# Evaluation of the **College Bound Program**

## Boys and Girls Clubs of the Los Angeles Harbor

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**Executive Summary**

The Boys & Girls Club of the Los Angeles Harbor's College Bound Program offers crucial case management, workshops, and other support services to underserved and marginalized youth in the communities of San Pedro and Wilmington. As research suggests, students of color often struggle to access traditional pathways to higher education. There is a wide achievement gap between Latino and African-American students' and White students' likelihood of not only enrolling in college, but in earning a college degree. In an effort to combat these educational inequities, mentoring programs prove to have a profound impact on the educational experiences of students of color. As such, the College Bound Program and its staff work to ensure that these financial, educational, and cultural barriers do not keep at-risk and first-generation youth from pursuing higher education. The Program's consistently positive participant responses across the 2011 and 2012 cohorts suggest that the College Bound Program is accomplishing its goals.

In order to evaluate the College Bound Program, a total of 102 program participants from the 2011 cohort were sent a survey invitation; 60 alumni participated. As a check on these results, the survey was also sent to 2012 program alumni. In addition to the online survey, 28 alumni from 2011 completed a supplemental 15-minute phone interview. The research team constructed these surveys based on the data extracted from individual program participant files. The 33-question online survey was divided into three sections: demographics, college attendance, and College Bound Program components. The surveys were designed to measure whether College Bound program participants' high school completion and/or access to higher education improved as a result of College Bound participation.

Across both cohorts, 57% of the respondents were female and 70% were Hispanic. Fifteen percent of respondents from 2011 and 35% from 2012 were the first in their families to graduate from high school. As seen in the two graphs below, over 40% of the students in each cohort were the first member of their families to attend college.
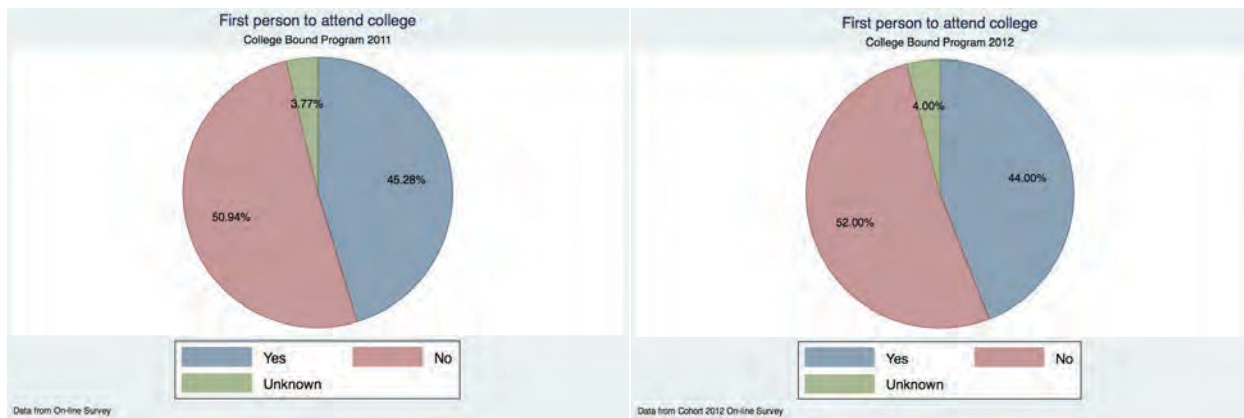


It is notable that as of Fall 2013 close to 100% of respondents across both cohorts are enrolled in some form of college, with 75% of the respondents attending a CSU, UC, or other 4-year out-of-state college.
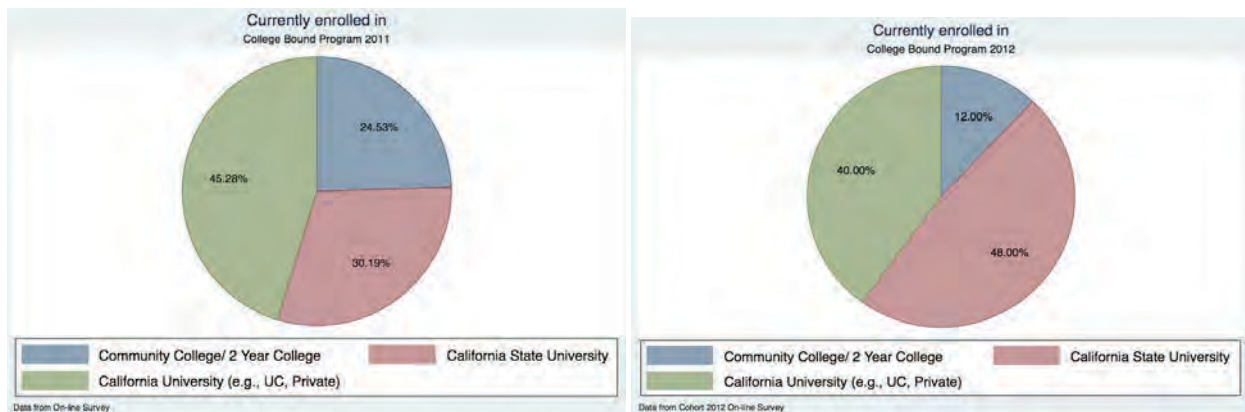


As an additional testament to the success of the College Bound Program, the graphs on the following page indicate that 55% of the respondents in both 2011 and 2012 were accepted to over four schools; over 95% of youth were accepted to at least one school.
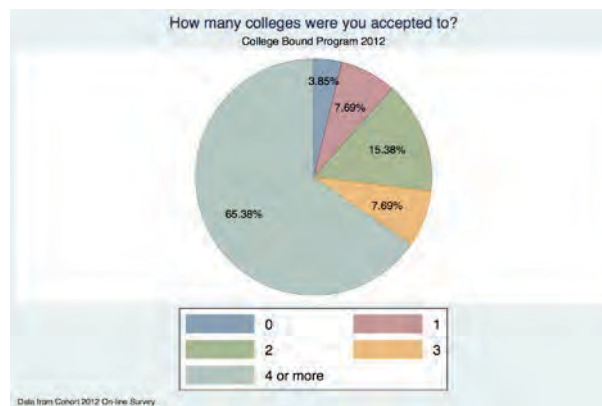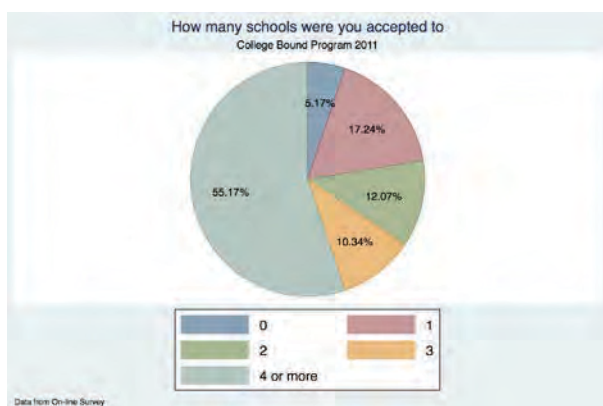
Across both cohorts, 95% of students indicated that their motivation to succeed in college had either improved significantly or stayed the same since high school. Nearly all students recognized that school was either very important or important in achieving their career goals. Over 96% of the 2011 and 2012 cohorts indicated that they believe they will successfully obtain a Bachelor's degree. Notably, there were several participants in each cohort who thought they would earn a Master's degree. Without the support of the College Bound Program, students indicated that they would not have been as successful in navigating the college application process and the transition to college life. Students in each cohort overwhelmingly agreed (85%) that the College Bound Program staff, "listened to what [they] had to say" and "believed [they] could do well in school."

College Bound staff reported a 98% graduation rate for the 2011 cohort in addition to the youth securing over $2.66 million in FAFSA funding and $654,000 in scholarships. Over the last five years, the program has seen an impressive average graduation rate of 95% surpassing San Pedro High School (77%) and LAUSD (66%). Given the historically low graduation rates of students of color coupled with the financial burden of attending college, the program's ability to assist youth and their families in securing financial support is noteworthy. This is supported by survey responses indicated that cost is the most difficult part of attending college. Not

surprisingly, College Bound Program offerings related to scholarships, financial aid, and loans saw high rates of usage and proved very beneficial to participants. As the surveys and phone interviews indicate, the Boys & Girls Club of the Los Angeles Harbor's College Bound Program is successfully addressing the challenges present for underserved high school graduates of color as they strive to enter college. The evidence collected over the past two years is indicative of the program's important role in these communities. The program has succeeded in its goal of providing many first-generation high school graduates the opportunity to actively participate in higher education.

**Introduction**

Students of color are traditionally underserved, creating marginalization in education and society as a whole. The void found in public school education can be filled by an effective after school program that promotes academic advancement and supports pathways to higher education. As the non-White population grows in many states, particularly California, programs such as the Boys & Girls Clubs of the Los Angeles Harbor's College Bound Program in San Pedro, California, offer crucial services that can mainstream this marginalized population towards successful positions in society.

The United States is home to a quickly expanding Latino population. In 1990, 21.9 million Latinos were counted and by 2008, this number grew to 46 million Latinos in the United States (Torres & Fergus, 2012). The vast increase of Latinos in the United States has ensured that this segment of the population will play a leading role in shaping the future of the United States. Additionally, in 2009 the California Department of Education reported Latinos make up the largest enrolled student body in the state at 49.2% followed by White 28.5%, Asian 8.2%, and African Americans 7.4%. Latinos' educational attainment has not matched their population growth.

Students of color struggle to access academic curricula and opportunities that provide a pathway to postsecondary education. Mainstream discourse on the underperformance of Latino students has tended to place blame on students and their families. However, research focused on the institutional functions of schools has shown the multiple ways in which schools are structured to offer a sound academic trajectory to some students while failing other students (Oakes, 2005; Noguera, 2001; & Conchas, 2001). Nationwide, Latinos are classified with disabilities at higher rates (7%) and enrolled at lower rates in gifted and talented education

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programs (4%) than White male students (6.6%) and (8%) (Donovan & Cross, 2002). In addition, the Department of Education, Office of Special Services, disaggregated special education services provided by race and discovered that in 1998 a significant increase in services provided for African American children was found at ages 6 to 21 years, going from 4.4% at age 5 to 11.4% by age 6. Moreover, 59% of African American male high school dropouts experience imprisonment by age 34 compared to 11% of their White classmates (Hirschfield, 2009). Solorzano and Ornelas (2002) found that while Latino students made up 68% of the overall highschool students in one of California's school districts, they only made up 45% of the AP enrollment. African American students comprised 13% of the high school population and accounted for only 4% of students enrolled in AP courses. At a time when GPA and testing continue to play an important role in college applications, students who are not being counseled into AP courses remain at a serious disadvantage. Such findings are a testament to the lack of access these students have to academic courses that will make them competitive when applying to college.

Students of color also have a disproportionate dropout rate. Nationwide, African American students dropped out at higher ages (6.3%) compared to their peers; Latino 5.8%, White 2.6%, and Asian 2.4% (National Center for Education Statistics, 2006). However, statewide approximately 33,000 Latino students drop out; three times the rate of White students and twice the rate of African American students (Public Policy Institute of California, 2006). In 2009, 30.9% of Latinos aged 18-25 had a high school diploma while 7.9% of Latinos earned Bachelor's degrees (Torres & Fergus, 2012). Current education discourse focuses on the discrepancy in academic success opportunities, high school completion rates, and the restricted

access to higher education students of color face (Darling-Hammond, 2007; Giroux & Schmidt, 2004; Howard, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 2006).

Experiences with mentoring can have a profound impact on the educational experience of students of color. Latino college students reported that teachers served as role models and mentors in classes and extracurricular activities in ways that facilitated their educational success (Ceballo, 2011). Because most students of color are being educated by schools that have traditionally underserved them, it is important to examine some of the successful educational approaches that after school programs have undertaken. These components include providing key personnel that monitor student progress, offer high-quality instruction and/or tutoring, give students extensive college counseling, include parents, and develop student support groups (Gandara, 2004). Therefore, the purpose of our research was to examine the effectiveness of the Boys & Girls Clubs of the Los Angeles Harbor's College Bound Program in San Pedro, California, through a series of online surveys and interviews from former program alumni.

**Literature**

**Barriers to Higher Education among At-Risk Youth**

The focus of this literature review is to answer two main questions to gain a better understanding of the current climate for at-risk youth obtaining college degrees. This information will guide us in evaluating the College Bound program, which is currently in place to address associated barriers. We set out to learn more about the main barriers at-risk youth face when trying to get into college, and what programs and interventions are currently in place to address these barriers. We defined "at-risk" youth as individuals facing socio-environmental factors that have been found to impede post-secondary educational attainment and contribute to the widening achievement gap amongst ethnic groups and social classes.

The literature was reviewed through the exploration of education, social and psychology-oriented databases (PsycINFO, ERIC), as well as federal education statistics, with a focus primarily on Latino and African American students. It is well documented that there is a wide achievement gap in enrolling in college and, more so, obtaining college degrees, particularly when comparing White students to Latino and African American students. For example, from 1980 to 2011, the gap in the attainment of a bachelor's degree or higher between Whites and Hispanics widened from 17 to 26 percentage points, and the gap between Whites and Blacks widened from 13 to 19 percentage points (The National Center for Education Statistics, 2012).
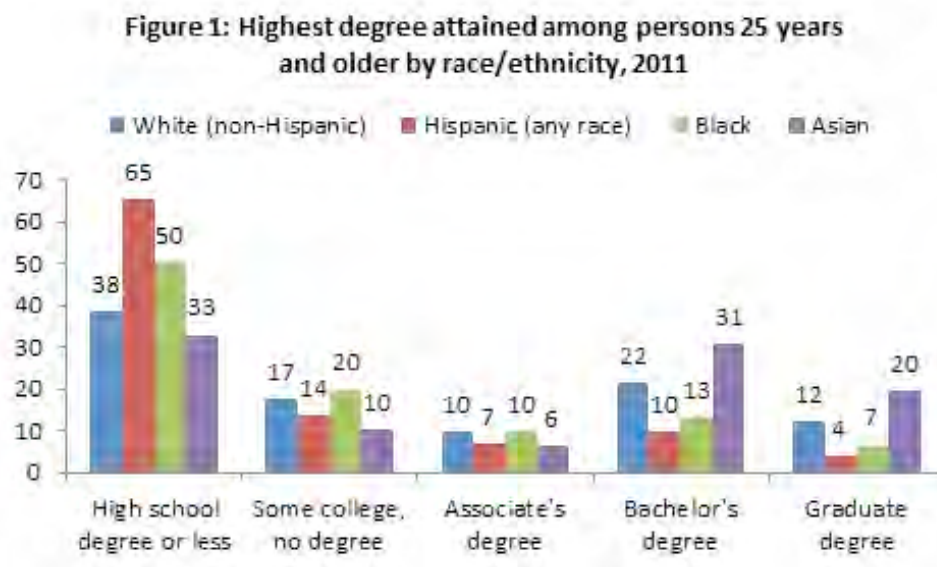


*Figure 1*. Highest degree attained among persons 25 years and older by race/ethnicity, 2011 (National Center for Education Statistics, 2012)

Psychology and Education research has produced many theories attempting to explain academic underachievement of students of color. This review focused on the most prominent barriers found to enrollment in postsecondary education and acquisition of a degree for these at-
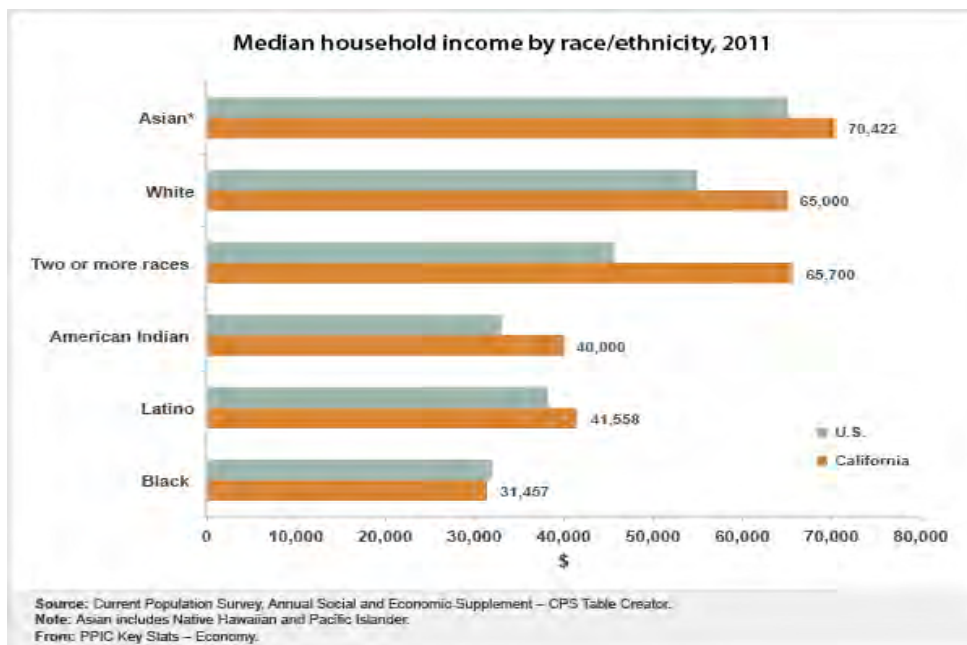
risk youth. Through quantitative and qualitative research, we present a concise description of the socio-environmental factors that create barriers to higher education.

**I. The most prominent barriers at-risk youth face getting to college**

**Financial**

The current cost of college tuition is realistically a financial burden even for students who are not considered "at-risk." With the current economic climate and rising tuition, the costs associated with attending any kind of college can be daunting. For the 2010 academic year, the annual cost for undergraduate tuition and room and board was estimated to be $13,600 at public institutions and $36,300 at private institutions. Between 2000 and 2011, prices for undergraduate tuition and room and board at public institutions rose 42%, and prices at private institutions rose 31%, after adjustment for inflation. (National Center for Education Statistics, 2012). It was found in a study conducted in San Bernardino County that, "Across all students, barriers related to finances were the most prominent reasons for not attending college" (Jimenez, 2012). With the current median household income for African American and Latino families in the U.S. (see Figure 2), it is understandable that the cost of attending college would be an even more significant barrier for these populations.

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Median household income by race/ethnicity, 2011

Source: Current Population Survey, Annual Social and Economic Supplement – CPS Table Creator.
Note: Asian includes Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander.
From: PPIC Key Stats – Economy.

*Figure 2*.  Median household income by race/ethnicity, 2011 (National Center for Education Statistics, 2012)

Additionally, it has been found that among students of lower socioeconomic background, working and supporting self and/or family sometimes outweighs the perceived value given to a degree.  In the study conducted by Zarate and Pachon (2006), out of 400 Latino students in San Bernardino County, it was found that 38% did not believe that the benefits of college outweigh the cost of college. This belief was found more so among students with Spanish-speaking parents (Aleman, 2007; Jimenez, 2012).

