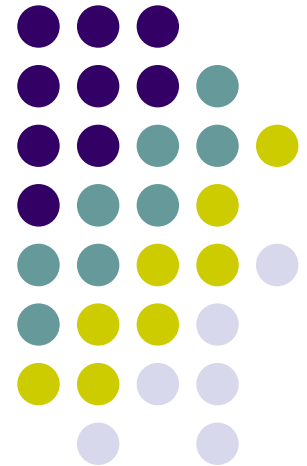


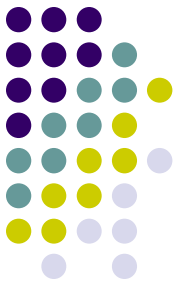
# Research Brief

## Summer Quest Program 2008

*The conclusions presented in this report represent the perspective of the Department of College and Career Preparation researchers, and are not meant to be the final determinant of the nature nor quality of the program. We hope they may encourage improvement within and discussion around the program.*



# Summer Quest 2008



- Overview of the Summer Quest Program
- Goals of the Summer Quest Program
- Objectives
- Methodology
- Executive Summary
- Demographic and Academic Summary
- Pre-Questionnaire
- Post Questionnaire
- Wrap-Up Session
- Appendix

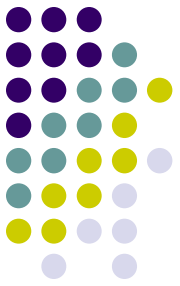
# Overview



Summer Quest is a unique program that connects students in grades 9-11 to pre-established summer educational or leadership programs around the country. Students spend one to eight weeks on a college or elite college-prep high school campus, arts institution or outdoor leadership program.

Summer Quest and its summer program partners provide partial scholarships, which often cover 80-90% of the program costs. All students must apply for financial aid. The primary scholarship beneficiaries are students who qualify for free or reduced lunch.

Pictures?



# Goals of the Summer Quest Program

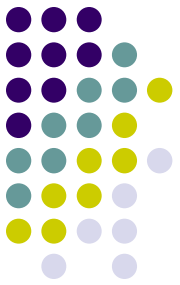
- Provide intensive summer study opportunities for students
- Expose students to the rigors of college
- Provide students an opportunity to experience campus life
- Increase awareness of postsecondary options

Pictures?



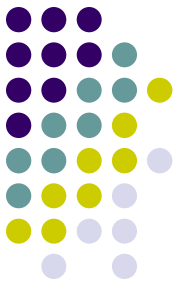
# Objectives

- To document the Summer Quest participants' experiences, and to begin to understand the participants themselves.
- To develop a strong knowledge-base of students' summer program experiences and their own perceptions of these experiences.
- To learn about Summer Quest participants' views concerning their postsecondary educations. This all may inform the way the program is implemented in the future, the way the program is marketed, and the way that information about the program is disseminated to students and their families.



# Methodology

- Students filled out a questionnaire both prior to entering the program and upon their return from their program (n=113)
- Data was also collected through different activities during the wrap-up session including group discussions and student interviews
- Essays were also written by students and then analyzed for this research brief (n=128)

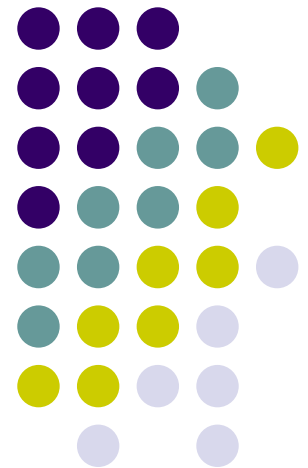


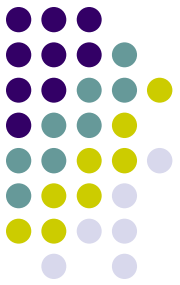
# Executive Summary

- All students believe college is extremely important to them, saying it is essential in order to be successful in life
- All but 3 students plan on at least earning a bachelor's degree, with almost two thirds planning on earning a master's degree
- Slightly over half of students (54%) chose at least one highly selective school, while 23% chose only highly selective schools
- The top reasons students gave for their college choices were based on the programs/services offered (62%), location of the school (24%) and recommendation from parent/relative (22%)

