high school students who were admitted to UC.	59%	77%
False	To provide after-school supervision to high school students interested in UC.	57%	75%
True	To support the responsibility of students and parents for learning and development.	45%	76%

17. Please check **all** that are required. Who is **eligible to participate** in UCLA's Early Academic Outreach Program (EAOP)?

Correct Response	Item	Percentage correct responses	
		Spanish	English
True	Grade Point Average (GPA) of 3.0 or higher on 10-week or mid-semester report card	79%	94%
True	Enrolled in at least 3 A-G courses	24%	66%

18. Please choose the **one** best answer. What are **A-G subject requirements**?

Correct Response	Item	Percentage correct responses	
		Spanish	English
False	A list of classes from which students have to take one class each year.		
True	A list of classes that students have to take for a specified number of years.	69%	83%
False	A list of classes from which students can choose a specified number.		

19. To the best of your knowledge, which of the following statements are **true**, which ones are **false**?

Correct Response	Item <sup>5</sup>	Percentage correct responses by language	
		Spanish	English
False	GPA for college admission is determined by a student's grades earned in all classes taken throughout the student's high school career.	10%	34%
True	In order to earn extra points toward UC eligibility, students can take UC-approved Honors (H) or Advanced Placement (AP) courses in high school (if offered).	90%	91%
True	Concurrent enrollment refers to college courses that students can take while still in high school and that give credit transferable to the university.	76%	90%
False	Students must have been accepted by the college or university in order to apply for FAFSA.	38%	29%
True	The UC campuses may award additional financial aid to applicants based on merit and need.	83%	85%

Possible reasons for the differences in scores could be attributed to many factors. One such factor could be the translation of the survey from English to Spanish may have resulted in misrepresentation or misunderstandings of the questions being asked. Another reason may be the differences in the way technical words, such as GPA or A-G requirements, are presented during the workshops, which may lead to confusion in comprehending their meaning.

<sup>5</sup> One item was deleted from the analysis of this question because its wording was considered too ambiguous.