**Lack of Preparation in High School (A-G Subject Requirement)**

**State Mandated Testing**

Lack of preparation for college, particularly completing all required academic coursework, is another significant barrier to at-risk students applying to and attending college. In California, if a student has not fulfilled the A-G subject requirements, they are not eligible to

apply to four-year public institutions such as the California State University (CSU) and

University of California (UC) consortium schools. According to Rose (2010), the California

Department of Education notes that 39 of 58 California counties fell below the 35.8% state

average of graduates completing the coursework for entrance to a UC or a CSU campus. For 24

counties, students completed the UC/CSU course requirements at a rate of less than 25.8% (Rose,

2010). As shown below, from 2006-2009, only 40% of African American and Latino female

students in the Los Angeles Unified School District, the second-largest school district in the

nation, had completed the academic requirements necessary for admittance to four-year

institutions. The numbers are even lower for male students of color.
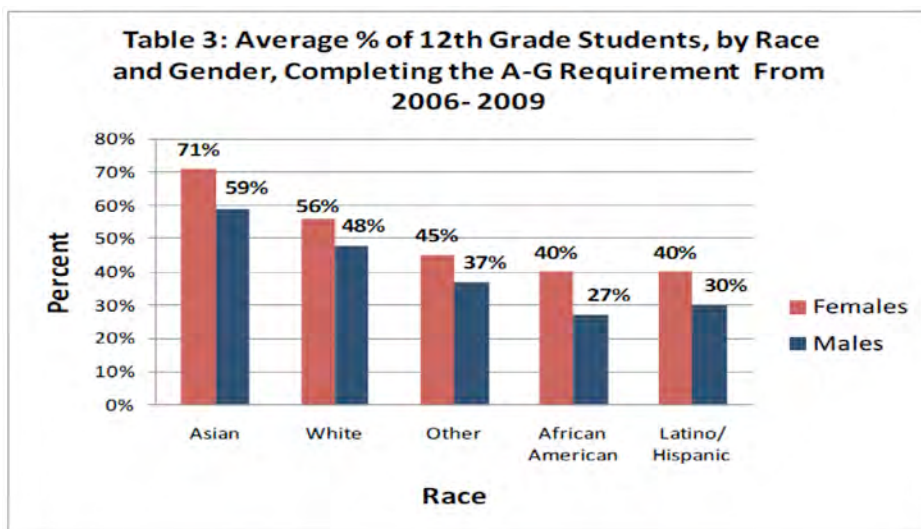


*Figure 3*. Average % of 12$^{th}$ Grade Students, by Race and Gender, Completing the A-G

Requirement From 2006-2009 (California Department of Education, 2010; Gonzales, 2011)

Although many students who have not completed the A-G requirements can attend

community college and then transfer to a four-year institution, it has been found that this option

tends to decrease the likelihood of students completing a bachelor's degree (Jimenez, 2012)

because they do not actually transfer. In addition, underserved students tend to opt for

community college for financial reasons. In 2002, Saenz reported, "55% of Hispanics attended a two-year college institution, tending to choose a two-year college because it is affordable" (Saenz, 2002). Even when Hispanics do transfer to a four-year college, Hispanic undergraduates are half as likely as their White peers on campus to complete a bachelor's degree (Fry, 2005; Jimenez, 2012). High school preparation (or lack thereof) significantly determines post-secondary education outcomes.

**Self-Efficacy and Perceived Barriers**

It is important to address the possible psychosocial factors that may jeopardize

a student's level of educational attainment. Socio-environmental conditions such as socioeconomic disparities, discrimination, and other community and school-wide issues can impact the psychosocial make up of students, Which in turn significantly affects students' educational achievement (Twomey, 2009). Self-efficacy in particular has been found to be an important psychosocial component to educational achievement and is inextricably linked to career decisions. Students' beliefs that they can do well impacts not only their performance, but also their educational aspirations and expectations (Bean and Eaton, 2001).

Our understanding of self-efficacy is based off of Bandura's theory: self-efficacy is a cognitive process in which an individual assesses his or her own ability to perform certain behaviors. An important part of this process is "an individual's belief regarding whether or not he can perform a behavior successfully" (Twomey, 2009). Furthermore, a person's, "ability to initiate action, expend energy upon, and persist when facing obstacles is determined by his or her expectations" (Bandura, 1977).

Self-efficacy also impacts something referred to as Career Decision Self Efficacy, which is the cognition associated with the degree of confidence one has in successfully engaging in

career choice tasks, such as attending college (Gushue et al., 2006; Taylor & Betz, 1983). In 2008, Flores, Navarro, and De Witz explored predictors of educational goal aspirations and expectations of 89 Mexican-American highschool students. It was found that no gender or generational status differences existed in educational aspirations or expectations. However, it was reported that students' educational aspirations were higher than their educational expectations for themselves (Jimenez, 2012). Additionally, Gloria (1993) found that self-efficacy was directly related to Hispanic undergraduates' academic persistence. Students' own perceptions of their ability to attend college, the expectations of their families, and their ability to overcome academic obstacles also contribute to educational attainment (Nailor, 2009).

**Family Support/Cultural Views**

While most people are influenced by family norms and cultural values when making big decisions, these factors seem to play a more significant role among particular ethnic groups and at-risk students, particularly with decisions for attending college. Additionally, parental and family support for attending college has been correlated with parents' educational level and general experience with college. Many students whose parents have little knowledge about college and the educational system often find themselves living in two different worlds. These students' families often "have little knowledge or experience of the academic culture and therefore, tension may exist as the student tries to balance the responsibilities and demands of their various roles" (Bellamey, 2009).

Jimenez (2012) discusses how much culture can impact educational decisions. In a survey among Latino students, Jimenez posed a question concerning the process of post-secondary school planning and consideration of whether to apply to colleges. All students in the survey replied that they would rely heavily on relatives, siblings, peers, and high school contacts

when making these decisions. Jimenez goes on to report finding that, "many Hispanics like to live close to home, and community colleges are located near home" (Jimenez, 2012). These findings, while broad generalizations, continue to support the idea that family and cultural values can greatly influence a student's decision to enroll in college and pursue higher education.

**First-generation College Student/Parents' Educational Level**

In 2009, Hunt examined Academic Performance Index (API) data from San Bernardino County and found that the strongest statistical predictor of student achievement is parents' education. It was also found that the lowest parent educational level was in the Hispanic community (Jimenez, 2012; Hunt, 2009). This data supports the significance of parents' educational level and powerful impact on students' educational achievement.  A parent with lower educational attainment, particularly among immigrant parents, has been found to predict a lack of working knowledge about tasks that facilitate going to college such as high school requirements, the financial aid process, and preparing college applications (Jimenez, 2012).

Many low-income students are more likely to be the first in their family to attend college (Adelman, 1999), compounding their "at-risk" status. Terenzini et al. (2001) found that low-income and first-generation high school and college students found it more difficult to persist in educational attainment because their families did not understand the financial aspects of college (Terenzini et al., 2001; Diemer, 2012).  They also reported an overall lack of awareness and lack of realistic information about college in general (Deil-Amen & Rosenbaum, 2003). Therefore, first generation incoming students will not be aware of available funding sources, making it much more difficult to even take the steps towards applying for college.

Another important predictor of educational achievement associated with at-risk and first-generation college students is the lack of social and cultural capital. As conceptualized by

Bourdieu, cultural capital is defined as resources available in a social network that an individual can use for social profits (Bourdieu, 2001; Portes, 1998), and consists of behaviors, attitudes, knowledge, and preferences that parents pass to their children that can be invested for social or economic profits (Bourdieu, 2001; Lamont & Lareau, 1988; Walpole, 2007). Social capital is defined as resources available in a social network that an individual can use for social profits (Bourdieu, 2001; Portes, 1998). Everyone has cultural and social capital, but its value depends on particular social contexts (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992; Horvat, 2001; Lareau & Horvat, 1999). The higher education system in the U.S. affords certain privileges to middle-class and upper-class families with particular kinds of resources, skills, attitudes, knowledge, and access to social networks (Stephan, 2010). Many of the factors associated with at-risk students are consistent with the lack of cultural and social capital outlined in Bourdieu's framework (Bellamey, 2009). Overall, the college enrollment process requires cultural or social capital more available to middle to upper-class students with parents who have college experience (Stephan, 2010).

**II. Question: What programs/interventions are currently place to address these barriers?**

There are numerous programs and educational systems in place throughout the nation attempting to address the various barriers noted. Many of the programs aim to reduce the well-documented educational disparities amongst social classes and ethnic groups.

**AVID**

Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) is a college readiness system for elementary through high school students that is designed to increase school wide learning and performance ("What is Avid?", n.d.). AVID helps develop a school culture that minimizes the expectation and opportunity gaps that many students face. The system "accelerates student learning, uses research based methods of effective instruction, provides meaningful and

motivational professional learning, and acts as a catalyst for systemic reform and change"

("What is Avid?", n.d.). Instructors teach academic and social skills to help students develop the

techniques and behaviors needed to succeed in and beyond high school. AVID curriculum

includes rigorous standards, WICOR (Writing, Inquiry, Collaboration, Organization, and

Reading), Cornell note-taking, and Socratic seminars.

**TRIO Programs**

"TRIO programs," an umbrella of U.S. Federal Education outreach and student services,

support students from "disadvantaged backgrounds" (U.S. Department of Education, 2013). In

addition to providing services through eight targeted programs, TRIO programs assist in

identifying students in need of the services. Low-income individuals, first-generation college

students, as well as individuals with disabilities are all target demographics for these services.

The goal is to move these students forward on the academic trajectory from middle school to

post-baccalaureate programs.

The TRIO programs include: Educational Opportunity Centers, Ronald E. McNair Post-

baccalaureate Achievement, Student Support Services, Talent Search, Training Programs for

Federal TRIO Programs Staff, Upward Bound, Upward Bound Math-Science, and Veterans

Upward Bound (U.S. Department of Education, 2013). A more in-depth look at specific

programs is provided below.

**Upward Bound**

Upward bound (UB) projects vary somewhat in the services they provide based on their

location and setting. The purpose of UB programs is, "to generate in program participants the

skills and motivation necessary to complete a program of secondary education and to enter and

succeed in a program of postsecondary education" (U.S Department of Education, 2011). Although they might differ in services offered, UB projects are required to provide academic instruction in math, laboratory sciences, composition, literature, and foreign languages. Other additional services offered through the program include tutoring, mentoring, counseling, work-study programs, cultural enrichment, and education or counseling services to improve the financial and economic literacy of students and their families. The programs and activities are specifically designed for students who are limited English proficient, students from groups that are traditionally underrepresented in postsecondary education, students with disabilities, students who are homeless, and students in the foster care system.

All UB grants are awarded for a five-year cycles. The average UB grant award amount is $321,079. All UB grantees are required to submit an annual performance report (APR) documenting progress toward meeting their approved project objectives. Success is measured by the percentage of low-income, first-generation college students who successfully pursue and complete postsecondary education opportunities (US Department of Education, 2011).

**Neighborhood Academic Initiative**

Neighborhood Academic Initiative (NAI) is a rigorous, 7-year, pre-college enrichment program designed to prepare students from low-income neighborhoods for admission to a post-secondary institution. The University of Southern California (USC) founded the program in 1989, and it encompasses three major components: the USC Pre-College Enrichment Academy, the Family Development Institute and the Retention Program. The Pre-College Enrichment Academy offers enhanced classes at USC on weekday mornings, the Saturday Academy, after-school tutoring, remedial and enrichment sessions, workshops on time management and study skills, standardized test preparation, cultural field trips and recreational activities. The Family

Development Institute offers seminars for parents, guardians, or advocates of Neighborhood Academic Institute scholars. Seminar topics are developed through collaboration with parents, staff and teachers that may include child development, effective communication, the college application process and other related topics. Lastly, the Retention Component helps ensure that a student enrolling into a post-secondary institution will successfully attain a degree. Such services as special seminars, meetings with NAI counselors and a mentoring program are available to NAI scholars attending USC or other colleges/universities.

### Boys and Girls Club College Bound Program

The Boys & Girls Clubs of the Los Angeles Harbor (BGCLAH) serves highly at-risk youth in the communities of San Pedro and Wilmington, California. Both communities are seriously impacted by a growing gang presence and both are currently operating under Los Angeles City mandated *Gang Injunctions.* BGCLAH originally developed their *College Bound* program in the summer of 2002 to address the extremely low high school graduation rate of its membership at the time ($< 50\%$). They eventually expanded the program to provide academic case management and other college pathway support services to their highly at-risk and underrepresented (in higher education) Latino and African-American members. The following is a review of the program, the challenges it faces in supporting the demographic it serves, and College Bound's overall impact on its participants.

The purpose of College Bound is to introduce and expose club members to the idea of college, provide daily academic support, sponsor numerous college pathway activities including important resource acquisition, and prepare members for a successful college experience. The College Bound program includes students in grades 4-12 and provides daily homework assistance/tutoring and SAT & ACT test-prep resources and support. Additionally, weekly

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College Bound activities, such as A-G college requirement workshops, SAT classes, FAFSA workshops, writers' workshops, and intensive scholarship application workshops are offered. Exposure activities, trips to universities from Santa Barbara to San Diego, mentors, and guest speakers help students believe that college is an attainable goal. An annual Senior Retreat, on-site college credit courses, and one-on-one case management are also offered. Case management is the heart of the program; youth receive the individual guidance, support, and resources that they need to obtain their academic, financial, and testing requirements for public and private universities.

The College Bound Case Manager works on three important items with each youth: (1) the vision and belief that a college education is in their future; (2) the road map to achieve their college dream; and (3) building the skills and acquiring the resources to get to college. Case Managers track academic progress and note the classes needed to meet the curriculum requirements of the University of California, California State, and community college systems, as well as private institutions. In collaboration with Princeton Review, students are introduced to and begin preparing for standardized tests and applications. Over the course of the program, the Case Manager works with youth to develop an academic strategy that assures both high school graduation and a post high school plan. They guide youth through application and testing procedures, assist with college and financial aid applications, provide monthly and annual calendars and teach youth to manage those deadlines, advocate on their behalf, counsel parents, and provide cultural mentoring. In short, the Case Manager acts as the child's educational "guardian angel," guiding each club member through the unfamiliar and unpredictable landscape of college preparation, the application process, and eventual acceptance and transition.

The second component of College Bound is daily tutoring. Each day (Monday-Friday), the Teen Center implements Power Hour to ensure that all teen club members focus on academics daily. During Power Hour, teens receive tutoring and homework assistance from basic classes through Honors and AP courses.  These daily academic support sessions continue through 8 PM nightly to assure all students have access, including students who participate in school extra-curricular programs and/or work.  On Saturdays, there are "reservation only" meetings for one-on-one tutorials, on-line SAT/ACT test prep sessions, and additional support to finalize personal statements and various types of applications.  Case Manager meetings can also be scheduled on Saturdays.

Through College Bound, youth receive an array of resources to help them reach their academic and personal goals, resources that are not readily available or even accessible to the majority of the youth. These resources can make the difference between community college and a university for many youth.

**Methods**

**San Pedro Community and Context**

According to the 2010 U.S. Census, 62.2% of the San Pedro community is comprised of families, of which, 83.5% are families with dual parents with an average annual household income of $48,036 (2010). Meanwhile, single, female-headed households make up 18% and have an average annual household income of $15,030 (National Poverty Center, 2010). Latinos in San Pedro account for 53.2% of the overall population, White 26%, African American 6.25%, Asian 4.48%, and Other (10.7 %).

In 2010 the U.S. Census reported 25.47% of residents in San Pedro did not complete high school. The remaining 74.53% completed at least high school, with 23.73% completing high school, 23.30% attained some college education, 7.78% attained an Associates Degree, 13.05 attained a Bachelors degree, and 6.67% attained a graduate degree (Figure 5).



**2010 Highest Education Level Attained (Population Age 25+) for San Pedro, CA 90731**
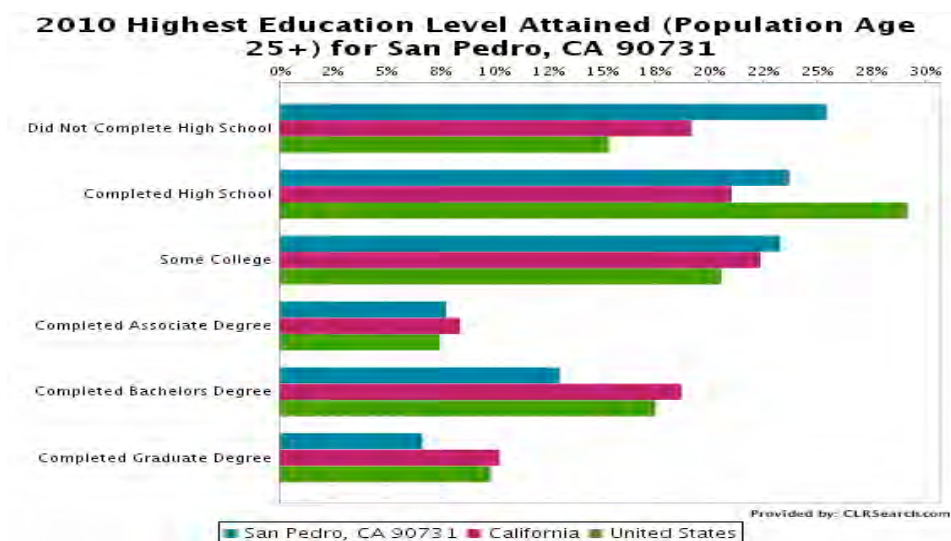
*Figure 4*. Comparison of Education Attainment in San Pedro, California, and United States

An analysis of data from the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention's (OJJDP) Socioeconomic Mapping and Resource Topography (SMART) system, Annie E. Casey Kids Count Data Book, the California Department of Education, and local demographic information shows that the youth served at the Boys & Girls Clubs of the Los Angeles Harbor (BGCLAH) Port of Los Angeles Club deal with various risk factors such as poverty, crime, gangs, and low educational attainment.

CDI is an index commonly used to summarize the general socio-economic conditions of an area. It is a combination of several measures gathered from the US Census and is generally considered to be more reliable than any single indicator used by itself. The CDI combines three weighted census tract measures: the percentage of persons living below the federal poverty line,

the percentage of persons receiving public assistance, and the percentage of families with minor children that are female-headed.  CDI scores range from 0 to 10, where 10 indicates that the tracts are the most disadvantaged in the country and 0 indicates the least disadvantaged. The OJJDP SMART system shows the average Community Disadvantage Index (CDI) for the census tract where the San Pedro Club is located is a 9 and the five surrounding tracts served by the site have an average CDI of 10. The Port of Los Angeles Club is located in census tract 296220, and it, along with adjacent tracts (297110 and 297120), all have a CDI of 10. Specifically, 9 indicates that the tract is more disadvantaged than 90% of other tracts in the country.

Within the five census tracts surrounding the San Pedro and Port of Los Angeles Club 44.4% of the youth are living in poverty. Many of the students from local schools receive various types of public assistance, such as free/reduced price lunch programs - Barton Hills Elementary School 89.3%, Dana Middle School 70.8%, and San Pedro High School 51.3%. A majority of San Pedro Club members (80%) are eligible for Free/Reduced Price Lunch. Nearly 20% receive CalWorks.

Within the five San Pedro tracts, an average of 46% of 18 - 25 year olds do not have a high school degree, with one tract as high as 62%. Educational attainment is low in the community. Single-parent households represent 47% of the five-tract area. The percentage of San Pedro Club members from single parent homes is even higher, at 62%.

There are 600 public housing units and low-income housing units adjacent to the Port of Los Angeles Club. According to the Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles, the Rancho San Pedro Public Housing community has a large youth population; 44% of its residents are under 18. The average monthly income is $1,334.