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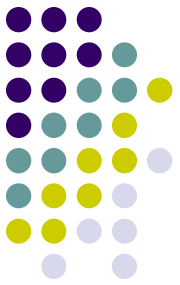
# Demographic and Academic Summary





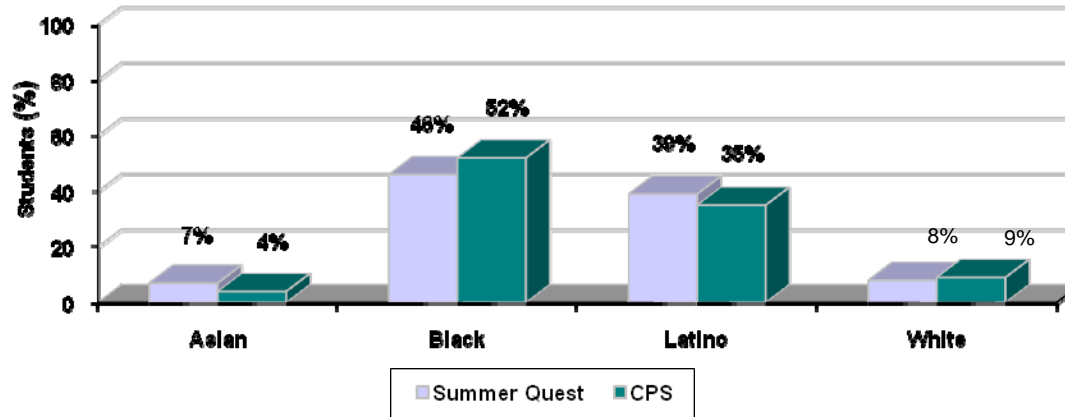
# Demographic Summary

- In most demographic categories, the breakdown of Summer Quest participants is fairly proportionate to CPS students
- Only about a third of Summer Quest participants are male, whereas half of CPS students are male
- Six percent of students with disabilities attended Summer Quest, while 17% of CPS students have disabilities

