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

2007 Evaluation Report

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Introduction

Once again, the SRM Evaluation Group is pleased to continue our working relationship with the UCLA Summer Humanities Institute (SHI) as external evaluators. The purpose of the evaluation was to investigate the strengths and weaknesses of the program, particularly from the students’ perspective. This report will describe how individual experiences relate to the program components in order to present a comprehensive account of how those program components work to collectively create the SHI experience.

This report details our findings from an evaluation of the 2007 UCLA Summer Humanities Institute (SHI). Building on our work with SHI in previous years, we utilized the same focus group and individual interview protocols with the program participants, with minor adjustments made to improve the quality of data collected. A pre and post program survey used in previous years was also administered. Faculty mentor interviews were conducted using the same protocol as last summer, once more with minor adjustments made. The table below describes our data sources.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Data Source</th>
<th>Type of Administration</th>
<th>Dates Collected</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre Program Student Survey†</td>
<td>In-Person Paper, 100% participation N=10</td>
<td>Orientation Day June 25th, 2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Focus Group</td>
<td>In-Person, group setting 100% participation N=10</td>
<td>End of program August 16th, 2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Interviews</td>
<td>In-Person, individual 100% participation N=10</td>
<td>End of program August 16th, 2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post Program Student Survey</td>
<td>In-Person, Paper 100% participation N=10</td>
<td>End of program August 16th, 2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty Mentor Interviews</td>
<td>Telephone, individual 83% participation N=5 (of 6)</td>
<td>End of program August 20-24, 2007</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

†Due to a prior commitment one student began the program late, and therefore completed the survey approximately one week after orientation

The program participant interviews and focus group were conducted by SRM Evaluation Staff members. The length of the interviews ranged from 10 to 25 minutes. Each protocol consisted of semi-structured questions that included a prompt for open-ended responses. The interviews concluded with an invitation for any final thoughts not covered during the interview. The focus group and interviews were digitally recorded and selectively transcribed. The pre program and post program surveys were administered on paper by SRM Evaluation Staff.
members and analyzed using MS Excel and STATA computer software. The faculty mentor
interviews were conducted by SRM Evaluation Staff members via telephone.

This report is organized into the following four sections:

**Section 1: Participants’ Background Information** - The first section of the report
provides a descriptive review of how students learned about SHI, students’ previous
experiences with academic research and their relationships with their academic advisor
at their home institution. Students’ expectations for their summer with SHI are also
summarized. The results in this section are taken primarily from the pre
program/baseline survey data.

**Section 2: Program Components** - The second section provides a descriptive review of
students’ evaluation of the various components that comprise the SHI. This section
integrates student focus group data, student interview data, pre program survey data and
post program survey data to provide a comprehensive view of students’ experiences
with each component. For the mentoring component, faculty/mentor interview data is
also integrated into the analysis.

**Section 3: General Comments and Suggestions** - The third section of the report details
general comments and suggestions for program improvement offered by student
participants.

**Appendix A** – This section provides the itemized baseline and post-program survey
results.

**Section 1: Participants’ Background Information**

The Summer Humanities Institute (SHI) targets undergraduate juniors, seniors and recent
graduates that are interested in pursuing graduate studies in the humanities. In the baseline
survey, which was administered during orientation, participants were asked how they first found
out about SHI. The most common response was the internet (4 of 10 participants). Two of the
ten had learned of SHI from a former SHI attendee and the remaining four students had unique
responses. For the majority of the participants, the primary motivation for attending the program
once accepted was to learn more about graduate school (3 of 10 participants) or to conduct their
own research (4 of 10 participants).

Results from the baseline survey also provide evidence that the majority of the students
who participated in the program this summer perceived themselves to have at least some 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’ or ‘some,’ meaning they had participated in at least one
research project. Only two students indicated that they had no direct research experience, but
had learned about research through workshops or conferences.
On the baseline survey, students were also asked to rate themselves on a scale of 1 to 10 (with 1 meaning no experience and 10 meaning very skilled) with regard to how much experience they had with various academic skills. With the exception of “understanding the theoretical approaches of different disciplines” and “presenting research in a public setting,” the lowest score that participants self-selected for any given skill was a 5. (See Table 2) The average rating for 9 of the 11 academic skills surveyed ranged from 7.2 to 8.8, signifying that participants felt they were already fairly confident in many of the academic skills promoted by the program. For the skills “understanding the theoretical approaches of different disciplines” and “presenting research in a public setting,” there were a greater range of responses and the average self-rating was almost a full point lower than the average self-rating of the other skills.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skill</th>
<th>BEGINNER (No Experience)</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>9</th>
<th>EXPERT (Very Skilled)</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Mean (SD)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Understanding academic texts</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>7.7 (1.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developing a logical argument in my writing</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>7.8 (1.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building upon primary sources to develop my own ideas</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>7.7 (1.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relating ideas to each other</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>8.2 (1.4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussing readings in a group setting</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>8.8 (1.4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proofreading my writing</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>7.2 (1.4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using citations</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>7.9 (1.4)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Finding primary resources</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>7.8 (1.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developing research questions</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>7.5 (1.4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understanding the theoretical approaches of different disciplines</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>6.7 (2.7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presenting research in a public setting</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>6.6 (2.9)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

On the baseline survey, students were also asked two questions regarding their relationship with their academic advisor at their home institution. First, participants were asked to describe their relationship with their academic advisor. Eight of the ten participants indicated that there are either extremely close (5), meaning they talk at least once a week to their advisor and feel supported by him/her, or fairly close (3), meaning they talk about once a month to their advisor and feel supported by him/her. Only one person said that they are not close, meaning they talk to their advisor less than once a month. One student does not have an academic advisor at their home institution. Correspondingly, when asked if the participants had spoken with their
advisor about applying to graduate school, the eight students who said they were close to their advisor said yes, while the one student who was not close said no.