According to the Education Data Partnership (www.ed-data.k12.ca.us), more than half of

students in the local schools fail to meet the most basic levels of proficiency in core subjects. At Dana Middle School, 55.2% score below proficient English/Language Arts and in 62.9% are below proficient in Math. In San Pedro High School, 46.1% of all students are below proficient in English and 50.8% are below proficient in Math. Poor academic success beginning in elementary school worsens in middle school and eventually leads to low high school graduation rates. In the midst of these dynamics, the BGCLAH's College Bound Program has had an impressive average graduation rate of 95% over the last five years, which surpasses that of San Pedro High School (77%) and the Los Angeles Unified School District (66%). In fact, in the primary year this study focuses on (2011 Cohort), the graduation rate was 98%.

**Study Sample/2011 Cohort**

The sample consisted of the approximately 150 youth who were in the College Bound cohort graduating in the Spring of 2011. This sample was selected since they would currently be in their second year of college or at least have been out of high school for approximately 18 months at the time data was collected. Of the 150 College Bound Alumni, 121 agreed to participate, 7 declined to participate, and 22 were in limbo pending correct contact information. Of the 121 who agreed to participate, 10 had multiple contact information and 8 were missing contact information. A total of 102 BGCLAH College Bound Alumni were surveyed.

**Procedures**

BGCLAH staff began to recruit College Bound program participants by contacting recent alumni and asking them to participate in a short survey and phone interview in the near future. Club staff compiled a list of their alumni with the contact information of those who agreed to participate for researchers to contact. Researchers then extracted data from their individual files, which the BGCLAH program staff maintained, on these former College Bound program

participants. Based on the data extracted by the researchers, an online survey was constructed along with a supplemental phone interview survey. Results were then collected and analyzed. The data extraction, survey and interview constructs, and data collection and analysis are discussed in detail in the following sections.

**Data Extraction**

A team of researchers at the BGCLAH extracted data from the individual files of the former College Bound program participants.  Prior to the research team's arrival, program staff pulled all necessary files needed for data extraction for the researchers. When extracting data from the individual participants' files, researchers gathered information pertinent to each participant; High school attended, ethnicity, birthplace, family income level, gender, total colleges applied to, total colleges accepted, FAFSA assistance, scholarship assistance, college essay assistance, tutoring assistance, high school A-G requirement assistance, letter of recommendation assistance, assistance with loans for college, participation in AVID program, GPA, PSAT and SAT scores, and time spent with a program case manager (see appendix A). Data gathered by the research team was compiled into a master excel file and used for the construction of the online survey discussed below.

**Survey**

Researchers constructed an online survey designed to measure if College Bound program participants' high school completion and/or access to higher education improved as a result of program participation. Therefore, the survey was concerned with inquiring if participants felt the College Bound program was effective and which components of the program were most beneficial and utilized by them. The survey consisted of 33 questions divided into 3 sections; 1) Demographic questions, 2) College attendance, and 3) BGCLAH College Bound Components

(see appendix B). The demographic questions, section 1, inquired about basic participant information such as gender, date of birth, family income level, individual income level, and if high school graduation was achieved. College attendance, section 2, consisted of questions inquiring about their decision to apply or decline to apply to college, their views on the importance of college to achieving their career goals, their current college enrollment status, college selection and attendance information, and desired degree attainment. The final section on program components, section 3, was a series of questions and statements regarding the College Bound program and its resources and activities offered to participants. Alumni were asked to select answers which described their participation in and thoughts and feelings about the program, its resources and staff. The overall survey took participants approximately 10 to 15 minutes to complete.

Altogether 102 BGCLAH College Bound Alumni were sent a Surveymonkey invitation to take the online survey. Within a few weeks, two email reminders were sent to the alumni who had not yet taken the survey. After the two reminders, BGCLAH staff called the College Bound alumni directly and reminded them to participate in the online survey sent to their obtained email addresses. Finally, two more email reminders were sent to alumni who had not yet participated. Of the 102 email invitations sent for survey participation, 60 College Bound alumni participated and one alum declined to participate.

**Interviews**

During the time when surveys were emailed to College Bound program alumni, participants were also contacted over the phone for a brief 15-minute phone interview designed to obtain more in-depth information about the program, components, and staff. Phone interview questions focused on participants' thoughts about the College Bound program's effectiveness in

assisting them to apply for college, the most effective College Bound services they used to help them apply for college, their participation in the College Bound program and improved chances to apply to and/or go to college, and their overall experience with the services offered to them and with the staff (see appendix C).

A team of five researchers spent a few weeks contacting all of the 121 program alumni; 29 had incorrect or disconnected phone numbers, 3 declined to participate, and 61 were contacted without success. The 61 program alumni were given up to 4 separate call attempts where messages were left with family, relatives, or a machine. There were 10 alumni who requested an appointment for a call back time and when researchers attempted to call back the participant was not available, the phone was suddenly disconnected, or there was no answer. A final message was left at this time for them to contact a researcher. A total of 28 phone interviews were completed.

**Results**

**Results from College Bound On-line survey 2011 Cohort**

The complete response to the survey is tabled at the end of the report;[1] the sections below aggregate and highlight the primary evidence from the online survey. Note, in the appendix there are some brief comparisons between the respondents to the online survey and the actual participants in the 2011 graduating College Bound cohort.

**Section 1. Demographics**

Questions about background information of the respondent and their family.

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[1] For a complete set of information, please refer to the Appendix for tables with complete results from all questions

As is shown in Figure 5, the majority of survey respondents were Hispanic/Mexican (71.67%), followed by White/Non-Hispanic 13.33% and African American 11.67%. Less than 2% (1.67%) indicated that they were Asian/Pacific Islander or Native Americans. The majority of respondents were female (56.67%) and 43.33% were male Figure 6). The vast majority (85%) were **not** the first of their family to graduate from H.S. (Figure 7).
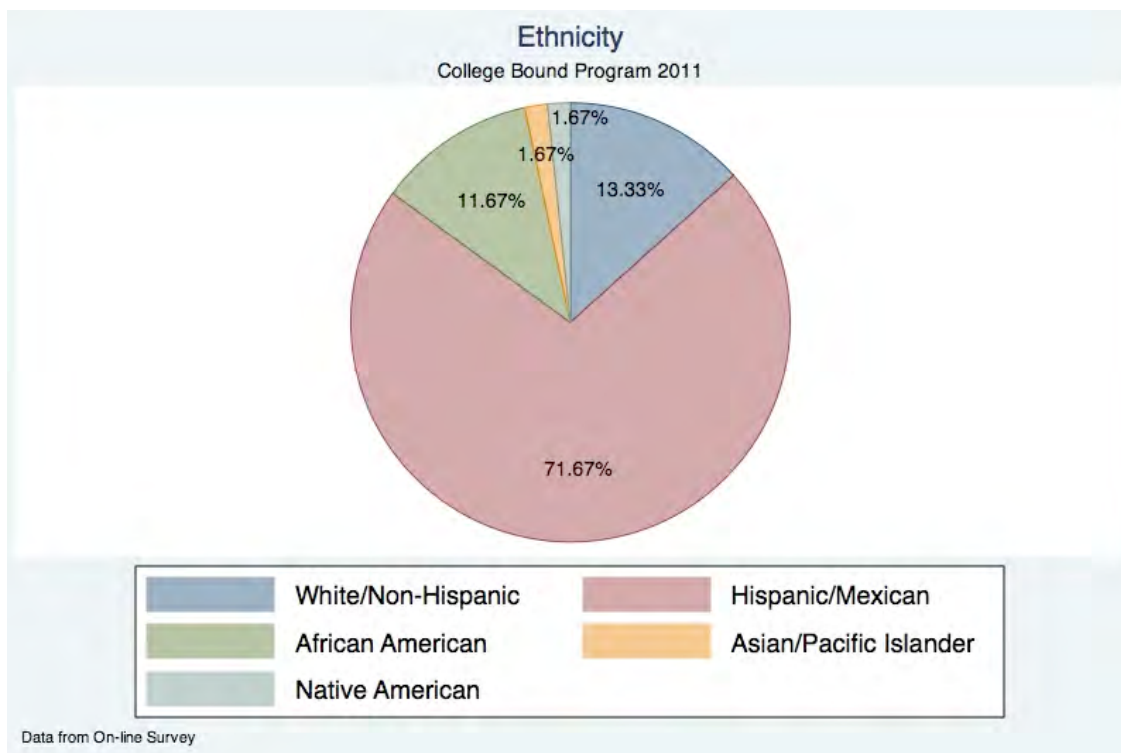


*Figure 5*. **Ethnicity of College Bound respondents**
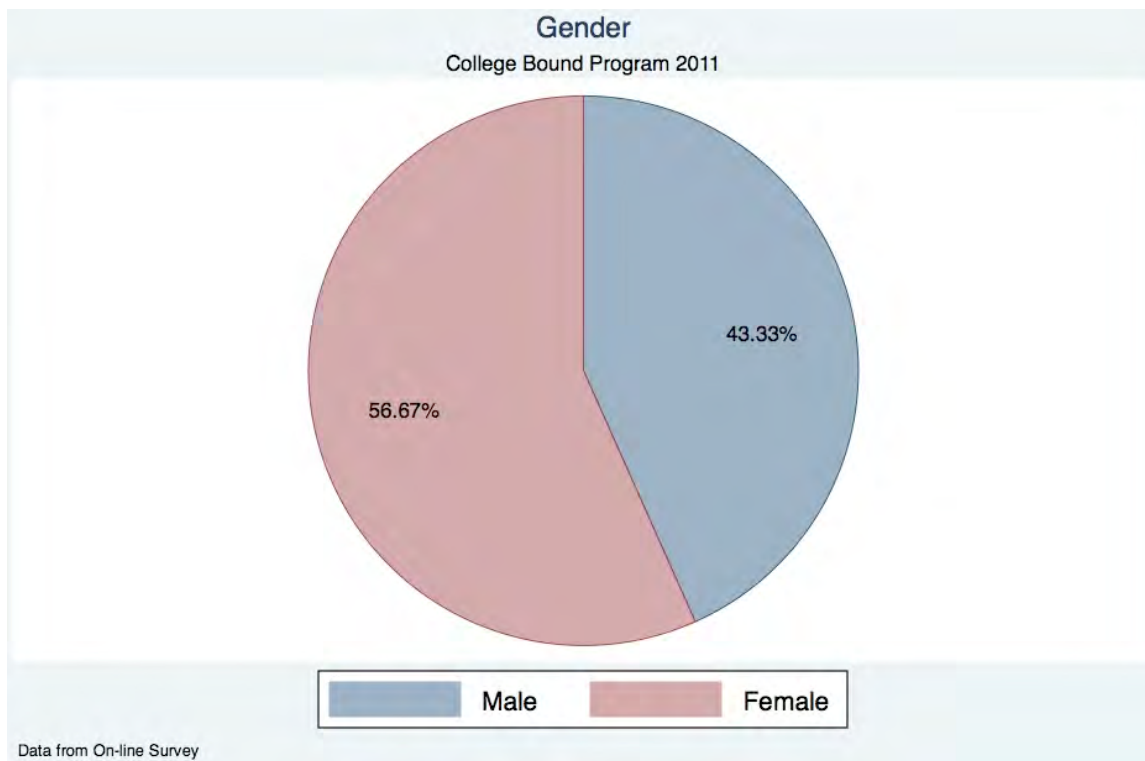
*Figure 6.* **Gender of College Bound respondents**
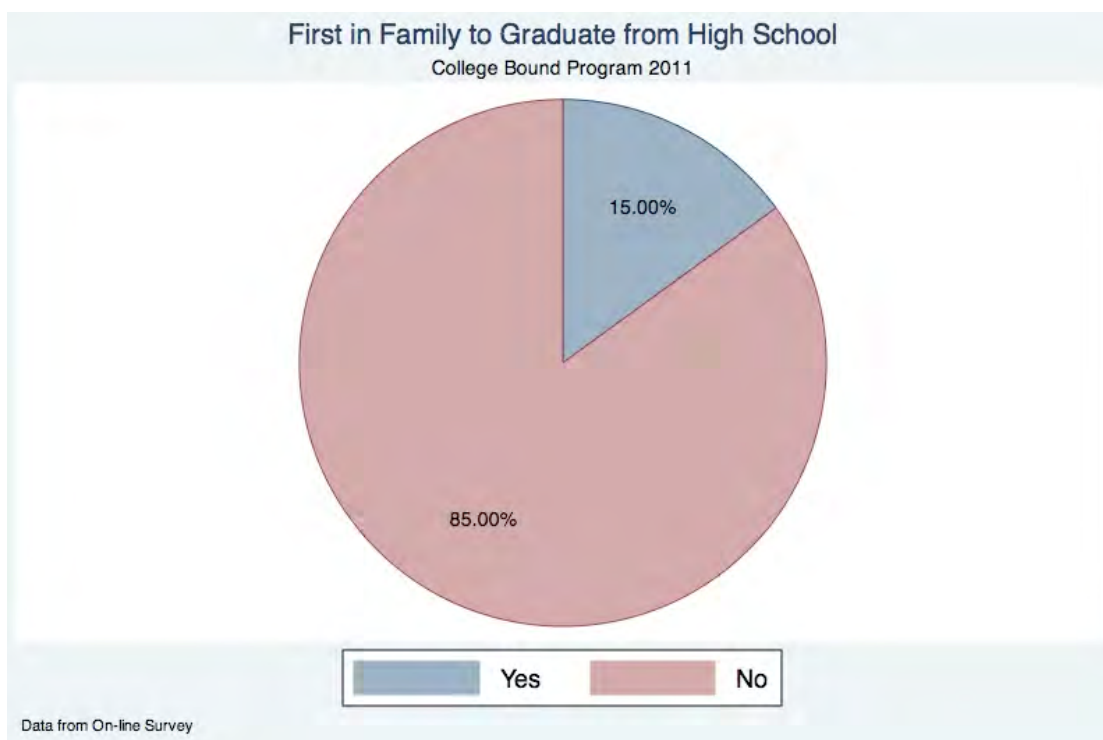


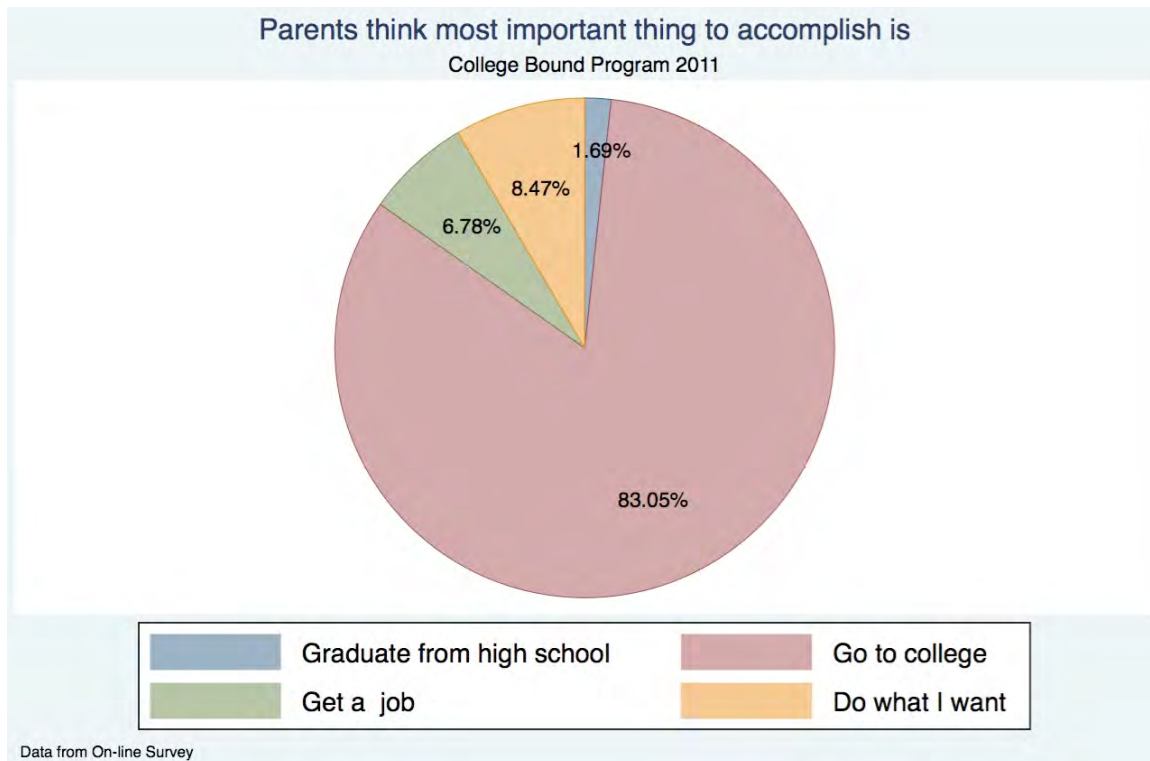*Figure 7.* **First in family to graduate from high school**

**Section 2. College Attendance**

This sections focuses on questions about the educational path during and after high school.
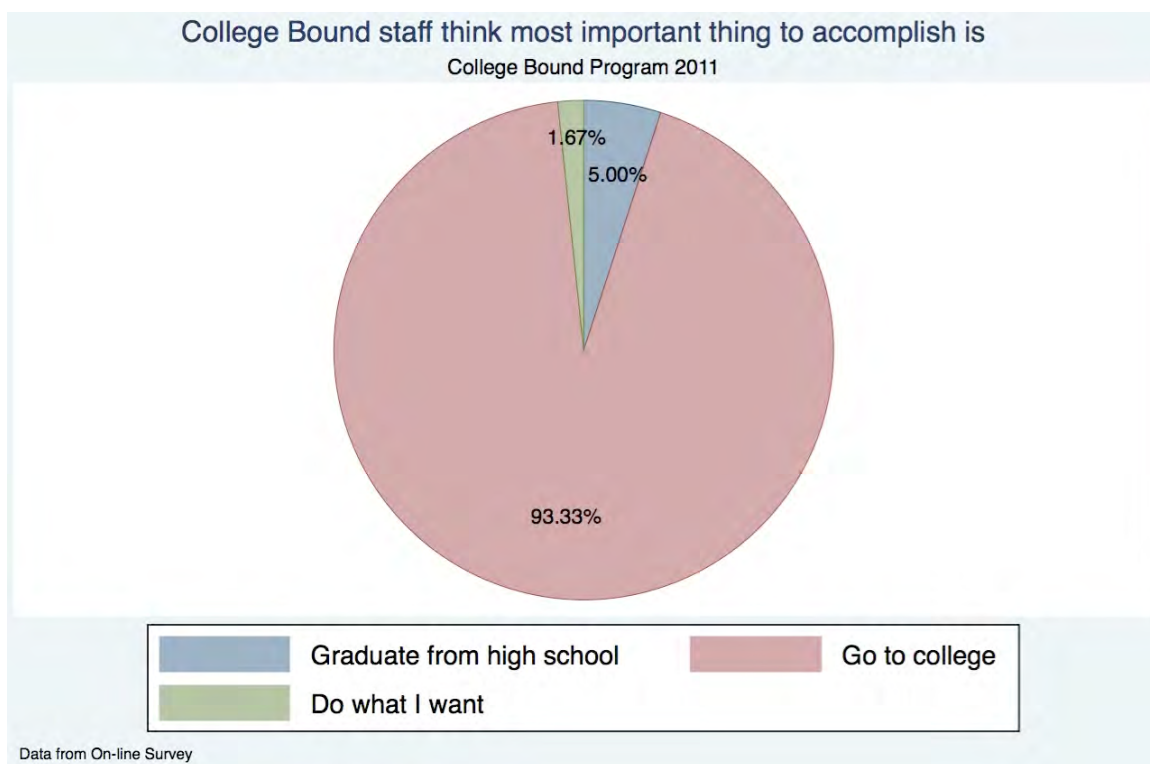
Respondents indicated (Figure 8) that their parents think the most important thing for them to accomplish is to go to college (83.05%). Almost 8.5% (8.47%) indicated that their parents thought it was most important for their children to "do what [they] want." Nearly 7% of respondents indicated that their parents believed that getting a job was the most important thing for them to accomplish.