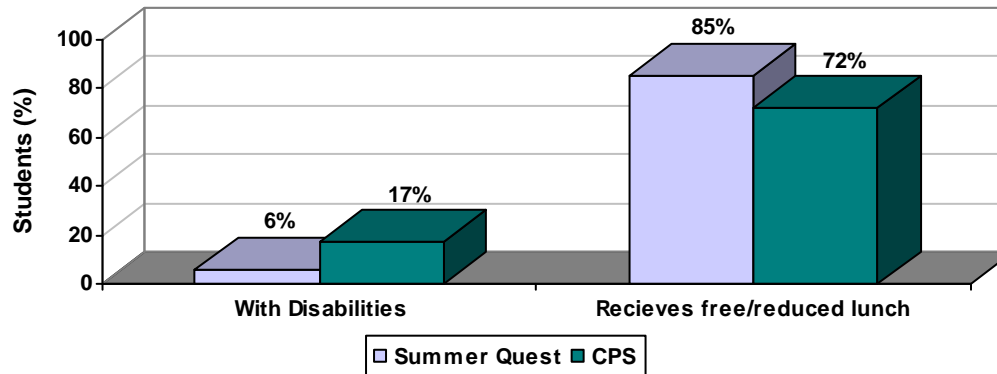


# Demographic Summary

## Race



## Disability Status Free/Reduced Lunch



# Academic Summary

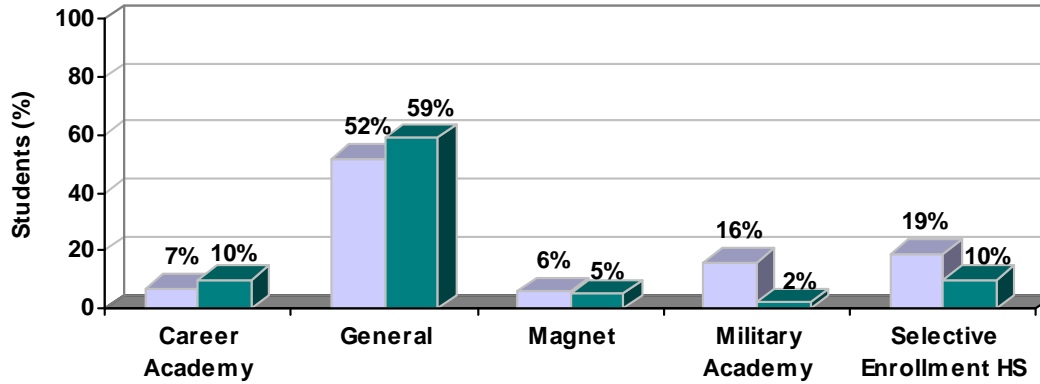


- In most academic categories, the breakdown of Summer Quest participants is somewhat balanced to that of CPS students
- When looking at high school type, a slightly larger percentage of Summer Quest students attend military and selective high schools than CPS students
- A greater percentage of Summer Quest students are exceeding expectations in both reading and math than CPS students