*Student Expectations for the Summer at SHI*

When students were asked to describe their general expectations for the summer at UCLA, all of the students listed multiple expectations. A majority of participants (7 of 10) mentioned wanting to learn more about graduate school, which included the specifics of applying and obtaining funding and/or learning about graduate school culture/learning what graduate school would be like. Over half of the students (6 of 10) were also very specific in their expectations of developing/enhancing research and/or writing skills. Two students mentioned wanting to learn more about their particular area of study.

On the baseline survey, participants were also asked which aspect of the summer program they were most looking forward to. The most common response to this question asked on the baseline survey was ‘meeting with my mentor’ or ‘researching with my mentor’ (4). The majority of the other responses were academic in nature. Students were looking forward to the classes/seminars (2), writing the paper (3), and learning writing/research/presentation skills (4).

**Section 2: Program Components**

There are seven key components to the SHI. These are:

A. Faculty conducted seminars  
B. Course materials  
C. Workshops  
D. Mentoring  
E. Extracurricular activities  
F. Writing research paper  
G. Presenting research paper

In theory, these key components work together to expand the academic skill set and encourage personal growth within the student participants. The belief is that this skill expansion and growth will lead to increased intellectual self-confidence, motivation to achieve, and a sense of institutional belonging. Taken together, the presence of these outcomes is understood to be the precursor to the program’s ultimate goal: Underrepresented students earn fellowships and doctoral degrees in the Humanities.

Overall, there was a wide variety of opinions by the students as to which component proved most useful to understanding what graduate school is like. When students were asked during the focus group which activity was most memorable, responses ranged from the workshop on C.V.s (1), to the course materials and seminars (3), to the mentor sessions (2), and the presentation preparation (1). This could be reflective of the fact that prior to beginning the program students had a wide range of things they were looking forward to the most with regard to their summer at SHI, as detailed in the section above.
At the end of the program, students were asked to rate each component on their usefulness in helping them understand what graduate school is like. The results are summarized in Table 3, below.

Table 3. Summary of students’ post program survey ratings regarding “Usefulness” of SHI program components.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Most useful</th>
<th>Very useful</th>
<th>Useful</th>
<th>Somewhat useful</th>
<th>Not useful</th>
<th>Totals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Faculty Conducted Seminars</td>
<td>0% (0)</td>
<td>56% (5)</td>
<td>22% (2)</td>
<td>22% (2)</td>
<td>0% (0)</td>
<td>100% (N=9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Course materials</td>
<td>10% (1)</td>
<td>40% (4)</td>
<td>20% (2)</td>
<td>30% (3)</td>
<td>0% (0)</td>
<td>100% (N=10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workshops</td>
<td>10% (1)</td>
<td>0% (0)</td>
<td>20% (2)</td>
<td>60% (6)</td>
<td>10% (1)</td>
<td>100% (N=10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mentoring</td>
<td>30% (3)</td>
<td>0% (0)</td>
<td>40% (4)</td>
<td>10% (1)</td>
<td>20% (2)</td>
<td>100% (N=10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extracurricular Activities</td>
<td>0% (0)</td>
<td>0% (0)</td>
<td>10% (1)</td>
<td>70% (7)</td>
<td>20% (2)</td>
<td>100% (N=10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing Research Paper</td>
<td>0% (0)</td>
<td>30% (3)</td>
<td>0% (0)</td>
<td>50% (5)</td>
<td>20% (2)</td>
<td>100% (N=10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presenting Research Paper</td>
<td>10% (1)</td>
<td>30% (3)</td>
<td>40% (4)</td>
<td>20% (2)</td>
<td>0% (0)</td>
<td>100% (N=10)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When students were asked in the post-survey which program component contributed most to their current understanding of what graduate school is like, the two most common responses were the mentoring (4) and the faculty conducted seminars (3). The most common response to the question on which program component contributed the least to their current understanding of what graduate school is like was the extracurricular activities (7). The following sub-sections provides evaluation data specific to each program component.

A. Faculty Conducted Seminars

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

In the post-survey conducted at the end of the program, most students found the faculty conducted seminars “very useful.” Among the three students who indicated that the seminars contributed the most to their current understanding of what graduate school is like, one student felt this way “because of the intensity and the engagement of critical thinking skills.” Another felt that way because the seminars were “small, effective and informative.” The majority of
students (6 of 10) agreed that the seminars helped them to develop their critical thinking skills through the introduction of new theories and perspectives. As one student put it, s/he “learned to see thing from a different point of view.”