Students indicated that they believed about 93% (93.33%) of the College Bound Staff (Figure 9), felt it was most important for the participants to go to college, with 5% feeling it was most important that the students graduate from H.S. They reported that the College Bound Staff and the parents agreed that college was the most important thing for the student to accomplish. A total of 88% of respondents indicated that school is *very* important to achieving their career goals; 10% indicated it was important. Combined, 98% of participants agreed that school was either important or very important, with less than 2% (1.67%) indicating that it was not important to achieving career goals.

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## Parents think most important thing to accomplish is
### College Bound Program 2011

1.69%
8.47%
6.78%
83.05%

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Graduate from high school | | Go to college |
| Get a job | | Do what I want |

Data from On-line Survey

*Figure 8*. **Participants' beliefs about what parents think is most important**



## College Bound staff think most important thing to accomplish is
### College Bound Program 2011

1.67%
5.00%
93.33%

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Graduate from high school | | Go to college |
| Do what I want | | |

Data from On-line Survey

*Figure 9*. **Participants' beliefs about what College Bound staff think is most important**
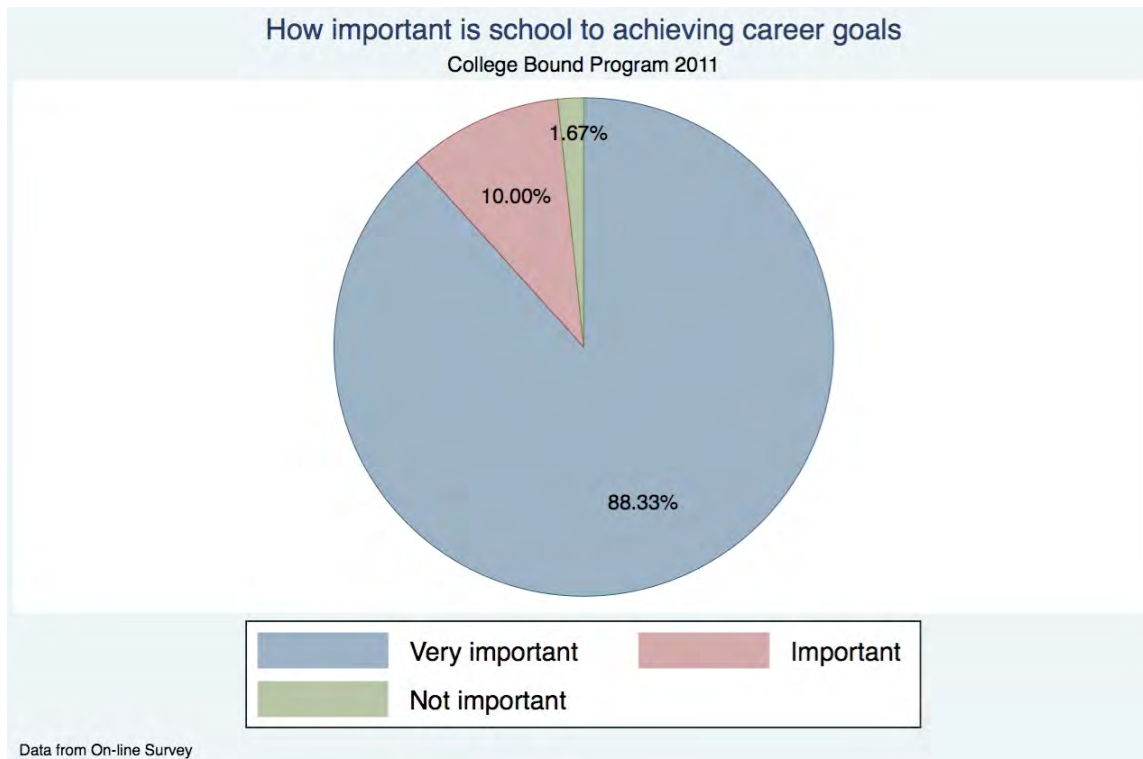
**Figure 10.** Participants' beliefs about how important school is to achieving career goals
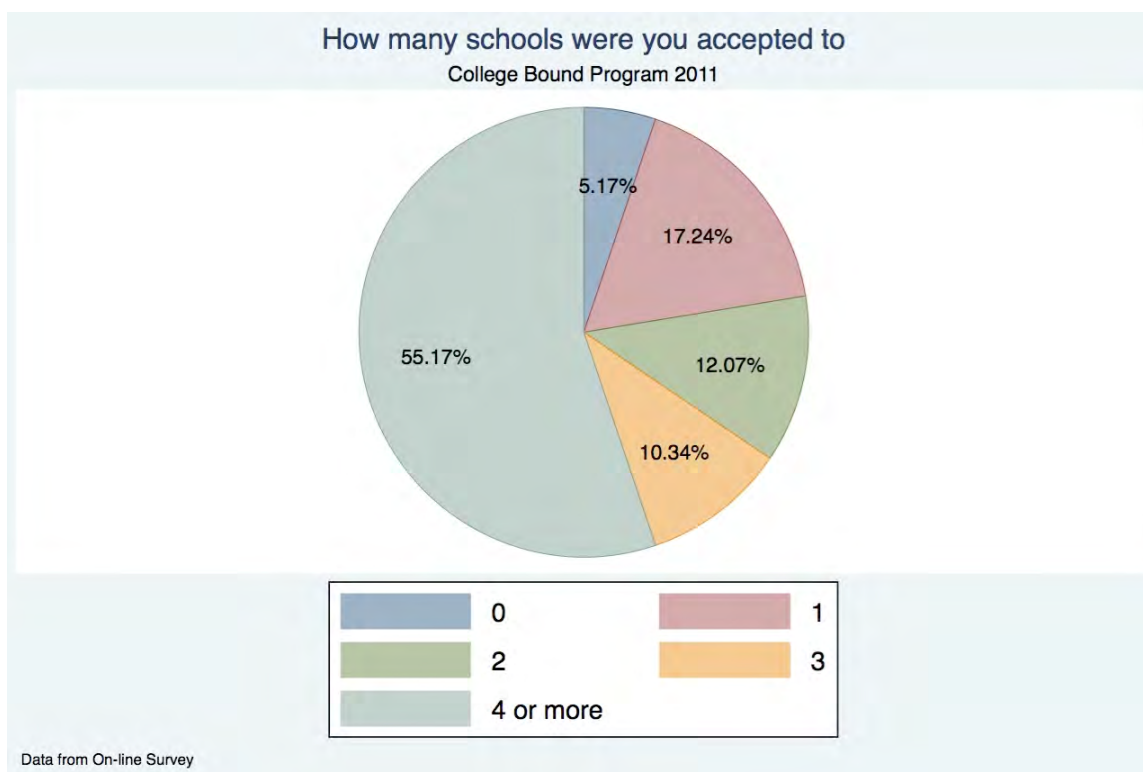


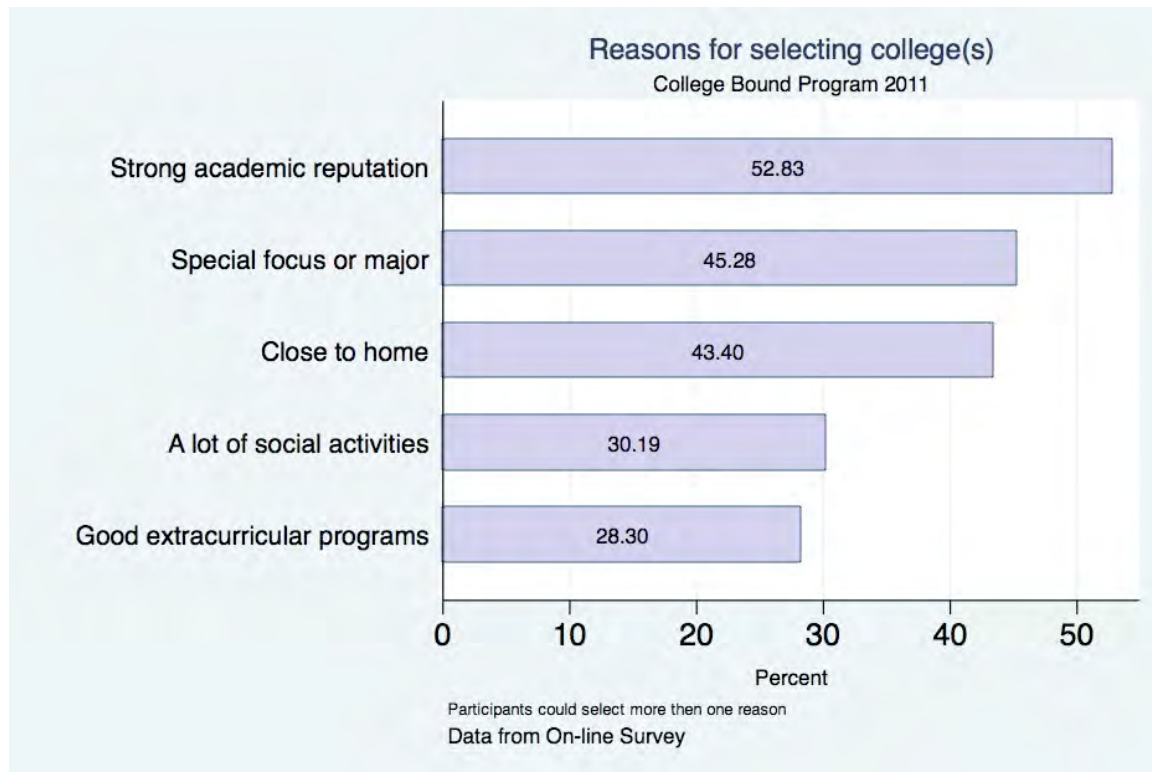**Figure 11.** Number of schools participants were accepted to

Approximately 55% (55.17%) of the students reported that they were accepted to four or more schools (Figure 11). Overall, about 95% (94.82%) of respondents were accepted to at least one school. Only 5% (5.17%) indicated that they were not accepted to any schools.

Figure 12 displays what types of programs the participants are currently attending. Of those participants enrolled in higher or post-secondary education, 45% are enrolled at a California University (4-year college, UC, or Private) followed by 30% enrolled in a State University (may include out-of-state), and 24% at a Community or 2-year College.
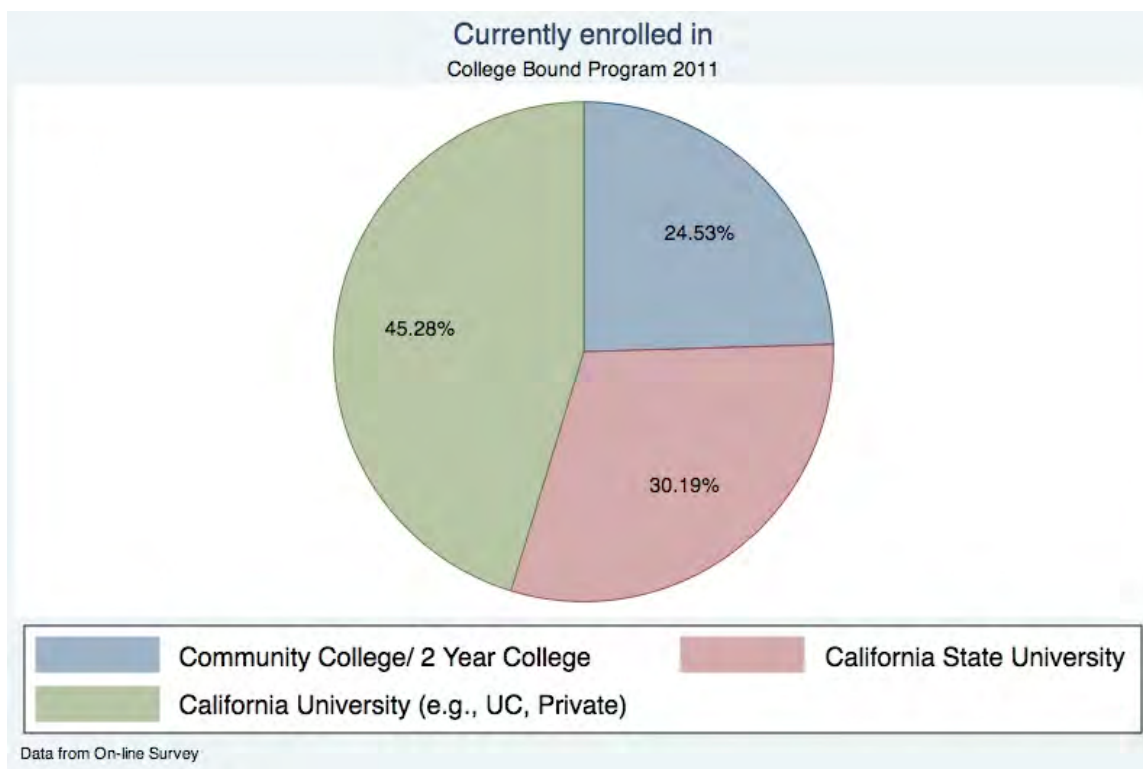


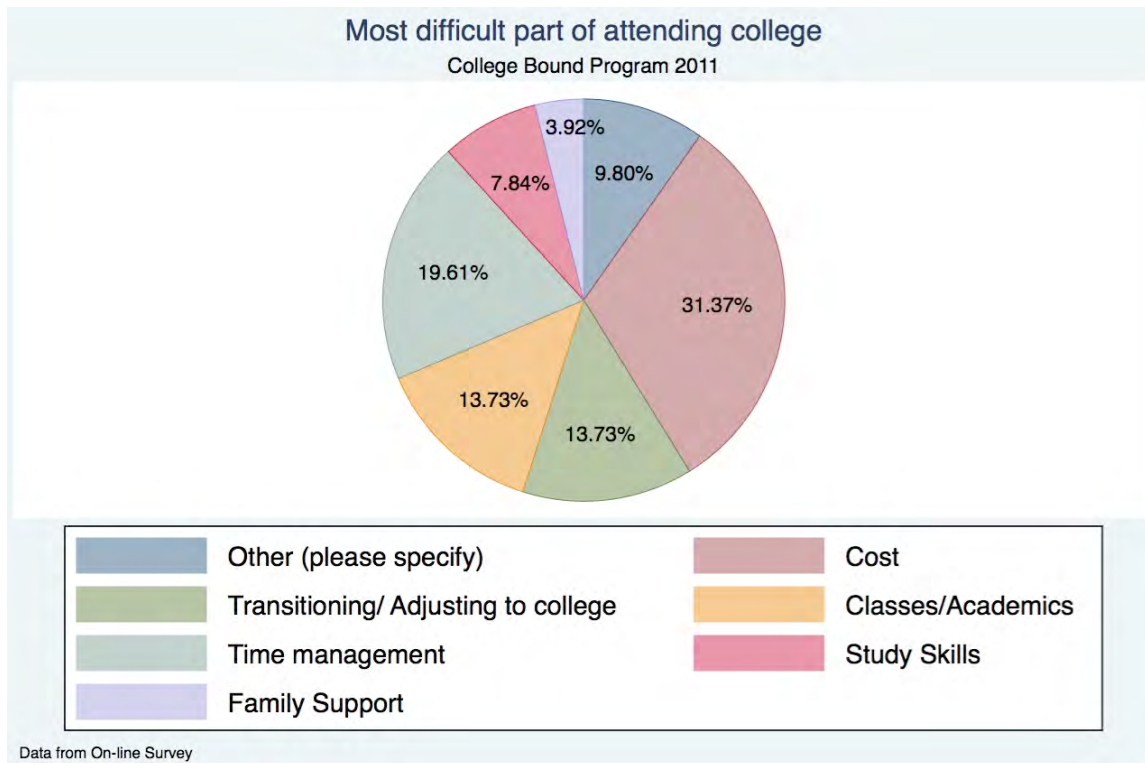*Figure 12.* **Colleges participants are currently enrolled in**

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**Reasons for selecting college(s)**
College Bound Program 2011

| Reason | Percent |
|--------|---------|
| Strong academic reputation | 52.83 |
| Special focus or major | 45.28 |
| Close to home | 43.40 |
| A lot of social activities | 30.19 |
| Good extracurricular programs | 28.30 |

Participants could select more then one reason
Data from On-line Survey

*Figure 13.*  **Participants' reasons for selecting colleges**

As can be seen above in Figure 13, the most highly selected reason for choosing their college was its strong academic reputation (52.83%), followed by a special focus or major (45.28%), and its proximity to their home (43.40%). The amount of social activities and good extracurricular programs were also important factors in their decision to attend certain colleges over others.
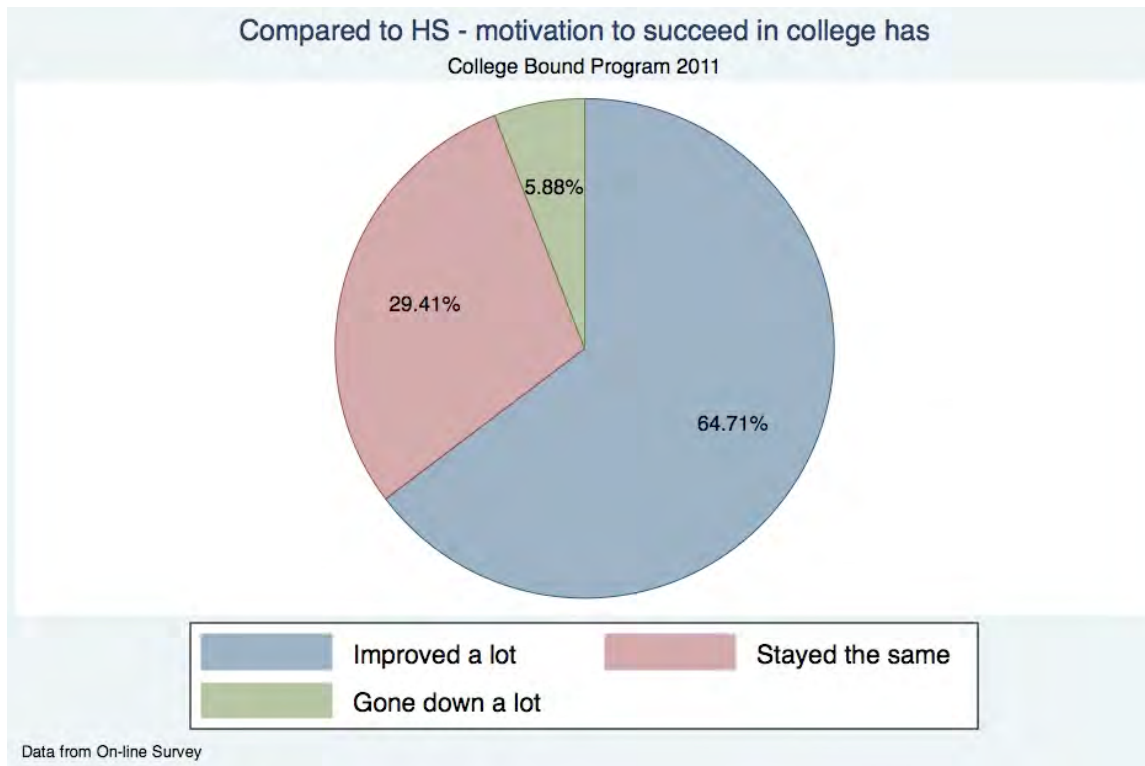
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**Most difficult part of attending college**
College Bound Program 2011