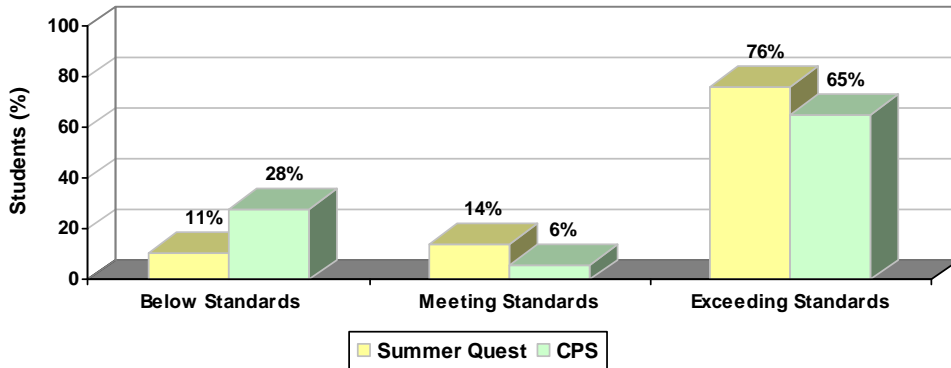
# Academic Summary



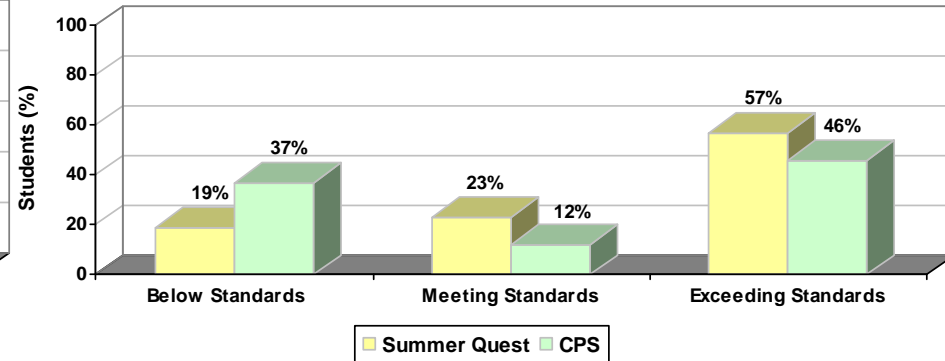
## High School Type



## Reading

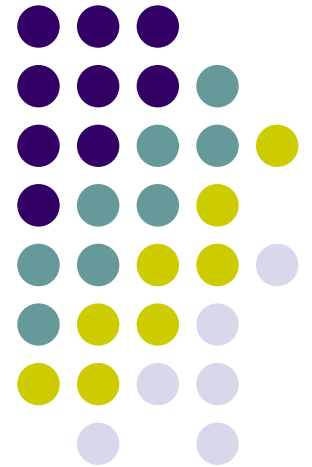


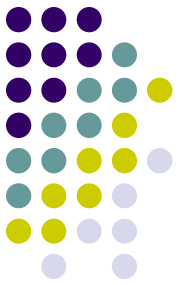
## Math



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# Pre-Questionnaire

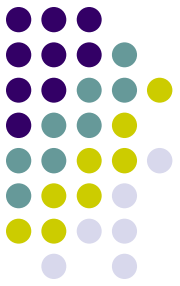




# Pre-Questionnaire

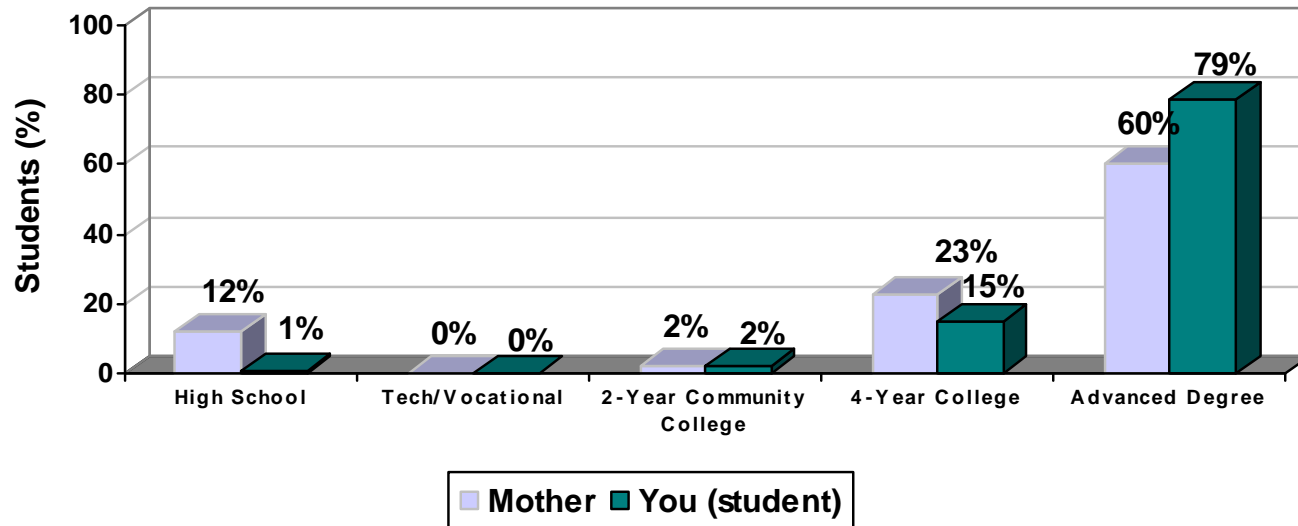
- Almost half of students (44%) have participated in a summer program, with 16% of students having participated in a summer program provided by CPS
- The majority of students (66%) anticipate the work during Summer Quest to be more challenging than their current classes
- About two thirds of students (65%) do not hesitate to ask for help when they need help or guidance with school work
- All students have someone in their life to help them with the college search and application process. Students mentioned they had the following support:

Friend      Teacher  
Relative    **Parent**  
School Counselor



# Pre-Questionnaire

The majority of both mothers and students themselves hope for students to achieve advanced degrees.



Q5. How much education does your mother or female guardian want you to get?

Q6. What is the highest level of education you hope to get?



# Pre-Questionnaire

Most students want to experience college life and gain knowledge as part of their Summer Quest experience