During the focus group interview, when asked how the seminars were similar or different from their courses at their home institutions, several students indicated that there was a repetitive nature to the seminars, meaning that at times, each seminar seemed to cover some of the same material. One student suggested that “if they [the faculty] would have had more collaboration before preparation of the materials things would have moved a lot quicker.” However, a different student felt that this repetitive nature was not necessarily negative. This student said, “I liked how they [the professors] each took the standard history of African Americans and applied it to their respective disciplines.” Another participant felt that “most of us had a grasp on the history, but maybe there were some points that were brought out that we didn’t know. The way they structured the class engaged us in critical dialogue, so that was what was helpful being able to critically assess the text. The way that the class was structured helped you to think a little bit deeper.”

Although most of the students learned much from the seminars, one common frustration expressed by the students was the fact that, at times, the seminars and the work associated with the seminars took away from the time that could have been used on the research project/paper. One student expressed that s/he “felt like the courses were what we were here for and paper was like an elective. And I felt that the paper was what I was here for and the courses were the elective.” Another said “the research kind of took a backseat to making sure you were prepared for the seminars.”

**B. Course Materials**

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

In the post-survey conducted after completion of the SHI program, 40% rated the course materials to be “very useful.” In particular, during the focus group, students mentioned several visual aides that reinforced the course material being taught, including a video on the Jim Crowe museum, graphs, written formulas on the board, and music examples during the ethnomusicology seminar. Several students appreciated the fact that the readings (along with the lecture) introduced them to new theories and ideologies that “promoted differences in perspectives.” A few students (2) mentioned that the readings had a direct impact on their research project/paper. For some students the course materials were not directly used in their research project, but had an indirect impact by influencing they way they thought about a particular subject, or by helping them think through writing their paper. One student used the course materials in a social conversation around conservatism and liberalism.

**C. Workshops**
The purpose of the workshops is to provide comprehensive knowledge of the technical aspects of the graduate school/fellowship application process, and to teach various writing and research techniques.

In the post-survey administered at the end of the program, the majority of the students (60%) felt that in general, the workshops were “somewhat useful.” Two workshops that a few students found particularly helpful were the curriculum vitae (CV) workshop and the financial aid/funding workshop. One participant indicated that the workshops contributed the most to his/her current understanding of what graduate school is like. However, during the focus group interview, other students expressed feelings of disappointment due to the content of the workshops and/or the perceived lack of emphasis on the graduate school application process and graduate school experience. On the baseline survey the majority of students (7 of 10) indicated that they did not think their home institution has prepared them to be successful in a top-ranked graduate school. Nevertheless, it became apparent during the focus group conversation that some of the content covered in the workshops was not new to some of the participants. One student thought it would be beneficial “to make more time for the graduate emphasis – maybe some of the workshops that are repetitive of the things we did in undergrad (like power points and annotated bibliography) could have been put into one workshop instead of having a three hour workshop on annotated bibliography.”

Along with the fact that some of the workshop material may have been redundant, several participants felt that there were not enough workshops devoted to the graduate school application and experience. For example, one participant stated, “I was kind of disappointed as far as trying to find out about graduate studies and funding. I found that it was more beneficial talking to the graduate students, talking about their experiences, talking to them about what avenues they took to try to find their school, what hardships they’ve had.” During the focus group, a second student agreed, saying, “If there was more of an emphasis on that [graduate studies]. Like more encouragement towards going to graduate school, more assistance, more dialogue with the process, like intimate dialogue, you know.” A third student thought that there should have been more of an emphasis on the politics and culture of graduate school.

Three suggestions offered by the students, specifically for the workshops were:

1) to perhaps offer a weekly/biweekly seminar where the time is used specifically for working on applications;
2) to have some time devoted to GRE preparation;
3) to have even more discussion/suggestions for graduate funding.

It is interesting to note that in the baseline survey, when asked which aspect of preparing for graduate school the participant would need the most assistance with this summer, a majority of the responses (7) had to do with some aspect of the application process (the ins and outs of applying, finalizing list of schools and personal statement, funding, completing a well-rounded application, GRE/test-prep, etc.). It is possible that students may have had different expectations than intended by SHI on how much time and assistance would be available for the specifics of the graduate school application process.
D. Mentoring

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.

In the post-program survey, 30% and 40% of the participants indicated that the mentoring experience was “most useful” or “useful”, respectively, in helping them understand what graduate school is like. Almost half (4) of the students also indicated that it was the mentoring relationship at SHI that contributed most to their current understanding of what graduate school might be like.

During the individual interviews, participants shared their personal experiences with their mentor. Students’ reports of their mentoring experiences with faculty had mixed results. Most students (8 of 10) generally assessed their mentor/mentee relationship as “positive.” Two students had particularly enjoyable relationships with their mentors, articulating comments such as, “I loved my mentor... I’ve gotten to really love the way she tackles things.” Two students, on the other hand, seemed to have decidedly disappointing experiences with their advisor. Both of these students felt that having a mentor who was not in his/her field of study was especially detrimental to their experience at SHI. The remaining six students had positive experiences, but did find that their personal relationship fell short in one of three areas – academic guidance (1 of 6), receiving feedback (2 of 6), or establishing a personal connection (3 of 6). These are the same three components that were identified by the faculty/mentors during the faculty/mentor interviews as the key factors that holistically encompass their approach towards mentoring.