- 3.92%
- 9.80%
- 7.84%
- 19.61%
- 31.37%
- 13.73%
- 13.73%

| Legend | |
|---|---|
| Other (please specify) | Cost |
| Transitioning/ Adjusting to college | Classes/Academics |
| Time management | Study Skills |
| Family Support | |

Data from On-line Survey

*Figure 14.* **The most difficult part of attending college for participants**

For 31% of respondents the most difficult part of attending college was the cost, followed by 19% who felt that time management was hardest. Nearly 14% of respondents felt that it was either classes/academics or the transition/adjustment to college that was the most difficult.
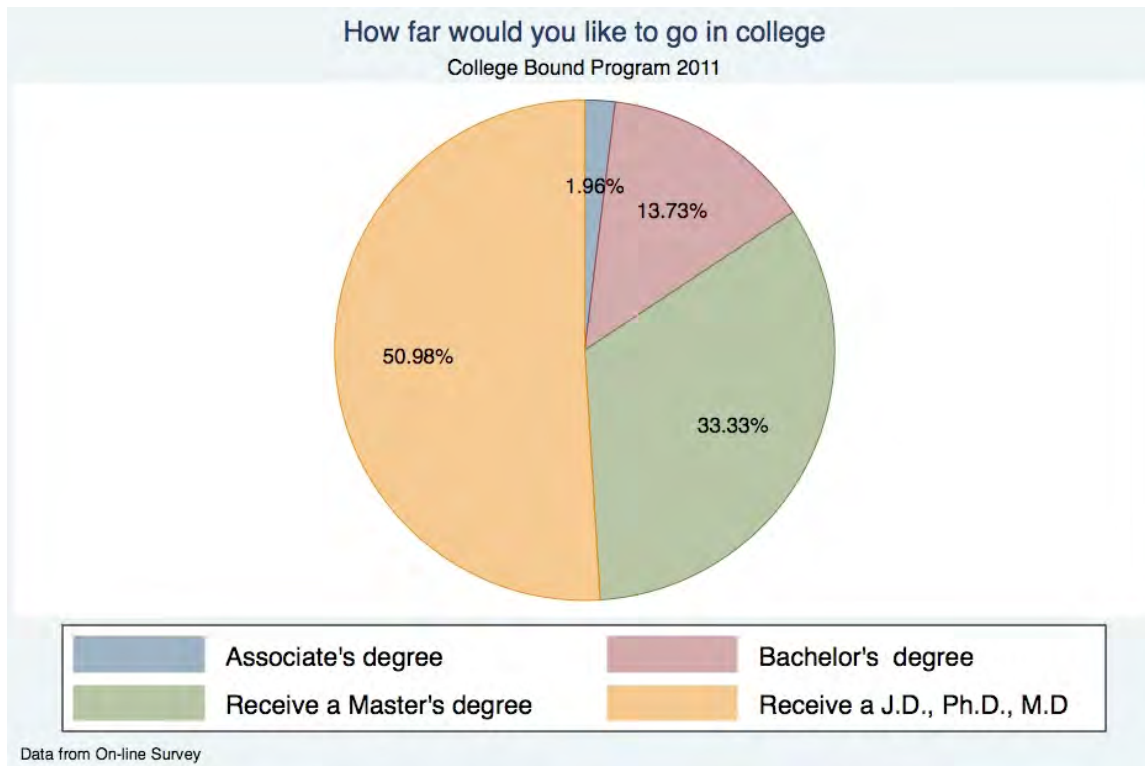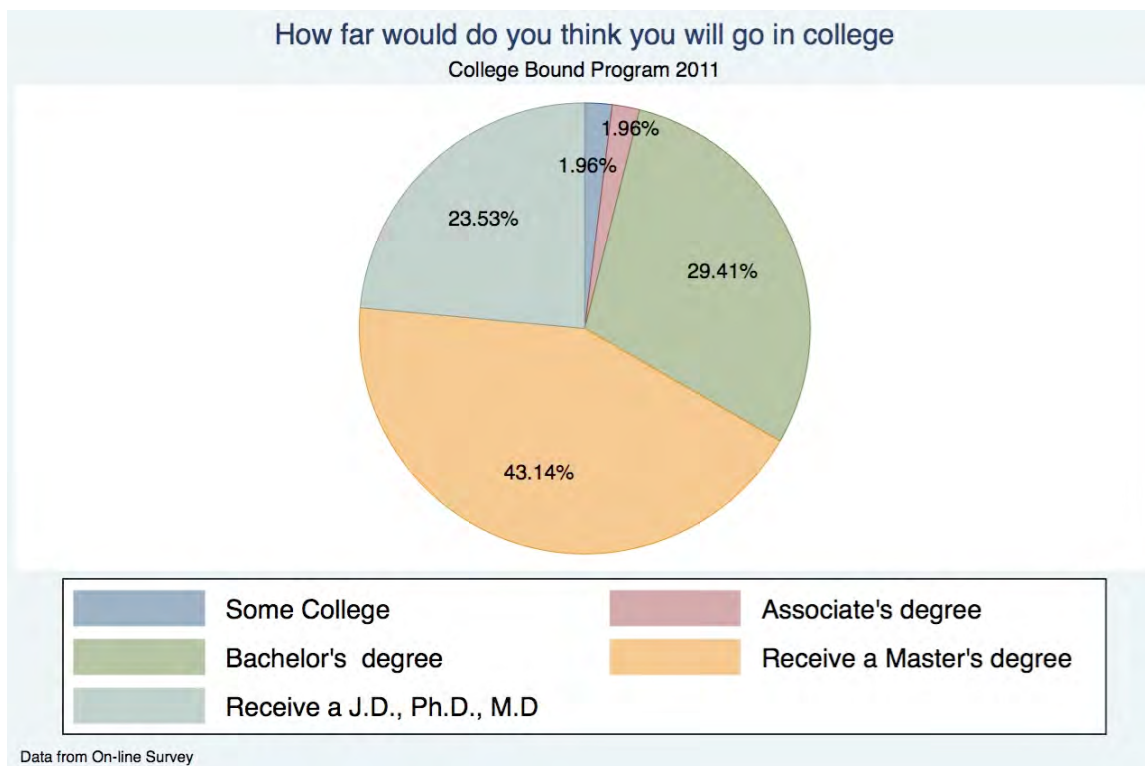
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**Compared to HS - motivation to succeed in college has**
College Bound Program 2011

5.88%

29.41%

64.71%

| Improved a lot | Stayed the same |
| Gone down a lot | |

Data from On-line Survey

*Figure 15***. Improvement in participants' motivation to succeed since high school**

For the majority of respondents (64.71%), their motivation to succeed has improved significantly since high school. Combined, over 94% of students indicated that their motivation has either stayed the same (29.41%) or improved. Less than 6% (5.88%) indicated that their motivation had gone down a bit.

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## How far would you like to go in college
### College Bound Program 2011



1.96%
13.73%
50.98%
33.33%

- Associate's degree
- Bachelor's degree
- Receive a Master's degree
- Receive a J.D., Ph.D., M.D

Data from On-line Survey

*Figure 16.* **How far participants would like to go in college**

## How far would do you think you will go in college
### College Bound Program 2011



1.96%
1.96%
23.53%
29.41%
43.14%

- Some College
- Associate's degree
- Bachelor's degree
- Receive a Master's degree
- Receive a J.D., Ph.D., M.D

Data from On-line Survey

*Figure 17.* **How far participants think they will go in college**

There were some differences between what the respondents would *like* to achieve with regards to their education and what they *think* they will actually achieve (Figures 16 & 17). Almost 51% (50.98%) indicated that they'd *like* to receive a J.D., Ph.D, or M.D., though only about 24% (23.53%) *think* they will go that far. While 33 % of respondents would *like* to receive a Master's, 43% *think* they will. Almost 14% (13.73%) indicated that they'd *like* to earn a Bachelor's, while 29% *think* they will. Notably, 99% of respondents indicated that they'd like to complete at least 4 years of college, while over 96% *think* they actually will.
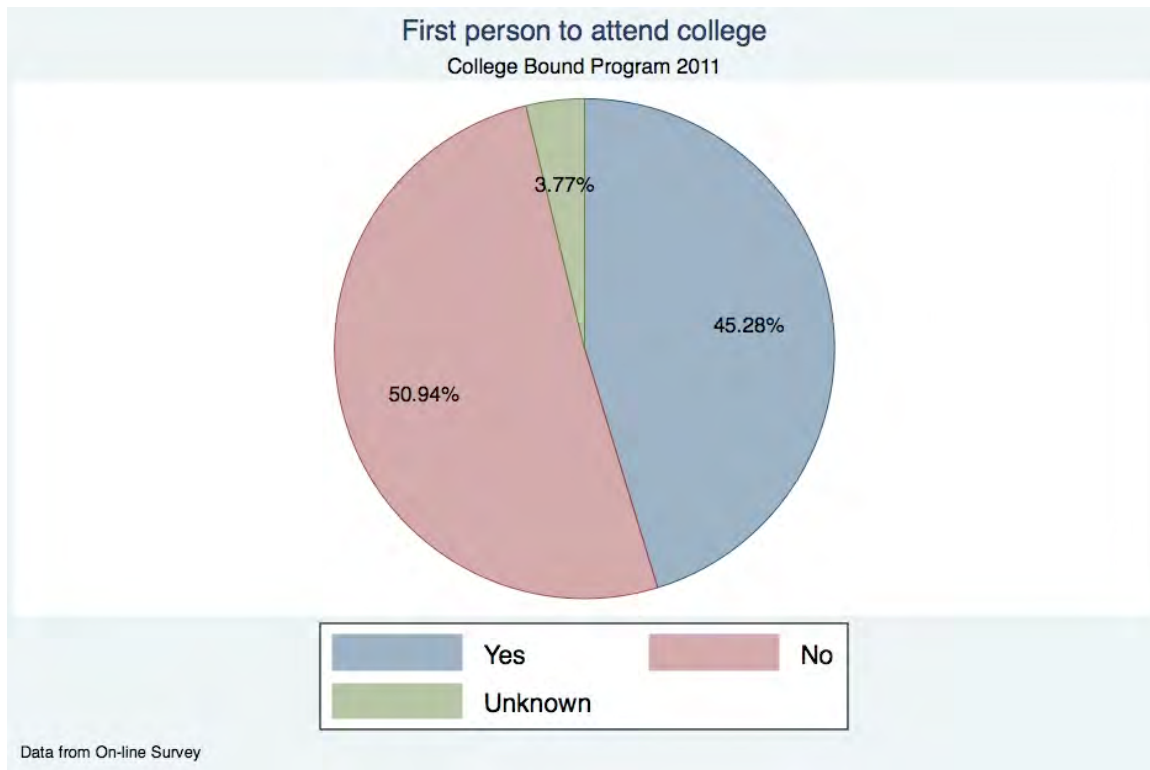
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Table 1

*Comparison of what participants would like and what they think will happen with their college education*

| | | How far do you **think you will go in college**? | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Some College | Associate's degree | Bachelor's degree | Master's degree | Earn a J.D., Ph.D., M.D | Total |
| How far would you **like to go in college** | Some College | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | Associate's degree | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| | Bachelor's degree | 0 | 0 | 6 | 1 | 0 | 7 |
| | Master's degree | 0 | 0 | 6 | 11 | 0 | 17 |
| | Earn a J.D., Ph.D., M.D | 1 | 0 | 3 | 10 | 12 | 26 |
| | Total | 1 | 1 | 15 | 22 | 12 | 51 |

Participants on the diagonal (N=30) responded that how far in school they would **like** to go matches what they think they will achieve.  Those below (N=20), a group that desires the most attention, responded that they **do not** think they will achieve what they would like to academically.  There are 10 participants who indicated they would like to earn an advanced degree (J.D., M.D., Ph.D.), but think they will end up with a Master's degree.

First person to attend college
College Bound Program 2011

3.77%

45.28%

50.94%

Yes        No
Unknown

Data from On-line Survey

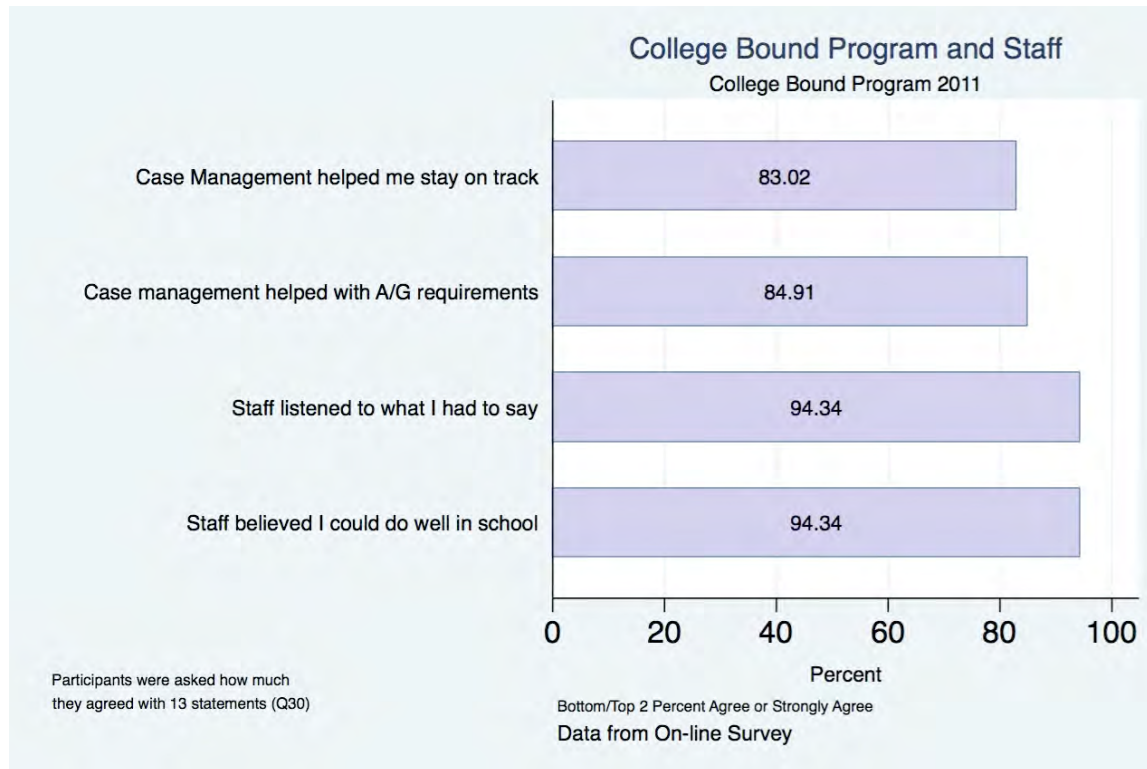*Figure 18*.  **First person to attend college?**

Over half of the respondents (50.94%) were not the first person in their families to attend

college; 45% of respondents were the first to attend.

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**Section 3. Boys and Girls Club College Bound Staff**
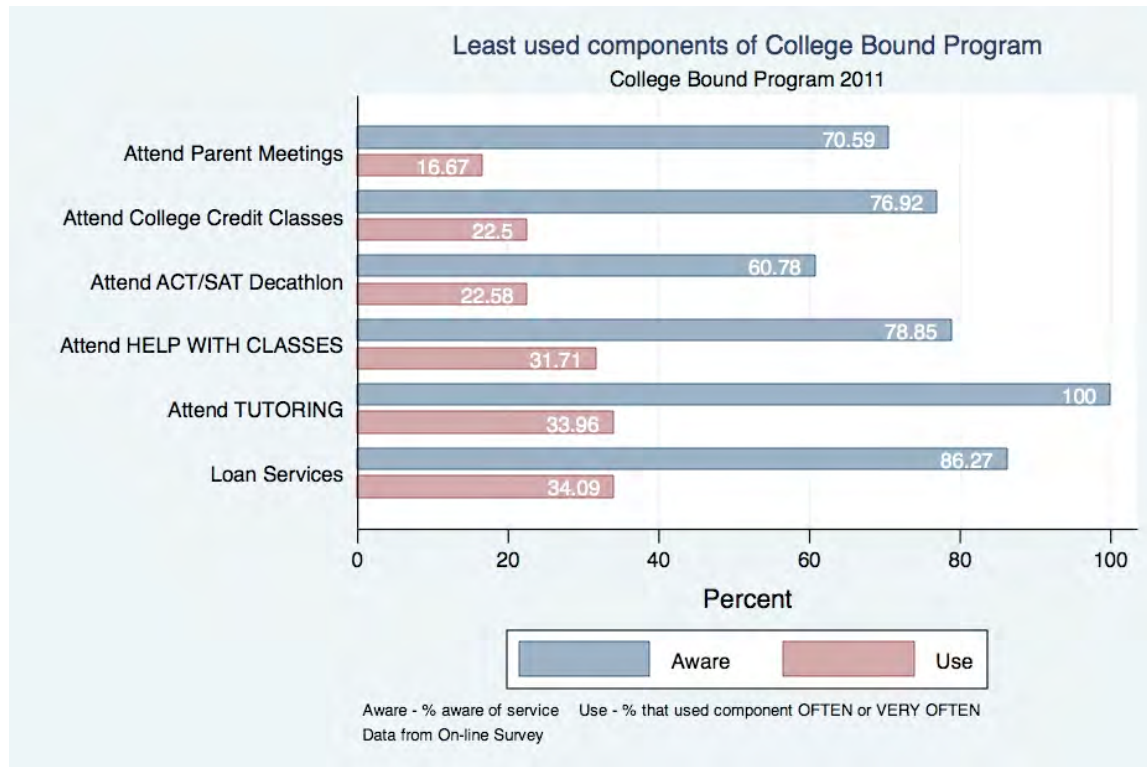
Questions about the College Bound program and staff.



*Figure 19.* **Impressions about the College Bound program staff**

Participants were asked how much they agreed with each of the 13 statements focused on the help they received from the College Bound Program staff. For each of the 13 items the percentages that responded agree or strongly agree were summed to create an overall measure of 'agreement'. The four items listed above are the two questions that had the highest and lowest percentage of agreement. Notably, the lowest percentage of agreement was still very strong with 83% agreement that case management helped to keep the students on track. The highest percentage of agreement (94.34%) was for the following statements: "staff believed I could do well in school" and "staff listened to what I had to say."

**Section 4. Boys and Girls Club College Components**

Questions about the College Bound program and their resources/activities.