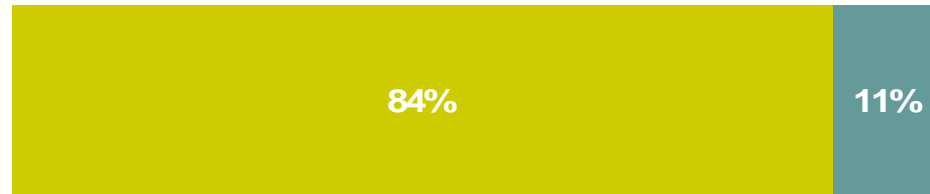




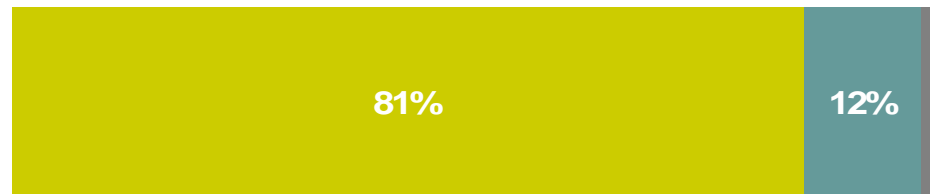
# Pre-Questionnaire

## Academic Preparation for College

I will work hard to make sure I get into college



I know that doing my best will help me get into college

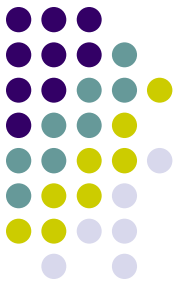


I feel that once I graduate high school, I will be prepared to do well in college



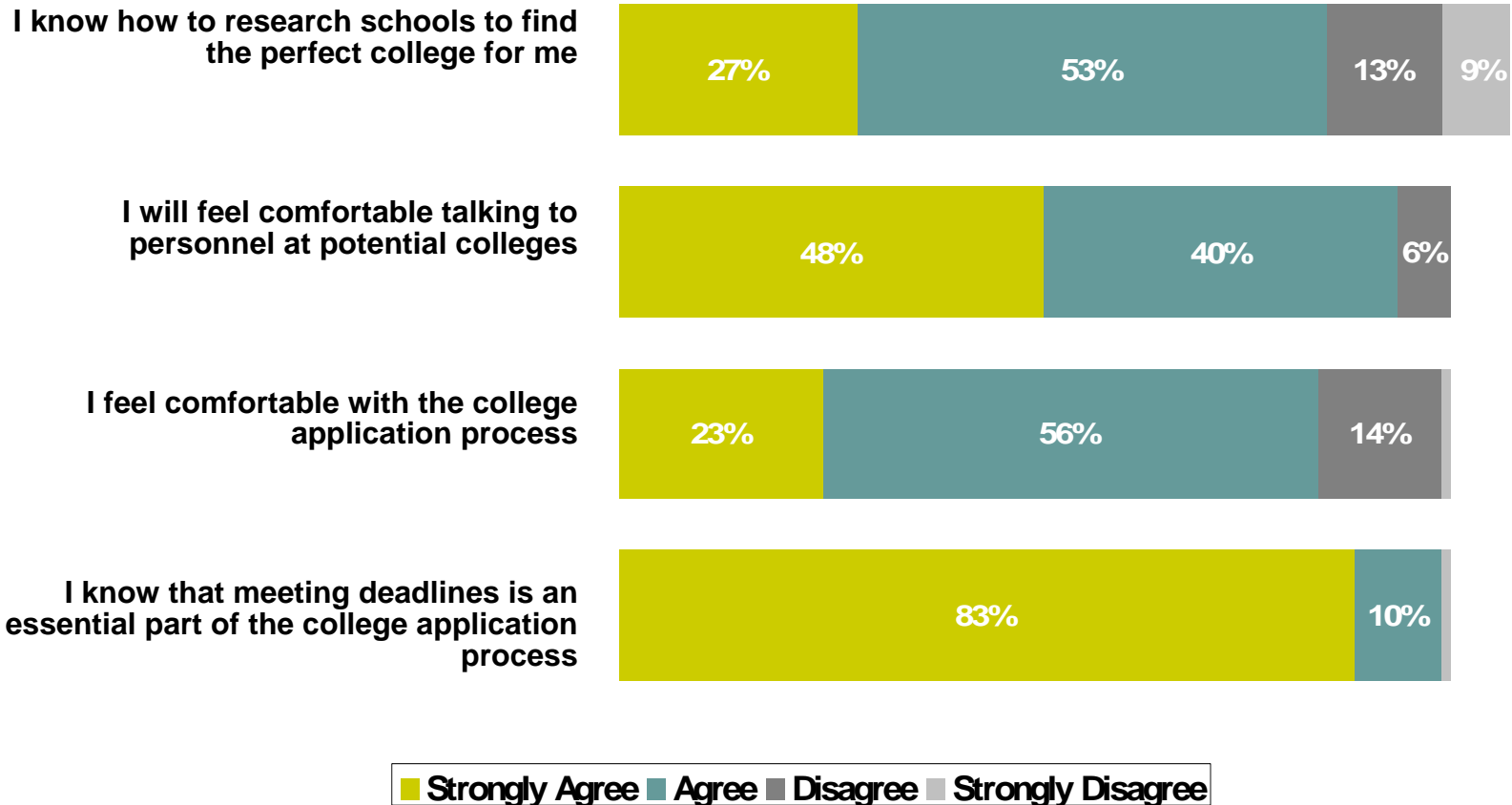
**Strongly Agree** **Agree** **Disagree** **Strongly Disagree**