During the interviews, each faculty/mentor acknowledged that all of these components (academic guidance, feedback, and personal connection) are typically inter-related. Of the five faculty/mentors interviewed, one thought that the academic guidance was the most critical/valuable component to the mentor/mentee relationship, another thought it was the personal connection, the remaining three thought each component was equally valuable. Many of the faculty/mentors also acknowledged that each student is unique, and at times, the approach taken in the mentor relationship will depend in part on that student. The remainder of this section on mentoring is organized and will be discussed in light of the three main components.

Academic Guidance

For the faculty/mentors, academic guidance included two main components: 1) helping students prepare for graduate level research and 2) teaching students about graduate school, both the application process and culture. Helping students prepare for graduate level research included such things as helping them identify research interests, identifying strategies for moving from general interests to research ideas, referring students to academic journals/books, providing students with networking skills in order to contact professors whose work might align with their interests, and reading proposals and reviewing drafts of the paper on a continuous basis. One mentor said, he helps his mentees prepare “...through informal, on-going conversations that happen throughout the eight weeks of the program, talking about the kind of focus they could take; what is it like to join the academic community, a community of scholars. You do this by
modeling, not just one to one.” Another mentor put forth that it is important to “teach them to be malleable with information” so that students would be open to where research can take them.

The student interviews also presented a picture of how the faculty/mentors were able to provide academic guidance through helping students prepare for graduate level research. One student said, “[My mentor] really helped me to pinpoint exactly what I was saying, making sure every sentence counted and saying exactly what I wanted to say. So, I think he really helped me to sharpen my skills.” Several students (4) mentioned, specifically, that their mentor was very supportive of their ideas, but at the same time their faculty/mentor challenged them to deepen their understanding of their research ideas and be able to defend their ideas with sound academic support.

The entire SHI experience provides student participants with insights into the graduate school experience. However, the faculty/mentors, specifically worked to provide insight into the graduate school culture and level of intellectual rigor needed in order to achieve the necessary level of scholarship. Much of this comes from the personal connection that faculty/mentors strive to establish. As one mentor said, “I talked to them about what grad school is like, how to apply, and how to survive once you get there.” As for the students, as previously mentioned, several of them thought that it was the mentor relationship that provided the most insight into their understanding of what graduate school is like. One important experience for a few students (3) was the fact that because their mentor was not in their field of interest, they had to learn how to articulate their ideas and work with someone who might not be familiar with their topic or agree with their perspective, which is a situation that students’ are likely to encounter in graduate school. On the post-survey, at least two students would recommend SHI to a friend because of the exposure to graduate school culture.

Feedback

All of the faculty/mentors interviewed agreed that providing feedback to the students is an important aspect of the mentoring relationship. As one mentor said, “Academics and feedback are an integral part of mentoring.” Another mentor explained,

“Feedback is very important – students have to get adjusted to constructive criticism. It’s difficult for young people. Providing feedback is very essential to role [model]. We are here to encourage them to and guide them to do work as demanded...[with] more criticism, they get better in the long run. It also helps them to understand the rigors of academia in grad school.”

Faculty/mentor feedback was given in person, during weekly mentoring sessions, as well as electronically via email.

It was clear from the student focus group interview and the individual interviews that feedback was also very important for the students. More specifically, students commented on the feedback the faculty/mentors provided on 1) their writing and 2) their research ideas. During the individual interviews, several students (4) mentioned that working with their mentor helped to sharpen their writing skills. One student mentioned that “…[my mentor] helped me out with
the structure of my paper and flushed out a few things that I needed to do as far as writing skills and stuff...” Another student explained, “Even though I wasn’t a poor writer coming in, I had my weaknesses and I feel like [my mentor] helped me to zone in on those weaknesses, figure out what they were and try to make them into strengths.”

When it came to receiving feedback on their research ideas there were some mixed reviews. Some students (3) were very happy with the level of feedback they received. One student described, “…[my mentor] was able to give me some very critical feedback, even though we were are from different disciplines…” Another student said,

“…[my mentor] has a Ph.D. in Political Science and I’m working on a degree in English so there were some obvious differences in our philosophies, our approaches to doing research but we were able to kind of let our ideas correlate so that we can do the best research project.”

Several students (3) had positive relationships with their mentors, but would have liked more critical feedback on their work. One student stated,

“I wish that [my mentor] would have given me more critical thinking on the work that I was doing, because I think that the area that I was researching he really, really cares deeply about it, but because it is a subject that has a lot of research on it, what I was putting together was not salient to anything that’s going on now. It was more of a focal point, like I could find out all the information I needed and I didn’t really have to go out and like, challenge what I was writing. So, I kinda had to ask around for more critical feedback and that’s when I kinda put some other information in and made my work stronger. So I mean, he was very supportive, I do appreciate that. He offered many resources, like with books and things like that, so that was really good. But I would have appreciated more critical feedback.”