*Figure 20*.  **Impressions about the least used components of the College Bound program**

Above are the six components of BGCLAH's offerings that participants report using the least often.  These percentages represent components that participants indicated they used "often" and "very often."  Parent Meetings had the lowest use with 16.67%, while roughly 71% (70.59%) of the participants were aware that B&G Club offered this service.  In the case of tutoring, 100% of participants were aware the service existed, while roughly 34% (33.96%) reported using the service.  The graph indicates that despite high levels of awareness regarding program offerings, there was little involvement in several of the services.

**Most used components of College Bound Program**
College Bound Program 2011
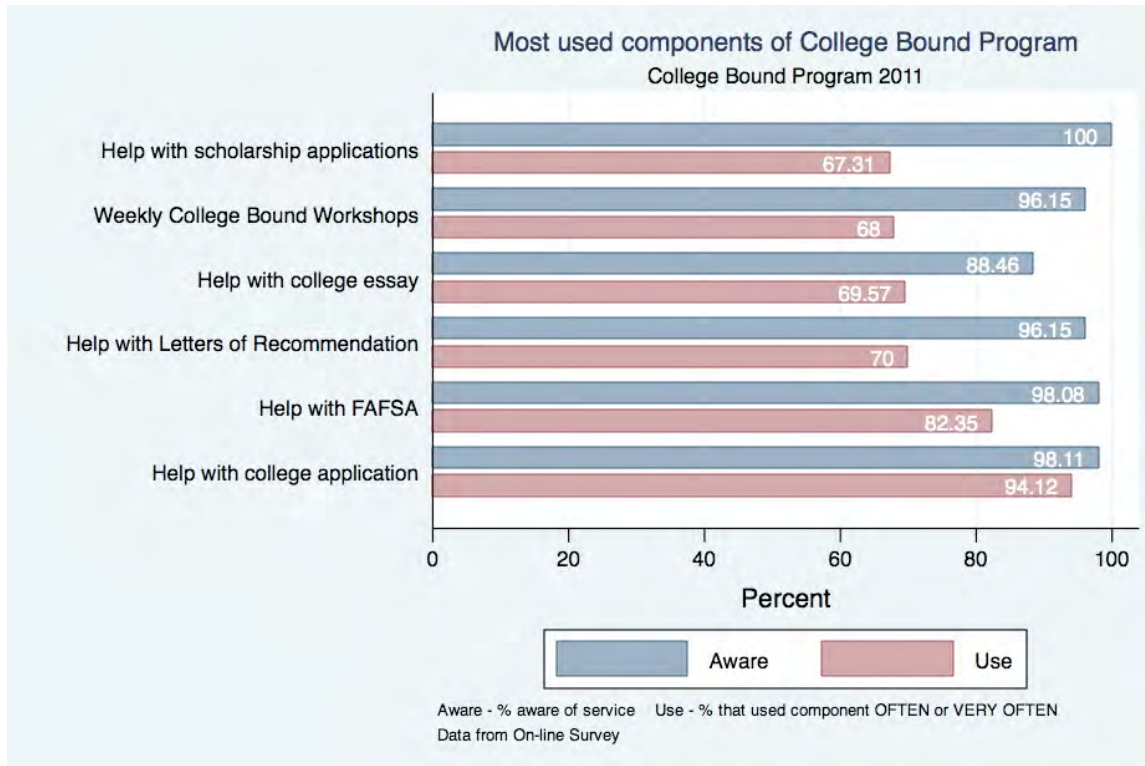
*Figure 21*. Impressions about the most used components of the College Bound program

Above are the six components of BGCLAH's offerings that participants report using the most often. Receiving help with college applications had the highest use with 94.12%, while 98.11% of participants were aware that BGCLAH offered this service. In the case of help with scholarship applications, 100% of participants were aware the service existed, while 67% reported using the service.

**Interview Results**

The major themes that emerged during the phone interviews with BGCLAH alumni were regarding the overall usefulness of the program, most useful workshops, and the program staff. The workshops the participants found most helpful were workshops on scholarships, financial aid, one-on-one case management, tutoring, college exposure trips, and having the college admissions process explained. One participant stated, "As a first generation college student, I

would not have gone to college if not for the Boys and Girls club giving me this information." Another stated College Bound was effective in helping him apply to college because he "never thought about going to college mainly because my parents couldn't afford it. I didn't know how to prepare for it, the formal aspects. The program taught me to be proactive." Another stated, "My parents don't know how to help me apply to college." Many of the alumni stated they would not have been able to receive this type of help from anyone else they knew. Having support through the college application process was a strong point of consideration for college for most interviewed students. One former student stated, "I had no idea and did not feel I would have done it on my own." Another stated, "I had no idea how to sign up or that I could apply. The program helped me with everything from how to apply to how to what to do." Moreover, most felt College Bound is "more than just a program; they care about you being successful."

There were few alumni who mentioned a desire for alternative choices of college explored by the program such as private university admissions process and universities abroad. Additionally, adding more staff to the program seemed to be a concern as well for all alumni. One in particular stated that although staff was "caring, on a personal and academic level and felt like family or a second home, it was hard to get help sometimes." Few expressed interest in expanding tutoring in subject areas like Math. One alum stated if College Bound staff had not helped him, he "wouldn't have had anyone else help me. I wouldn't have gone to school. I wouldn't have graduated high school. Because of them I have a plan now, I'm going to a 2-year, then a 4-year, and then I will start my career." Another stated, "My chances of going to college were 20 to 30% but because of them, they are 100% the reason I went to college."

A suggestion was made during an interview that an Alumni network should be established so that students attending the same school students can ask alumni for help. When

asked about possible changes to the program, most mentioned recruiting in middle school. Interviewers expressed that although it was possible that other existing programs could help them with college applications, most interviewers felt that none would have been as caring, in depth, thorough, or as organized as College Bound and its staff. One alum stated, "I was in AVID, but they were unorganized and didn't really help." Another stated, "They were always there for us, even those who weren't applying to college. They watched out for us and helped us figure out what's next in life."

All alumni interviewed stated that staff at the College Bound program went above and beyond, were extremely motivating, encouraging, built strong connections with students, and were "like family." The amount of support staff gave was overwhelmingly noted and appreciated. One interviewee stated, "You can tell they like their job; it's like they want to be there. They push you, like they motivate and engage you. The staff really cares." Another alum stated, "I wasn't close to too many staff members, but they were all very helpful." Yet another mentioned, "I grew up with them. I grew to love them. The director was like my mom and she kept me accountable. This program helped my brother, sister, and me get into college…" Given the responses obtained during the phone interview, a majority of survey respondents also felt that program staff felt information access for higher education was important for program participants to attain.

Most alumni interviewed stated they wished they were informed about the College Bound program much earlier on in their education, such as middle school. Concerns were expressed that recruitment during freshman and sophomore years were too late to learn about the vast amount of information and preparation needed to apply to college, making the process overwhelming. Therefore, interviewees suggested recruitment should start at the middle school level to obtain

earlier notice on potential opportunities and have more time to prepare[2]. Overall, program

participants felt welcomed, supported, and guided by staff. The major reoccurring theme was a

suggestion for more staff in the program. Additional to the resources most frequented by

program participants, mention was given to the university trips by most alumni. Most described

the trips as "encouraging," "motivating," and "inspiring." One alum stated, "The fieldtrips were

great because we got to talk to people, see the school, and it got us motivated and excited about

something more than community college."

**2012 Cohort**

In an attempt to check our results from the 2011 Cohort, the College Bound participants

in the 2012 cohort were asked to complete the identical online survey.  The sample consisted of

the approximately 126 youth with valid email addresses who were in the College Bound cohort

graduating in the Spring of 2012.  This sample was selected since they would currently be in

their second year of college or at least have been out of high school for approximately 18 months

at the time data was collected.

The online questionnaire was broken down into sections.[3]  These included a section on

socio-demographic questions, plans and current status in college, questions about the benefits

they gained from the College Bound staff and lastly, questions about their awareness and use of

the College Bound services.

---

[2] Beginning in 2010, the Club initiated a Middle School College Bound program and separate Middle School College Bound Center and staffing at the San Pedro Clubhouse to provide this same "earlier" intervention including academic case management, daily tutoring and weekly workshops.  The same year, the Club also developed a "Kids College" curriculum for 4th and 5th graders to assure early college pathway support and awareness for its members.

[3] For a complete set of information, please refer to the Appendix for tables with the complete results from all questions.

**Section 5. Demographics**

Questions about background information of the respondent and their family.

As is shown in Figure 22, the majority of survey respondents (73.08%) were Hispanic/Mexican, followed by White/Non-Hispanic (15.38%), and 3.85% of each of the remaining demographics: African American, Native American, and Asian/Pacific Islander. Figure 23 indicates that the majority of survey respondents were female (57.69%) and 42.31% were male. The majority of students (65.38%) were **not** the first of their family to graduate from H.S. (Figure 24).
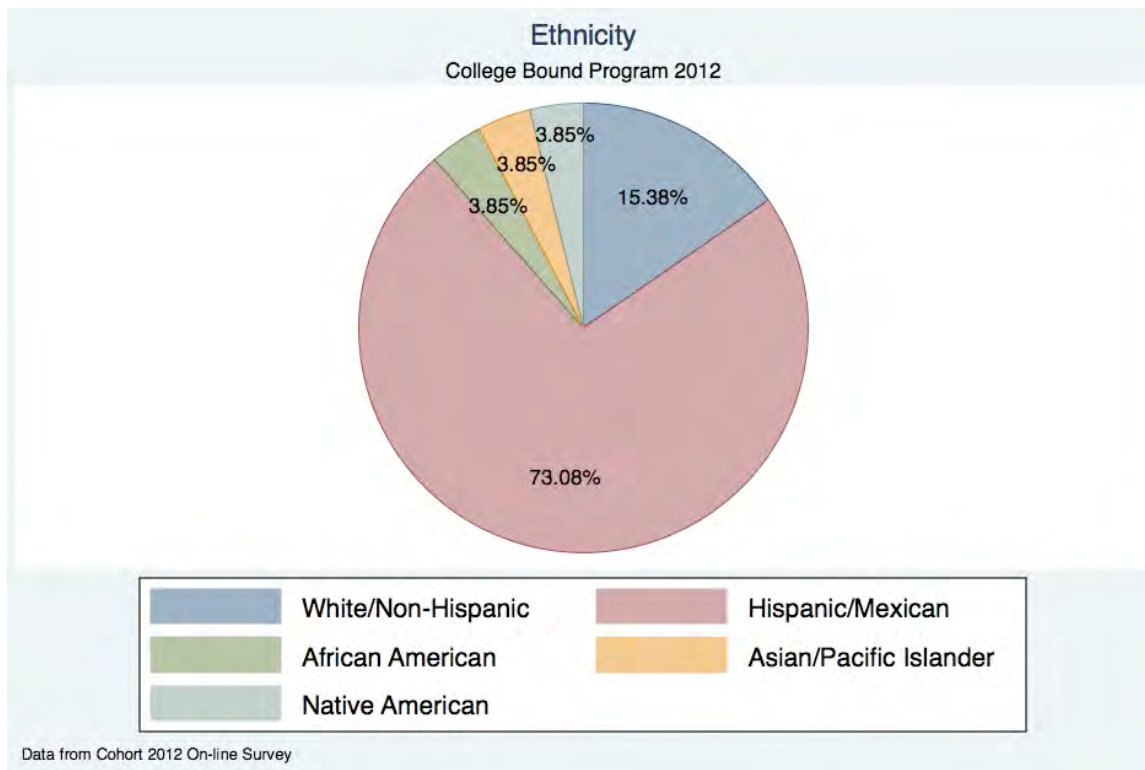


*Figure 22.* **Ethnicity of respondents**
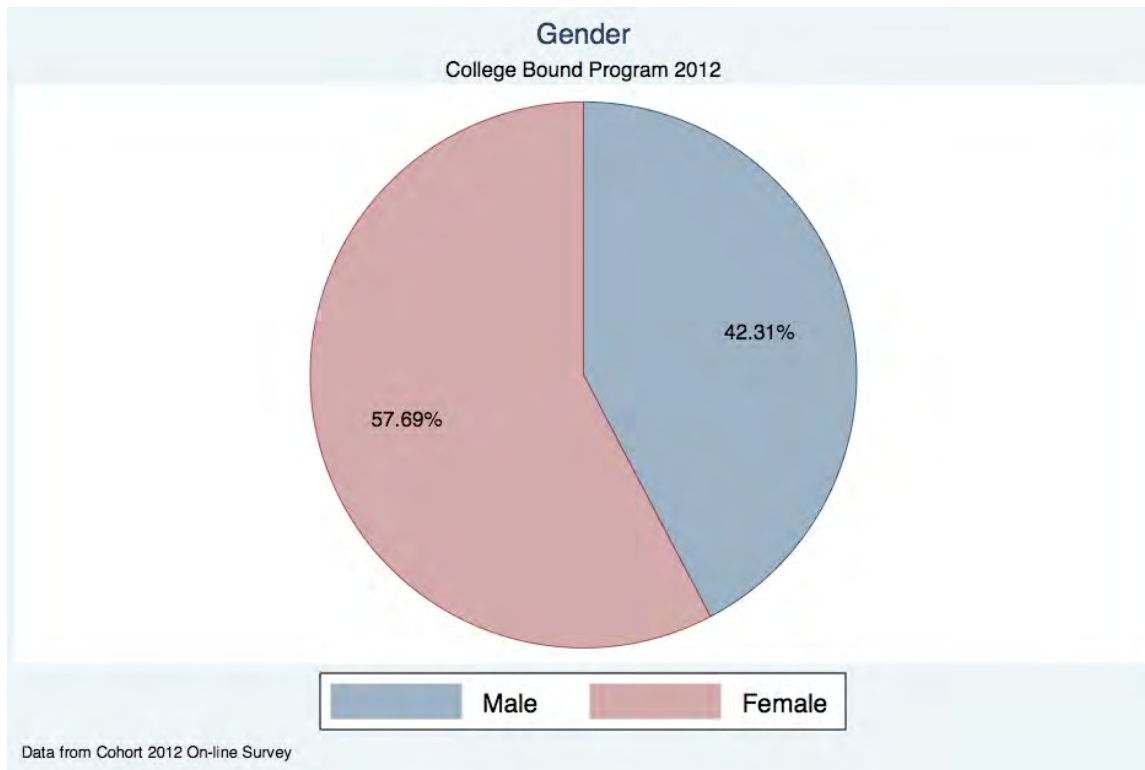
*Figure 23.* **Gender of respondents**
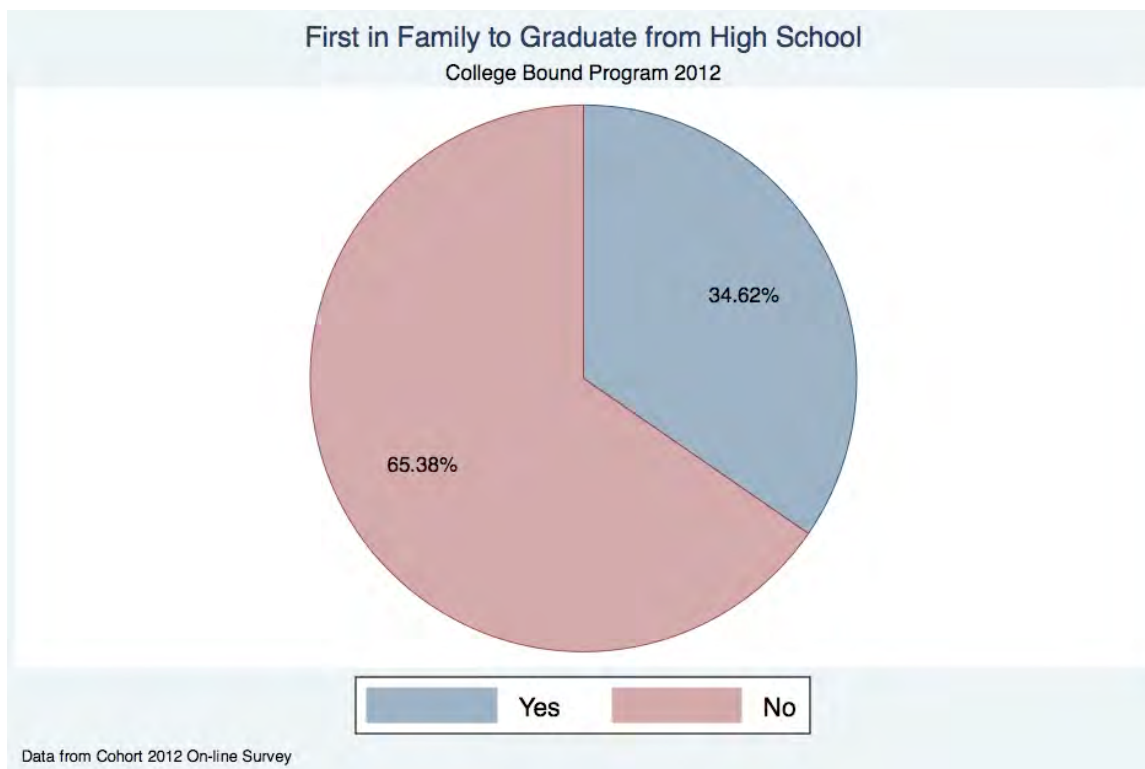


*Figure 24.* **First in family to graduate from high school?**

**Section 6. College Attendance**

This sections focuses on questions about their educational path during and after high school.

Respondents indicated (Figure 25 below) that their parents think that the most important thing for them to accomplish is to go to college (57.69%), followed by 26.92% indicating that their parents thought it was most important for them to "do what [they] want"; 7.69% of respondents indicated that their parents believed that getting a job was the most important thing for them to accomplish. One hundered percent of the respondents felt that the College Bound Program staff thought that the most important thing for program participants to accomplish was going to college. The College Bound Staff and the parents agreed that college was the most important thing for students to accomplish.