\*Totals may not equal 100 because some students may not have answered the question

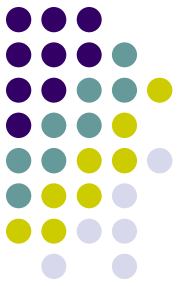


# Pre-Questionnaire

## Knowledge about College Search/Application Process

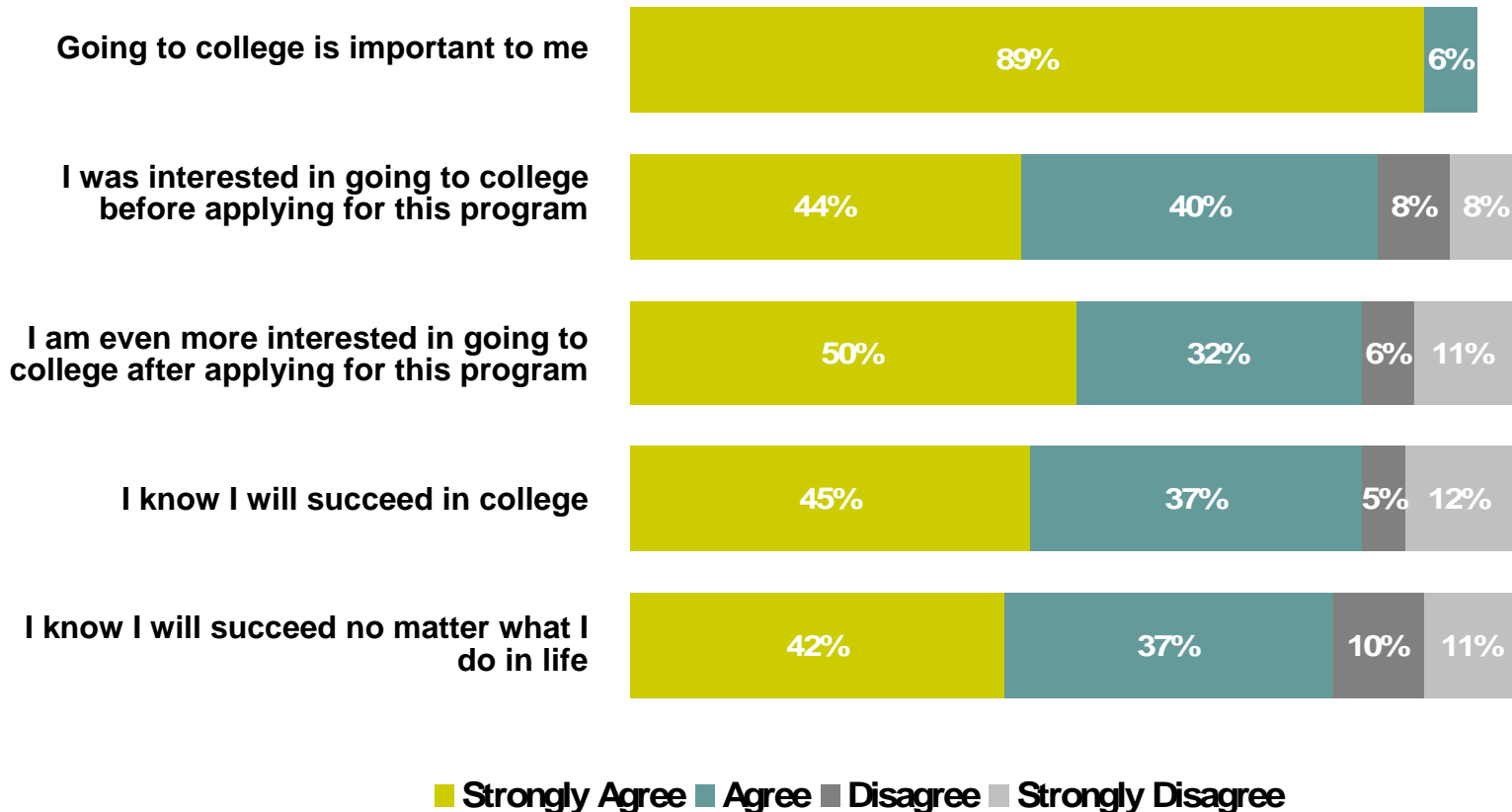