Another student felt that his/her mentor was the ‘encouraging type,’ but did not feel prepared for the research paper and presentation. This student explained,

“There was a positive relationship, yes, very nice guy. And I’ve had professors like this, where they’re the type to pat you in the back and say “good job, good job”. They are the encouraging type...they’re not really like that old school, hard knock types. And I like those. There has to be a balance, you know, especially with like a mentor, you know. It has to be encouraging, yet hard knocks. You know, the mentor was positive, very nice, you know. I enjoyed my mentor, but...I didn’t now how badly I was affected by my mentor until the end, because the mentor is the only one who really saw your work, and again, that’s what I’m saying...it needs to be cross-examined by peers and everybody throughout the whole program and have it evolve from that as opposed to having just one person looking at your work because I had a lot of stuff I was trying to bite off and I was trying to get into and as my mentor was very encouraging... he wasn’t really trying to give me an idea, he was just kinda like “yeah jump into it” and it affected me because at the end of the program for the presentation like seven days ago, it was like, I didn’t have anything.”
A third student said, "...I didn’t really get a lot of critical feedback at all. There was never any serious critical feedback. I got more feedback from the GSRs than I did from my mentor, so I was really frustrated about that." It is not clear whether these three students had the same mentor.

Some student participants also commented on the fact that it might have been more helpful to have had a mentor that was in their academic field of interest, although this was not a hindrance to all students. As mentioned earlier, two students in particular seemed to have been really impacted by this agreement. One of these two students explained,

"I’m in English and she’s in Political Science and I just thought that it was going to be great because she was going to be able to give me a different perspective on what I was trying to do. But what happened was, we started to not see eye-to-eye about how to structure my research, the things that I’m looking for in my research, what I need to work on in my research and what’s important in my research because of our different theoretical frameworks. So, towards the end and even now, I feel like she didn’t help me as much as I probably would have been able to get from an English professor just because she was not able to see the differences in our disciplines and how we approach different subjects...And so, she helped me in unconventional ways...realizing that I do have an authoritative voice in English, especially this being my third year and I’m about to graduate next spring. In that way she helped me. Otherwise when I brought it to her attention that maybe we weren’t seeing eye-to-eye about political science and English, she really wasn’t receptive to that. So that relationship could have been a lot better and a lot different in that my project, if that relationship was better and different... I could have bounced ideas off of her and received that critical thinking instead of you know, paddling with no destination...."

**Personal Connection**

An important aspect of the mentoring relationship is establishing a personal connection. Most of the faculty/mentors agreed that the strategy for forming this personal connection with the students is highly individualized. As one mentor said, "each student and each situation is different." Another mentor mentioned that part of establishing this connection is also to be "approachable." And another is able to connect with the students because,

"A mentor is someone who used to be where the students were once, an inspiration, something to look forward to, in spite of the obstacles. Also, as a mentor you take on like a big brother or big sister relationship, one of mutual respect, where you discover the feelings of students in the program. Being a role model, developing integrity and excitement towards the subject matter."

Based on the student survey, focus group, and interview data, from a student perspective, it appears that mentor/mentee relationships ranged from having no personal connection to establishing a very close relationship in just eight weeks. As mentioned before, two students felt that not having a mentor in their field of study prevented them from making a personal connection, and thus the mentor relationship did not contribute much to their academic growth this summer. Several students (3) had a positive relationship with their mentors, but felt that the
mentor relationship was kept “extremely professional” or “business-like.” One student described the mentor relationship as “…something that had to be done as a component of the program.” In all three of these cases, these students happened to be extremely close to their mentor/advisor at their home institutions. Each described how they had been over to their home institution advisors’ home, knew their families, etc. However, these students alluded to ways in which the personal connections made at the academic level helped them to push themselves into graduate level work. Then there were students who were able to make connections with their mentors on an academic and personal level. These students expressed growth on an academic and individual level. One student found that through the mentor relationship s/he felt much more comfortable expressing a dissenting opinion. This student explained, “…[my mentor] create[d] that space where if I disagree or if I hold a different opinion, I don’t feel like I can’t say that. I feel like I can definitely say that…she’s more than willing to engage in that kind of conversation, so she’s great.” Another student expressed, “[The mentor relationship] was a great working relationship and I hope to be keeping in contact with him in the future.” Yet another student described how s/he was very nervous coming into an institution like UCLA, having come from a HBCU, but found that having a mentor to talk to when feeling overwhelmed really helped to calm and settle him/her into the program.

E. Extracurricular Activities

The purpose of the extracurricular activities is to provide an embodied experience (i.e. 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.

In the post-program survey, the majority of the students (70%) indicated that the extracurricular activities were “somewhat useful.” A couple of the students mentioned that they enjoyed the trip to Leimert Park. One student in particular mentioned that after this trip, she felt more comfortable returning to the area on her own. Other students also mentioned that they enjoyed some parts of a given activity (i.e. the murals). However, the general consensus from the participants was that the extracurricular activities contributed the least to their current understanding of what graduate school is like (7 of 10 students).