As displayed in Figure 26, 92.31% of respondents indicated that school is very important to achieving their career goals; 7.69% indicated it was important. Combined, 100% of participants agreed that school was either important or very important.
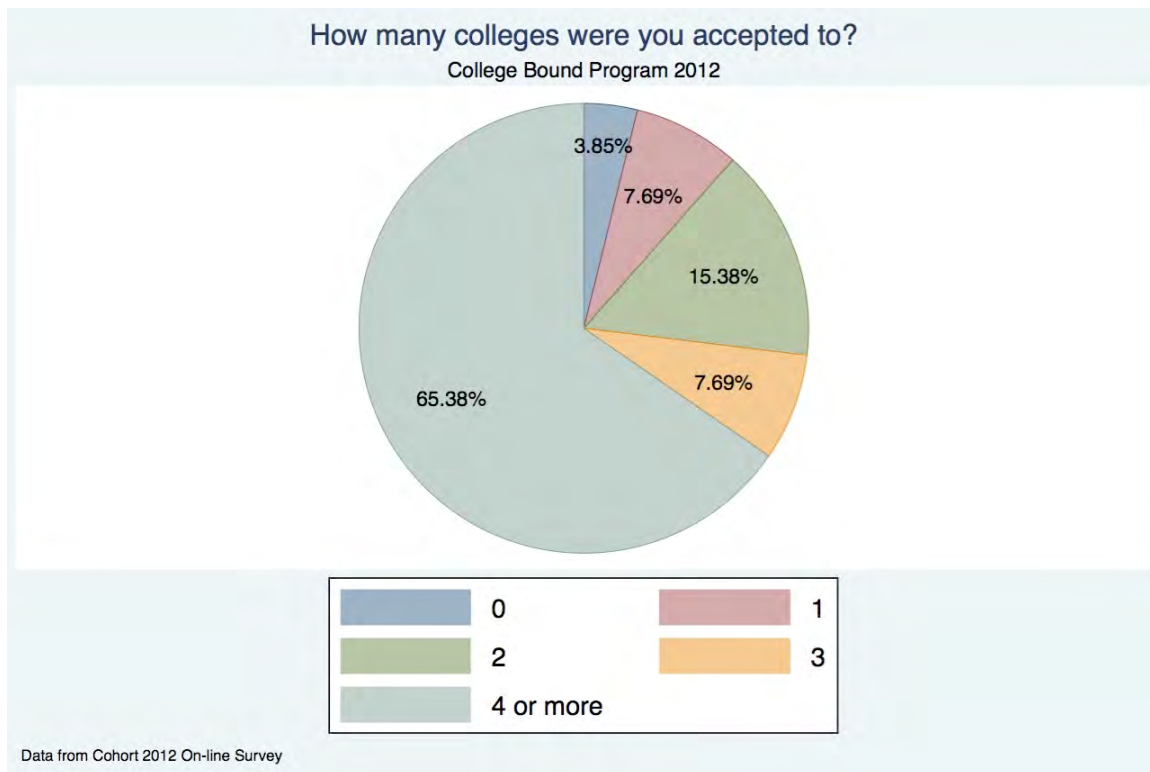
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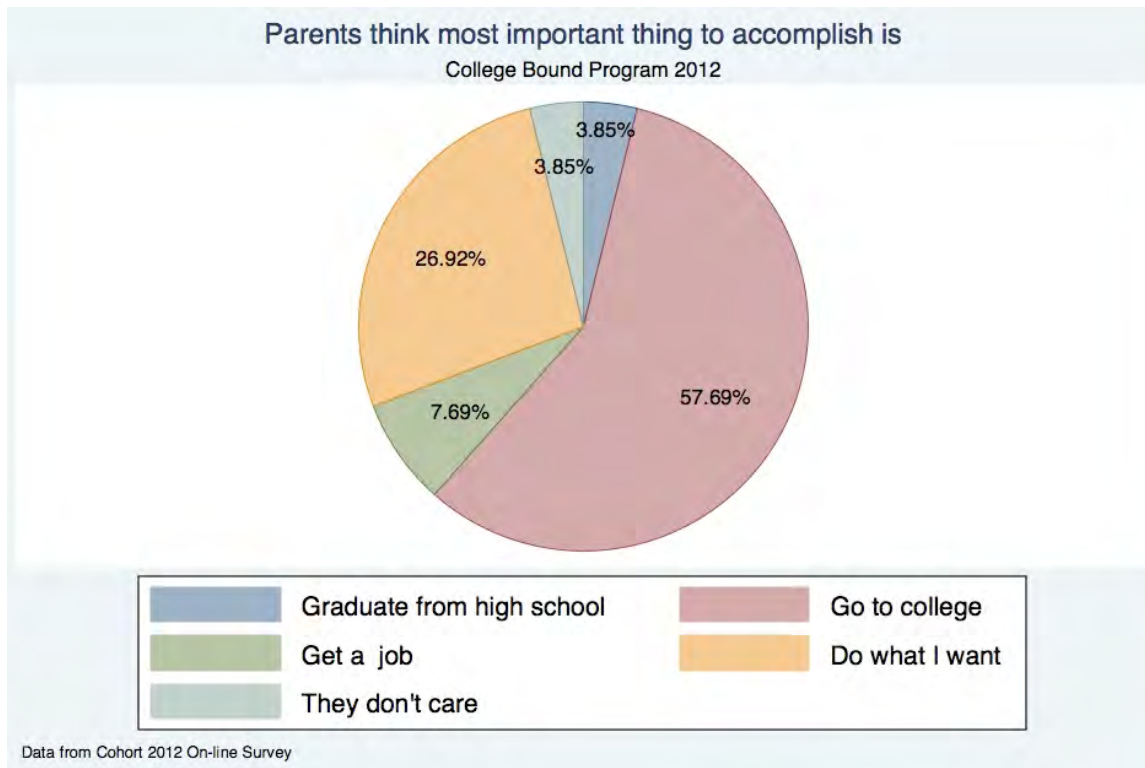
*Figure 25.* **What respondents believe parents consider most important**
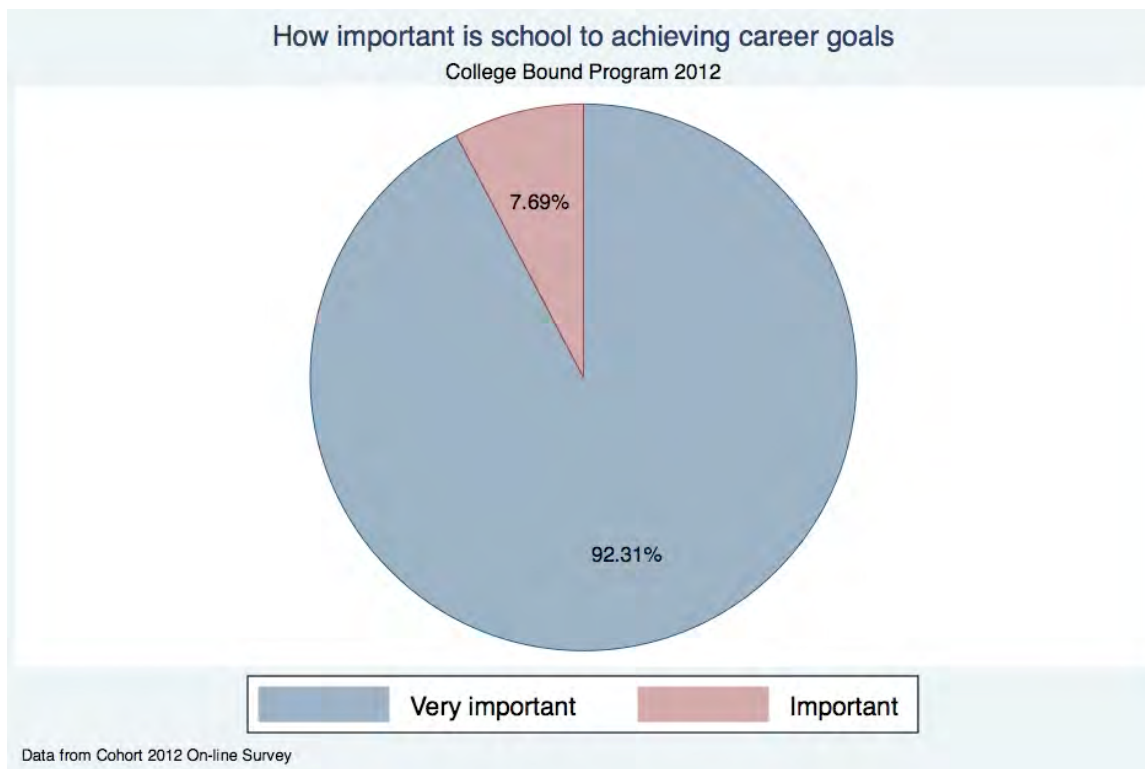


*Figure 26.* **The importance respondents give to school in achieving career goals**

How many colleges were you accepted to?
College Bound Program 2012

3.85%
7.69%
15.38%
7.69%
65.38%

| | 0 | | 1 |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| | 2 | | 3 |
| | 4 or more | | |

Data from Cohort 2012 On-line Survey

*Figure 27.  How many colleges respondents were accepted to?*

Altogether 65.38% of the students reported that they were accepted to 4 or more schools (Figure 27).  Overall, about 96% (96.15%) of respondents were accepted to at least 1 school. Just under 4% (3.85%) indicated that they were not accepted to any schools.

Figure 28 below displays the types of programs the participants are currently enrolled in. Of those participants enrolled in higher or post-secondary education, 48% are enrolled in a State University (may include out-of-state), followed by 40% enrolled at a California University (4-year, UC, or Private), and 12% are currently enrolled at a Community or 2-year College.
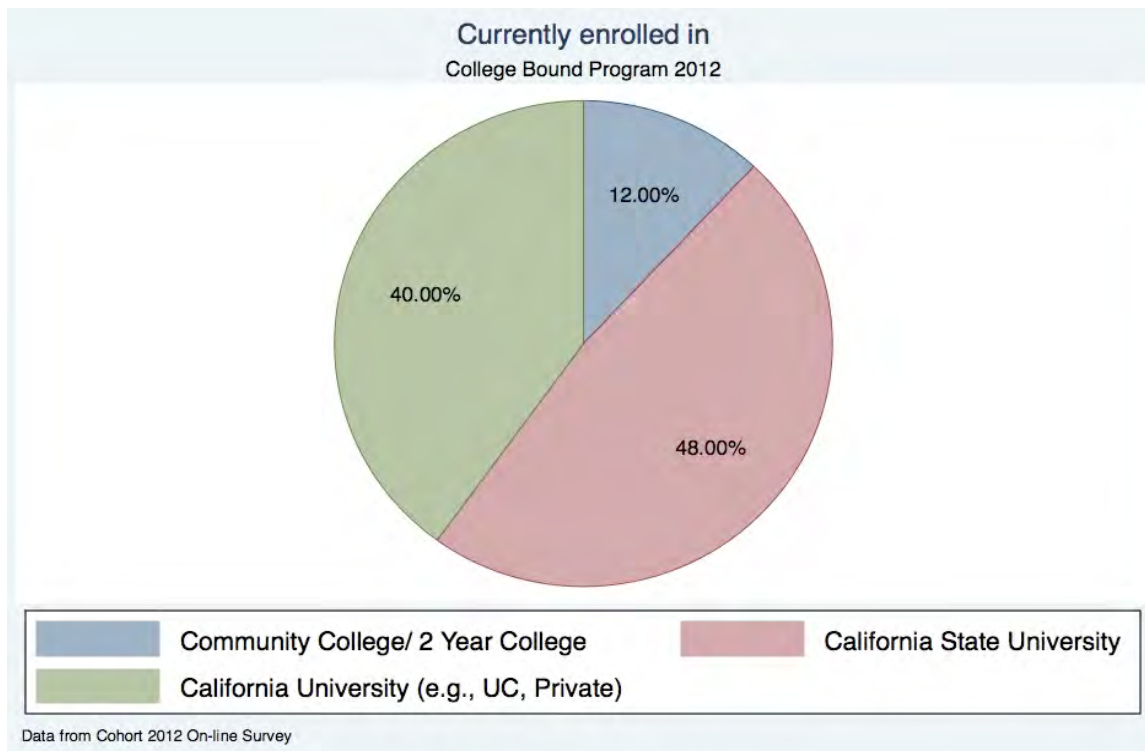
*Figure 28.Colleges respondents are currently enrolled in*
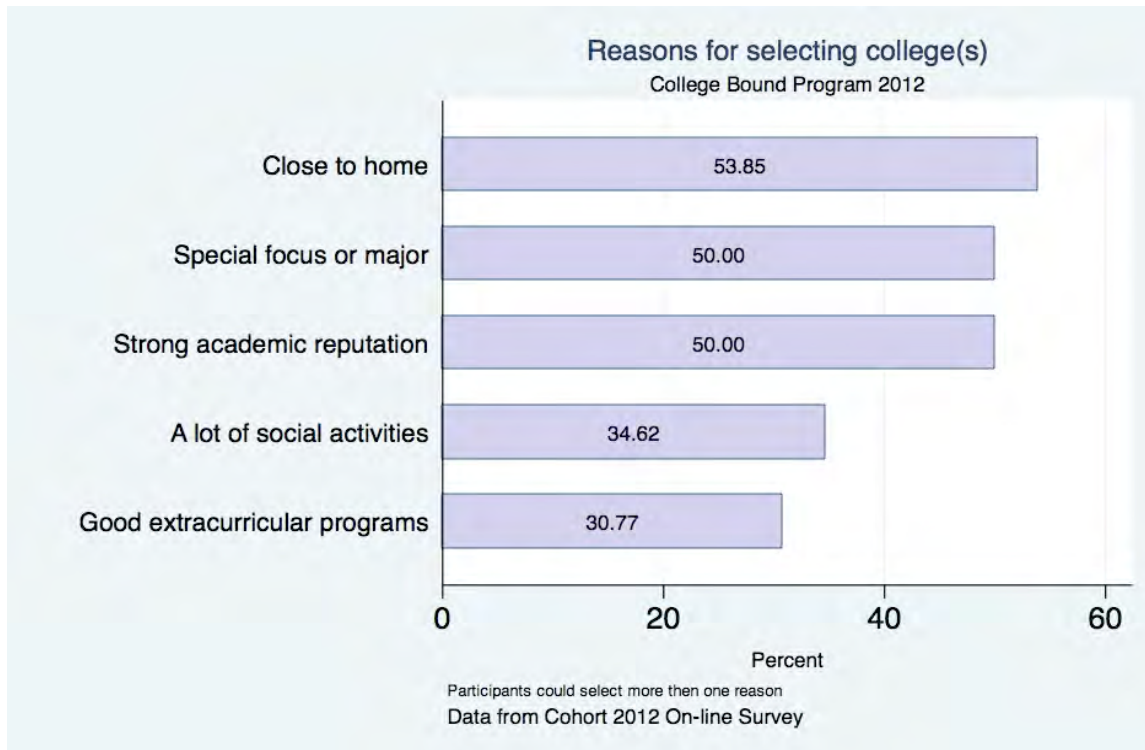


*Figure 29*.  **Reasons respondents selected colleges**

As can be seen above in Figure 29, the most highly selected reason for choosing their college was its proximity to home (53.85%), followed by a special focus or major and its strong academic reputation (50%). The amount of social activities (34.62%) and good extracurricular programs (30.77%) were also important factors in their decision to choose certain colleges over others.
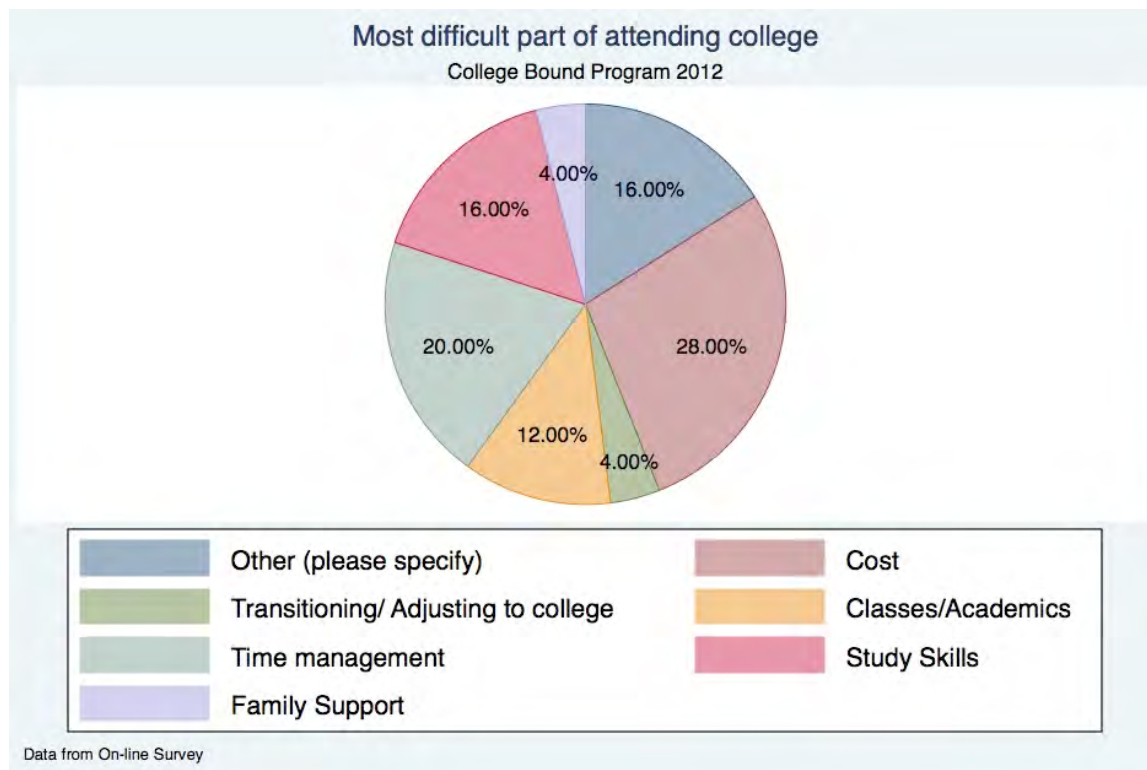


*Figure 30*. The most difficult part of attending college for respondents

As seen in Figure 30, for 28% of respondents the most difficult part of attending college was the cost, followed by 20% who felt that time management was the hardest part;16% of respondents felt that the hardest part was study skills.
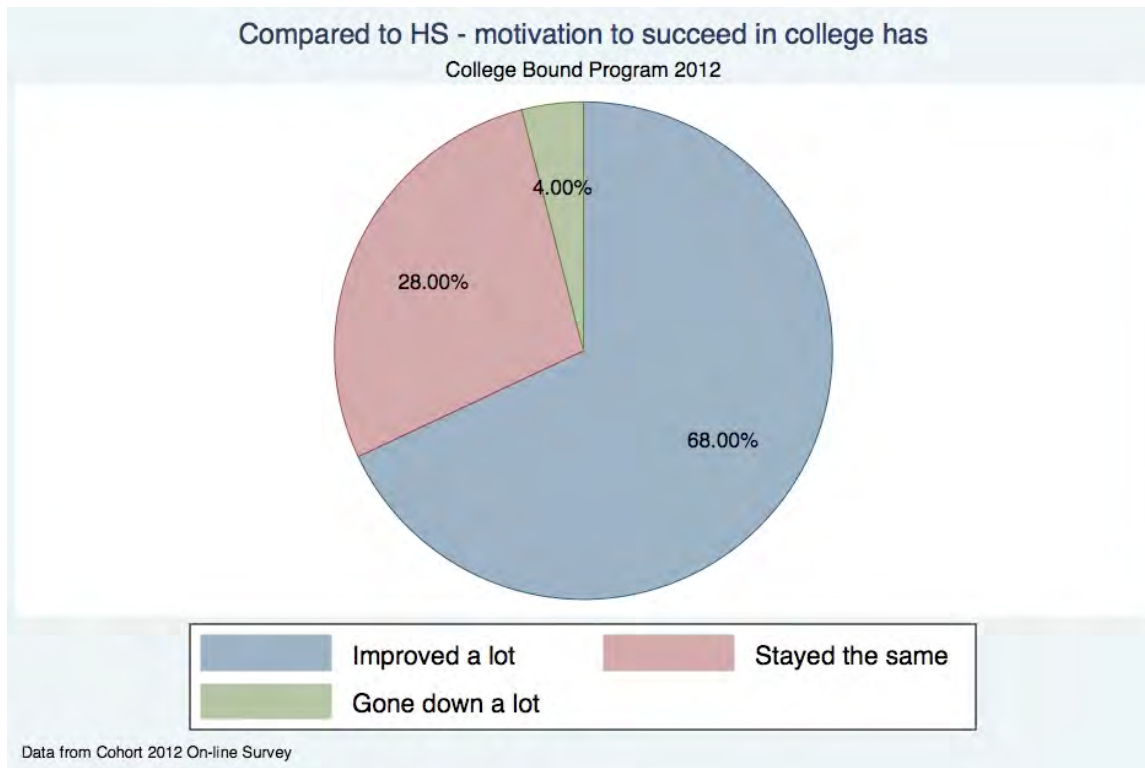
*Figure 31.* **Improvement in respondents' motivation to succeed since high school**

As shown in Figure 31, for the majority of respondents (68%), stated their motivation to succeed in college has improved significantly since high school. Combined, 96% of students indicated that their motivation has either stayed the same (28%) or improved; 4% indicated that their motivation has decreased.