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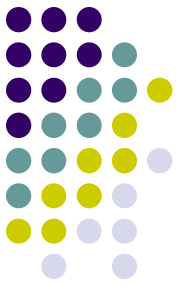


# Pre-Questionnaire

## Feelings About College



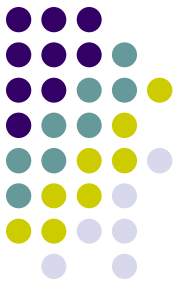
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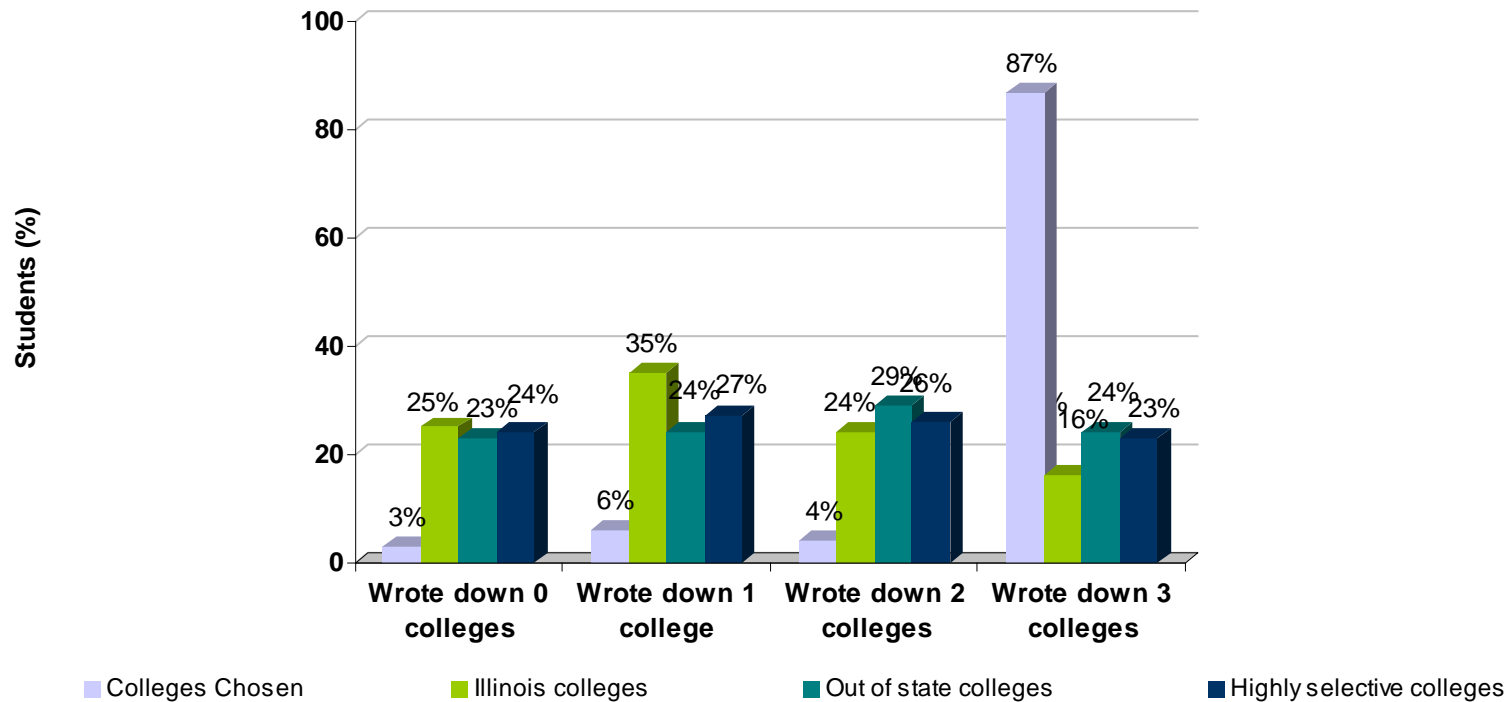
# Pre-Questionnaire