Understandably, given the purpose of these activities, what students may have gained might not be reflected specifically as ‘grad school preparation.’ During the focus group discussion students were asked what they thought was the purpose of these extracurricular activities and what they may have learned from them beyond what was learned in the seminars. Based on the students’ responses, it was clear that the majority of the students was not aware of the purpose behind the activities and did not see the utility of these activities. Several students (4) suggested that an analysis of what they were seeing on their outings would have been helpful. These students felt that it would have been helpful for the staff and faculty to “engage us critically” in a discussion and analysis of what was seen during the outings. Several students (3) also suggested that there could be more diversity in the types of extracurricular activities, such as, going to a music concert, a live theatrical performance, or exploring other ethnic activities. Another student also suggested that the program could have a list of available activities and the
participants could have then chosen certain ones based on interest and then come back and had a discussion of the different activities and how it related to the course materials.

F. Writing Research Paper

The purpose of writing the research paper is for students to learn how to develop arguments based on critical and personal reflections, produce organized and cohesive writing, and use citations.

As discussed in Section 1, prior to participating in SHI, most of the students rated themselves above average on many of the academic skills pertaining to writing a research paper (understanding academic texts, developing logical arguments, using primary sources, linking ideas, proofreading, using citations, finding primary resources, and developing research questions). In the post-program survey, 30% found writing the research paper to be “very useful,” 50% of the students found it to be “somewhat useful,” and 20% found it to be “not useful” to understanding what graduate school is like.

During the focus group interview several students (6) mentioned that they felt they did not learn any new techniques or approaches to writing a research paper. Much of the discontent appears to stem specifically from the teaching techniques of the writing instructor. One student expressed frustration on having “worked too long on the proposal.” S/he felt that it would have been beneficial to begin writing and submitting drafts of the paper earlier in the program. Other students agreed that there was too much emphasis on the early stages of the paper and more time could have been given for producing and revising full drafts of the paper. A few students felt that previous experience with writing was not taken into consideration. These students felt that the instructor needed to realize that she was “work[ing] with students who understand the writing process.” One student in particular felt very strongly on this topic and felt that perhaps the instructor may have underestimated the participants’ writing abilities because many of the students were attending or had graduated from small historically black or liberal arts colleges.

An additional source of frustration for some students (4) also stemmed from the fact that they felt the writing instructor wanted them to conform to a certain style of writing and discouraged them from writing in a style that would have been more appropriate for their discipline. As one student said, “I feel that having a writing instructor that wasn’t familiar with the type of research that we’re doing or didn’t have a vested interest in it period, made it a little bit harder because she came in with just her impositions with what she thought things were supposed to be … she really was not helpful and it really was upsetting because she couldn’t really be a help.”

Not all of the participants felt frustrated with writing the research paper, however. One student expressed that this was the first time s/he had “aggressively edited a paper” and enjoyed the experience. Another student felt that s/he had learned the most during the writing process, in particular from his/her mentor. This person mentioned that s/he learned how to write in the style that is most applicable to his/her discipline of interest. One student also felt that “writing the research paper or first conducting the research for the paper, the actual paper and finally
presenting and defending my work” is what contributed most to their understanding of what graduate school is like.

G. Presenting Research Paper

The purpose of presenting the research paper is to give students the opportunity to further develop their arguments and then to answer questions orally related to their work.

In the post-program survey, most of the participants found presenting their research paper to be “useful” or “very useful.” In the baseline survey, six of the ten participants indicated they had previous experience presenting at a research conference, but for four students this was a new experience. For two students, presenting their research paper contributed the most to their current understanding of what graduate school is like. Several students (3) mentioned during the focus group session that presenting a paper was something they had not had too much experience with, and they were glad for the opportunity. One student commented that, “Being able to present in a place where some people [the audience] had never taken things [your subject] was challenging in a way that we needed to be challenged.”

Some students, however, did express some disappointment with how the conference presentations were run. Some (4) felt that the conference was somewhat disorganized. One student said, “I don’t feel like the presentation did my work justice….it really did not go into the meat of what we researched….I was very disappointed about that – that I wasn’t able to say more about it. And because nobody was there, nobody could ask me questions about what I didn’t cover in the Power Point presentation.”

Section 3: General Comments and Suggestions

Prior to attending the SHI this summer, most students were expecting the program to be “challenging” or “very challenging.” At the end of the program, students were asked to assess their overall frustration level (on a scale of 1 (low) to 10 (high)) with regard to their summer experiences. Responses ranged from 3 to 9.9, with students generally falling into two camps. One group of students (5) had responses that ranged from 3 to 5. The other half of the students had responses that ranged from 8 to 9.9. It is interesting to note that among the students who experienced high levels of frustration with the program there were two things in particular they found to be aggravating: 1) their relationship with their mentor and/or 2) the perceived lack of time to work independently on their research project. Other sources of frustration were frequent miscommunications between program staff (on such things like due dates) and the lack of organization with regard to last minute deadlines and unclear expectations. However, one positive that stemmed, even from these frustrations, was the fact that several (4) students felt that part of their intellectual growth this summer included the ability to achieve despite facing adversity. This is a situation that students are likely to come up against, whether or not they decide to attend graduate school.