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## How far would you like to go in college
### College Bound Program 2012

16.00%

40.00%

44.00%

Bachelor's degree — Receive a Master's degree

Receive a J.D., Ph.D., M.D

Data from Cohort 2012 On-line Survey
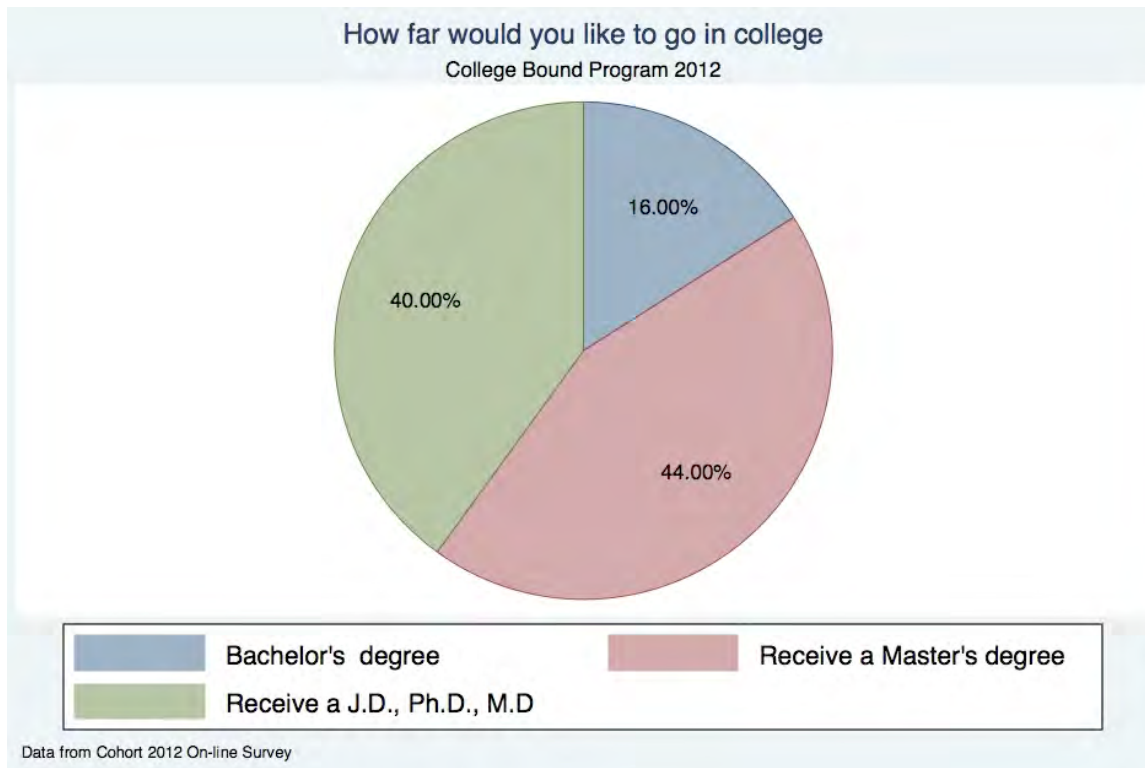
*Figure 32.* **How far respondents would like to go in college**



## How far do you think you will go in college
### College Bound Program 2012

20.00%

24.00%

56.00%

Bachelor's degree — Receive a Master's degree

Receive a J.D., Ph.D., M.D

Data from Cohort 2012 On-line Survey
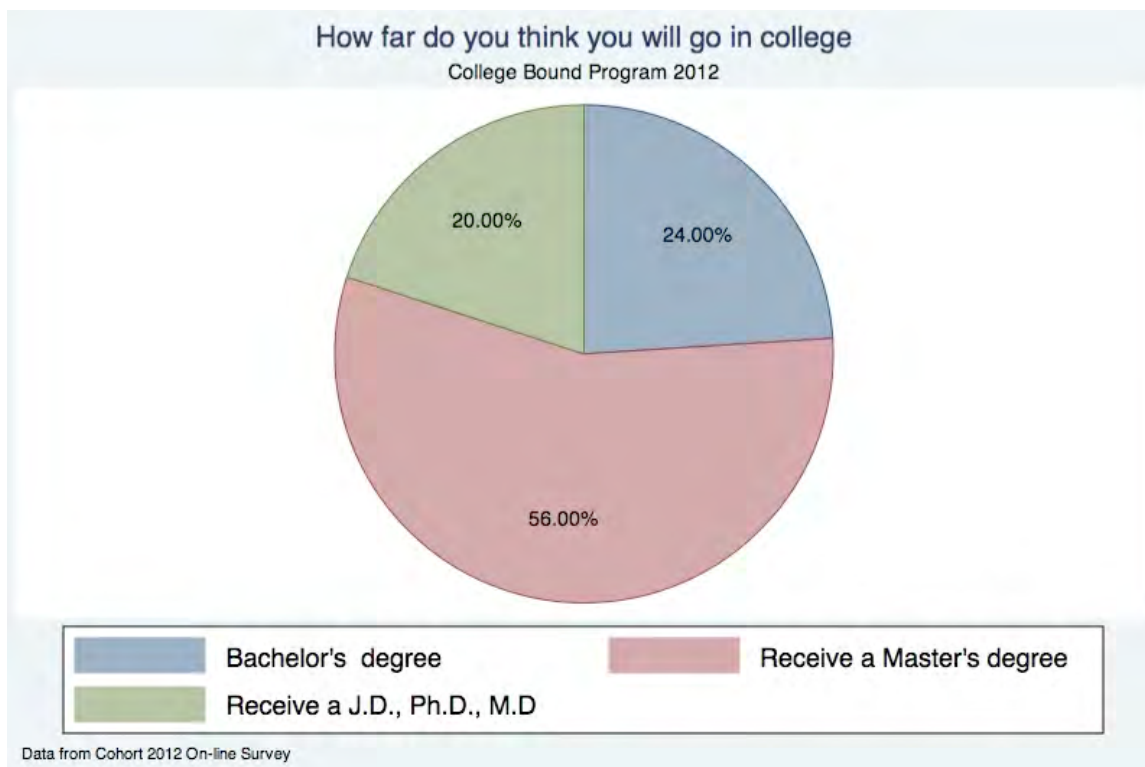
*Figure 33.* **How far respondents think they will go in college**

According to Figures 32 and 33 on the preceding page, there were slight differences between what the respondents would *like* to achieve with regards to their education and what they *think* they will actually achieve. The chart below displays these differences. 40% indicated that they'd *like* to receive a J.D., Ph.D, or M.D., though only 20% *think* they will go that far. While 44% of respondents would *like* to receive a Master's, 56% *think* they will. A total 16% indicated that they'd *like* to earn a Bachelor's, while 24% *think* they will; 100% of respondents indicated that they'd *like* to complete at least 4 years of college and 100% *think* they actually will.

Table 2

*Comparison of what respondents would like and what they think will happen with their college education*

|  |  | How far do you **think you will go** in college | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
|  |  | Bachelor's degree | Master's degree | Earn a J.D., Ph.D., M.D | Total |
| How far would you **like to go** in | Bachelor's degree | 4 | 0 | 0 | 4 |
|  | Master's degree | 2 | 9 | 0 | 11 |
|  | Earn a J.D., Ph.D., M.D | 0 | 5 | 5 | 10 |
|  | Total | 6 | 14 | 5 | 25 |

The participants on the diagonal (N=18) responded that how far in school they would *like* to go matches what they *think* they will achieve. The diagonal is representative 72% of the online survey respondents. Those below (N=7), a group that desires the most attention,

responded that they **do not** think they will achieve what they would like too, academically.

There are five participants who indicated they would *like* to earn an advanced degree (J.D., M.D., Ph.D.), but *think* they will end up with a Master's degree.
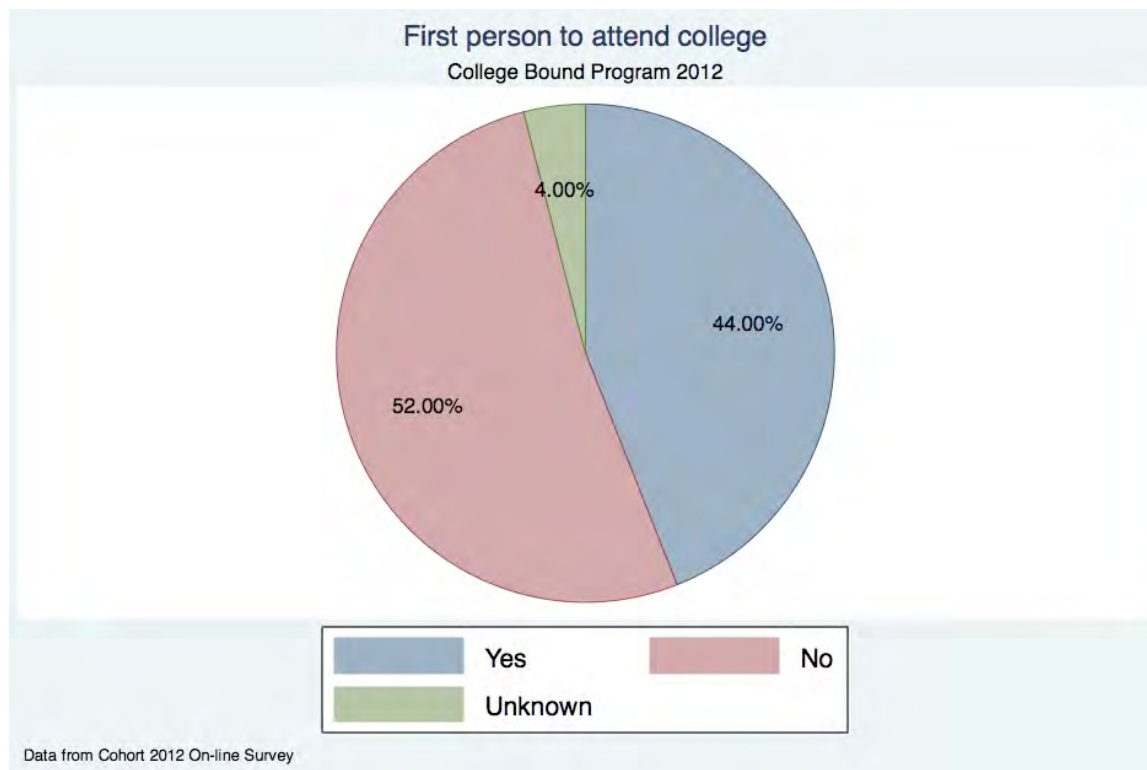


*Figure 34.* **First person to attend college?**

According to Figure 34, over half of the respondents (52%) were not the first person in their families to attend college; 44% of respondents were the first to attend, while 4% of the respondents were unsure.

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**Section 7. Boys and Girls Club College Bound Staff**

Questions about the College Bound program and staff.

**Table 3.**

*Percentage that Agreed or Strongly Agreed*

|  | **%** |
|---|---|
| **They helped if I had trouble learning something** | 96.15 |
| **They really listened to what I had to say** | 96.15 |
| **They believed I could do well in school** | 96.15 |
| **They were willing to give extra help on school work if I need it** | 96.15 |
| **They helped me catch up if I was behind in a class** | 96.15 |
| **I felt supported to do my best in whatever my goals were** | 96.15 |
| **I could count on at least one staff at College Bound to help me** | 92.31 |
| **The things I learned at College Bound were useful** | 96.15 |
| **College Bound helped me to be better prepared for applying to college** | 96.15 |
| **College Bound helped me to be better prepared for attending college** | 96.15 |
| **College Bound helped me prepare to graduate from High School** | 84.62 |
| **Case Management helped me to stay on track with HS graduation** | 96.15 |
| **Case Management helped me with the A/G requirements** | 96.15 |

Participants were asked how much they agreed with 13 statements. All statements had over 85% agreement, with 11 of the statements having over 96% agreement. Notably, the lowest percentage of agreement was still very strong with 84.62% agreement that the College Bound program helped [the student] to prepare to graduate from High School.

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**Section 8. Boys and Girls Club College Components**

Questions about the College Bound program and their resources/activities.

**Table 4.**

*Components of the College Bound Program*

|  | Use | Aware |
|---|---|---|
| **How often did you use help with COLLEGE APPLICATIONS?** | 100.0 | 96.2 |
| **How often did you use help services for your College Essay?** | 90.9 | 84.6 |
| **How often did you use help with applications for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA/ CAL Grants/ CSS Profile/ B.O.G.) services?** | 84.6 | 100.0 |
| **How often did you use help with SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATIONS?** | 76.0 | 96.2 |
| **How often did you use Case Management help for your 4 year high school graduation plan (grade 9-12)?** | 75.0 | 76.9 |
| **How often did you use help with Letters of Recommendation services?** | 72.0 | 96.2 |
| **How often did you use Weekly College Bound Workshops services?** | 72.0 | 96.2 |
| **How often did you use Case Management help with your college A/G requirements?** | 68.2 | 84.6 |
| **How often did you use help for the cost of paying for College Applications?** | 60.9 | 88.5 |
| **How often did you use the Mentoring services?** | 60.0 | 76.9 |
| **How often did you use the FAFSA Workshops services?** | 60.0 | 96.2 |
| **How often did you use help with EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY PROGRAM (EOP)?** | 57.1 | 80.8 |
| **How often did you use the HELP WITH CLASSES (meeting the A G Requirements)?** | 52.4 | 80.8 |
| **How often did you use the fee services to help pay for SAT/ ACT/ AP etc.?** | 47.8 | 88.5 |
| **How often did you attend the SAT/ ACT Decathlon?** | 42.9 | 56.0 |
| **How often did you use help with HOMEWORK?** | 37.5 | 92.3 |
| **How often did you use the help for Loans services?** | 33.3 | 69.2 |
| **How often did you attend the Back to School Night (Open House)?** | 31.6 | 76.0 |
| **How often did you use Financial Aid Fairs (Cash for College) services?** | 30.4 | 88.5 |
| **How often did you use the TUTORING services?** | 28.0 | 96.2 |
| **How often did you attend the College Credit Classes (Weekly LA Harbor College classes)?** | 22.7 | 84.6 |

The table above highlights several components of the College Bound program. Notably,

students used College Application services 100% of the time, despite 96.2% reporting awareness.

Help with college essays had the second highest level of use (90.9%), despite only 84.6% reporting that they were aware of the service. Help with the FAFSA also ranked high, with 84.6% use and 100% awareness.

Attending college credit classes had the lowest use with 22.7%, despite 84.6% of the participants being aware that B&G Club offered this service. In the case of tutoring, only 28% used this service, while roughly 96.2% report being aware of the service. The table indicates that despite high levels of awareness regarding program offerings, there was little involvement in several of the services.

**Summary**

The individual and societal implications of economic, educational, and cultural barriers to attending college are significant. Through daily academic support efforts, programs like the Boys & Girls Club College Bound Program are working to ensure that these barriers do not keep at-risk and first-generation youth from pursuing higher education. Overall, based on the consistency of participant responses across the 2011 and 2012 cohorts, the College Bound Program seems to be accomplishing its goals.

Demographically, in both cohorts, about 57% of the respondents were female, and over 70% of the respondents were Hispanic/Mexican. In the both the 2011 and 2012 cohorts, the majority of alumni (85% and 65%, respectively) stated they were not the first in their families to graduate from high school. Additionally, over 40% of the respondents in each cohort were the first to attend college. While the majority of parents in both cohorts (83% and 58%, respectively) felt that the most important thing for their children to accomplish was to attend college, 2011 cohort interviews indicated that many parents "did not have working knowledge of the college application process." It is important to note that 100% of respondents in both cohorts

are currently enrolled in some form of college; over 75% of the respondents in each cohort are attending a CSU, UC, or other 4-year out-of-state college. Over 55% of the respondents in both cohorts indicated that they were accepted to over four schools, while about 95% of respondents in both years were accepted to at least one school. In 2011 and 2012, the top three reasons for selecting their college were, in no particular order: strong academic reputation, proximity to home, and special focus or major. It would be important to know how College Bound Program participants who are *not* currently enrolled in college would have responded to these survey questions.

Across both cohorts, 95% of students indicated that their motivation to succeed in college had either improved significantly or stayed the same since high school. It is important to note that almost all of students in each cohort recognized that school was either very important or important in achieving their career goals. Additionally, over 96% of the 2011 and 2012 cohorts indicated that they *would not only like to* complete at least 4 years of college but report that *they actually will.* Notably, there were several participants in each cohort who *think* that they will end up with a Master's. Without the support of the College Bound Program and staff, students may not have been as successful in navigating the college application process and the transition to college life. Over 85% of the students in each cohort overwhelmingly agree that the College Bound Program staff, "listened to what [they] had to say" and "believed [they] could do well in school."

Furthermore, both cohorts cited cost as the most difficult part of attending college, followed by time management. This may suggest that College Bound Program offerings related to scholarship applications, FAFSA/financial aid, and loans may be very useful for students and the Program should work to ensure higher levels of awareness/use. Efforts should also be

focused on raising awareness/use of College Bound Program offerings pertaining to time management and study skills/classes. Because of the vast array of course offerings, it will be important for the College Bound Program staff to evaluate those course/workshop offerings with high levels of awareness and low levels of use (i.e. tutoring).

The Boys & Girls Clubs of the Los Angeles Harbor's College Bound Program is clearly having an impact on the participants' ability not only to address the challenges present for all high school graduates as they strive to enter college, but the evidence suggests that the program is successful in getting them into college. As noted earlier, the graduation rate for the 2011 cohort of students was 98%. Equally important is the funding secured by the participants through FAFSA and scholarships. In recent documentation (Annual Impact Report) prepared by the College Bound Program, the 2011 class secured $2.66 million in FAFSA funding and $654,000 in scholarships. Given the historically low graduation rates, particularly among Hispanic and African American youth, and the financial burden necessary to even seriously consider college, the ability of the program to assist the youth and their families in securing concrete financial support is noteworthy.

The program is serving the needs of the community and is enabling high school students, who are occasionally the first family member to graduate from high school and more often the first family member to attend college, the opportunity to participate in higher education. While direct comparisons with other programs were not part of this evaluation, the success of the College Bound Program stands on its own. The evidence collected over the past year supports the continued efforts of the program.

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**Brief Bio**

Dr. Franke is Professor and Chair in the UCLA Luskin School of Public Affairs, Department of Social Welfare and the Associate Director of UCLA Center for Healthier Children, Families and Communities. Dr. Franke has over 20 years of experience in conducting cross-sectional and longitudinal research and evaluations in the fields of child welfare, education, mental health and adolescent violence. Dr. Franke is currently working closely with public and private agency staff to evaluate key programs run by the LA County Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) and on a project strengthening the link between children in out-of-home care and early childhood education through a project funded by the Administration for Children and Families.