When asked on the post-survey if the participant planned to apply to graduate school, 100% of the participants indicated that yes, they do plan on pursuing graduate studies. When students were asked if they would recommend SHI to a friend, again, 100% of students said
“yes” they would recommend SHI to a friend. Some of the reasons included exposure to graduate school culture, the experience of researching in a setting such as UCLA, getting help in improving thinking and writing skills, and obtaining life experience. Some of the reasons did include a “conditional” yes, meaning, some of the participants felt that the program would be more beneficial to rising sophomores or juniors or to students who may have limited or no research experience.

Overall, almost all of the students (with the exception of one) expressed that they had been pushed and challenged during the summer experience with SHI – some academically and some personally. Only one student felt that s/he was not challenged and was “not really being pushed.” Academically, 8 of the 10 participants felt that they had grown intellectually this summer and 7 of the 10 participants felt that they were now more confident in their academic abilities. For some of the participants, this intellectual growth and increased confidence came from participating in the seminars, working on the research paper, and presenting their findings. For a small handful of participants (particularly those that expressed high levels of frustration), their intellectual growth and increased confidence was a result of their perceptions of having to navigate difficult situations. During the individual interview, one student expressed, “… I feel more confident about my own intellectual ability as far as how I feel my institution prepared me to be here….” This same sentiment was expressed in two additional individual interviews, and was mentioned during the focus group interview as well. These students felt that some of the activities (i.e. the seminars, the workshops, etc.) could have been more intense and could have incorporated more graduate school “jargon.”

During the focus group and individual interviews students were asked for their final thoughts on the program. Some of the positives comments included:

- “I think overall it’s a good program.”

- “…it really was a great learning experience and it helped me learn so much about myself, so much about academia and about how valuable it is to form connections and relationships with people who are going to be your colleagues later on. So, I think that SHI was really instrumental [in] learn[ing] all these things about me as I transition from undergrad to grad.”

- “I just want to say that you know, it was a great experience. It was a fantastic experience. And you can quote me as much as you want on that because I loved it here. I know I could have had other opportunities but being here and meeting the faculty and the people that organized this program… they were great…. I came here and I learned a lot from being in this program, academically and socially.”

Some key suggestions offered by the students include:

- Doing a needs assessment at the beginning of the summer to get an idea of what workshops may be best suited to student needs;
• Providing more opportunities to visit the library, especially given the early closing time during the summers. Along the same lines, providing more time for students’ own research – finding a better balance between structured activities and time for individual work;

• Having one administrator in charge of organizing deadlines, sending emails, establishing expectations, etc. so that things will be better organized and there will be no conflicting deadlines/information

• Providing better opportunities to take advantage of being at UCLA (e.g. learning more about specific departments/making connections with those in their field of interest at UCLA)

In summary, the majority of participants in the SHI this summer were pushed and challenged, both academically and/or personally. For some, intellectual growth and confidence came from their participation in the SHI activities (seminars, research paper/presentation). For others, these activities may not have been as meaningful, but their participation in SHI still afforded them the opportunity to learn more about themselves and their abilities. The program components that the students found most useful in understanding what graduate school is like were the faculty-conducted seminars and the mentoring relationship. The least useful component, according to the participants was the extracurricular activities, perhaps because they expected an obvious connection to their preparation for graduate studies. Prior to their arrival at UCLA, the majority of the students were already fairly confident in their intellectual abilities. Nevertheless, many expected to enhance their writing and research skills. Others were anticipating learning more about the graduate school application process and culture. These expectations were met for some participants through their relationship with their mentors, but not for others. After their experience with SHI, however, all of the students do plan on applying to graduate programs and all would recommend SHI to a friend, although, for some this recommendation would extend only to those with limited or no research experience. On the whole, despite some minor challenges, the majority of participants gained knowledge and benefited from UCLA’s SHI and this is sure to help them navigate future graduate school experiences.
Appendix A: Itemized Survey Results

The following tables and figures provide data for each item on the pre and post program survey not detailed in the sections above.

Figure 1. How Participants Heard of SHI

* The "other" responses were: 1) posted in English Department and 2) McNair Scholars Coordinator book of internships for minorities.

Figure 2. Students’ Primary Motivation for Attending the SHI Program*

*One student chose multiple responses for this question and therefore was not included in this analysis. The “other” response was: The money and see Los Angeles.
Figure 3. Students' Perceptions of Their Exposure to Research at Home Institution

Figure 4. Previously Presented at a Research Conference
Figure 5. Relationship with Academic Advisor at Home Institution

![Bar Chart]

- Extremely close: 5
- Fairly close: 3
- Not close, but OK: 0
- Not close: 1
- No advisor: 1

Figure 6. Whether Students' Advisor had Talked to them about Applying for Graduate School

![Pie Chart]

- Yes: 80%
- No: 10%
Figure 7. Students Perceptions of Who Has Provided the Most Information about Graduate School

*One student chose multiple responses for this question and therefore was not included in this analysis. The “other” responses were: the McNair Scholars Program and research at the Schomburg Center/personal motivation.

Figure 8. To What Extent are SHI Students More Motivated as Compared to Students at Their Home Institution
Figure 9. Students level of Agreement on Whether Their Home Institution Is Preparing/Has Prepared them to be Successful in a Top-ranked Graduate School

Figure 10. Students' Perceptions on how Challenging This Summer Will be for Them
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student</th>
<th>Describe your general expectations for your summer at UCLA.</th>
<th>Which aspect of the summer program are you most looking forward to?</th>
<th>Which aspect of preparing for graduate school will you need the MOST assistance with this summer?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>My general expectations for the summer are: To learn how to research; become a better writer; Acquire more knowledge in my area of study; Learn about graduate school.</td>
<td>I am most looking forward to the class/seminars.</td>
<td>Writing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>I hope to learn about the graduate school culture, network with faculty, and meeting other scholars.</td>
<td>Learning about the graduate school culture, particularly UCLA and the programs offered here.</td>
<td>The ins and outs of applying but also trying to figure out if I'm grad school material.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>To become a better researcher; To become a better writer, To start preparing for graduate level work</td>
<td>Dialoguing with scholars; meeting with my mentor regularly</td>
<td>Research; Writing (at a graduate level)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>To strengthen my research skills; To deepen my knowledge of my particular aspect of the humanities; To contribute to meaningful academic dialogue</td>
<td>Doing research with my mentor; Getting to know LA; Producing an academic paper.</td>
<td>time management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Develop graduate level research skills, writing skills, and presentation skills. Also exploring various options and ways of getting into graduate school and funding school.</td>
<td>The research, writing skills development, presentation skills development and all the graduate school tips and assistance.</td>
<td>Funding!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Becoming more comfortable working on an academic research project; learning more about the graduate school environment; strengthening my writing skills as well as ability to read and think critically</td>
<td>Meeting with my mentor to discuss and determine my research.</td>
<td>Finalizing my list of schools and my personal statement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>I expect to get a realistic example of what graduate school will be like.</td>
<td>I am looking forward to presenting my findings.</td>
<td>Preparing a good personal statement and a complete and well rounded application.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Academically focused; Research oriented; Thorough presentation of findings at the conclusion of the paper.</td>
<td>Interacting with the other students in the program; Meeting my faculty mentor; Producing an original, well-thought out/in depth paper.</td>
<td>GRE/Test prep</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>I expect it to be challenging and intensive yet supportive.</td>
<td>I'm looking forward to having the writing workshops and the writing critiques on my paper. More importantly I am looking forward to the seminar classes.</td>
<td>I need most assistance with my writing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student</td>
<td>Which program component contributed THE MOST to your current understanding of what graduate school is like? Why?</td>
<td>Which program component contributed THE LEAST to your current understanding of what graduate school is like? Why?</td>
<td>Would you recommend SHI to a friend? Why or Why not?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Workshops because it covered things like CV, financial aid, etc.</td>
<td>Mentoring. I did not receive any education/material outside of what I knew from this relationship.</td>
<td>Yes, I would recommend it to rising sophomores or juniors. It could reinforce their education and teach them methods they will need like how to make a bibliography while allowing them to practice or presentation skills.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Writing the research paper or first conducting the research for the paper, the actual paper and finally presenting and defending my work.</td>
<td>The extracurricular activities because they all dealt with Art and not at all about my discipline.</td>
<td>Yes. I would recommend this program because while it had its faults or problems it exposed me to the graduate school culture.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>The mentor/mentee relationship and the level of critical thinking at the grad school level.</td>
<td>The extracurricular activities were not included in discussions during the seminars.</td>
<td>Yes. I would recommend SHI to students who have no research experience because students who have the experience can find the program to be a) remedial b) redundant.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>The mentoring, because it helped me understand how difficult it can be to work with people who may not be supportive or understand your work.</td>
<td>The workshops. I felt they weren't productive, and they were a little remedial. I would have liked more in depth workshops that were better tailored to the students' needs.</td>
<td>Yes. Just for the experience of researching in a setting such as UCLA.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Presenting research</td>
<td>Extracurricular activities. These activities were an opportunity for us to leave Westwood, but that was about it.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Mentoring because I had to</td>
<td>The extracurricular activities.</td>
<td>Yes, but only a friend who</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>The seminars were the most helpful. They were conducted like grad courses.</td>
<td>The extracurricular activities; they seemed unnecessary.</td>
<td>Yes. It might help them learn what graduate school will be like.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Seminars. These seminars were small, effective and informative.</td>
<td>Extracurricular activities. These activities were an opportunity for us to leave Westwood, but that was about it.</td>
<td>Yes. It helped improve my thinking and writing skills.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Mentoring. I had to navigate how to deal with a mentor who I didn’t see eye to eye with. I may encounter it in graduate school.</td>
<td>Writing Research Paper. My professors will be in the field I am studying, therefore giving me a better research experience.</td>
<td>Yes, because of the life experience. No because of the lack of cohesive organization and the planning of expectations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>The faculty conducted seminars have contributed the most to my current understanding of what graduate school is like, because of the intensity and the engagement of critical thinking skills.</td>
<td>The extracurricular activities would have been more relevant to a better understanding of grad school.</td>
<td>Yes. Although there are problems that need to be resolved, as with any program, this is a beneficial program that students should have the privilege of participating in.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>