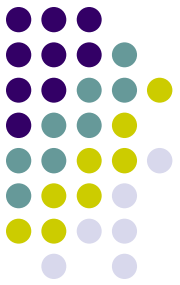
- When asked about their outlook on college, students mentioned the following:
  - It is the only way to succeed in life
  - It helps financially, socially and mentally
  - It is extremely hard to get a job without college
  - It is about learning new things and finding new interests
  - It is frightening and exciting at the same time
- When asked about their plan for after graduating high school, all students said they plan to go to college

# Pre-Questionnaire



## College Choices

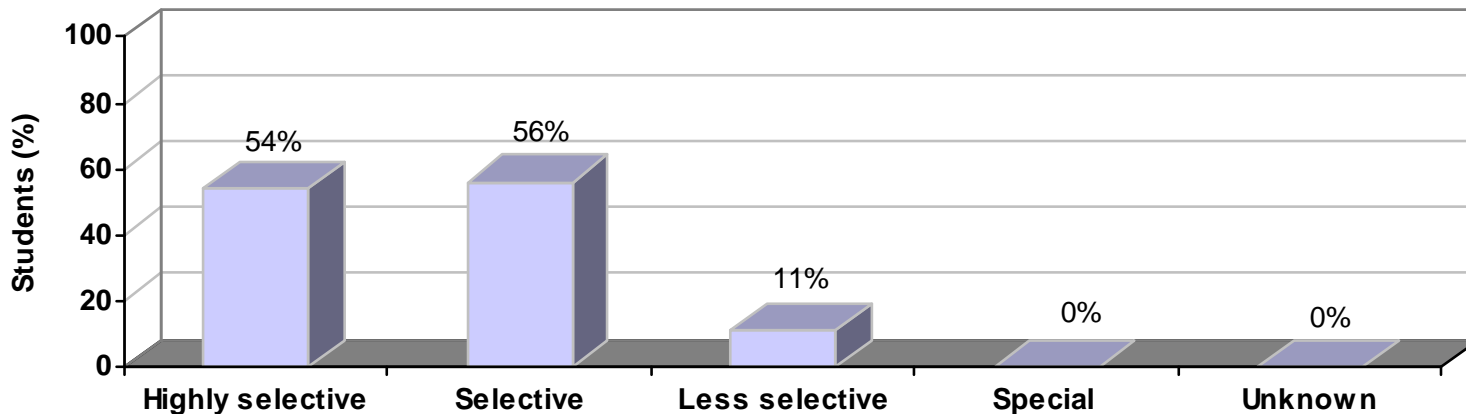




# Pre Questionnaire

Slightly over half of students chose at least one highly selective school, while a slightly greater percentage chose at least one selective school.

Number of students who chose **at least one** of the following types of schools



Selectivity rankings are taken from *Barron's Profiles of American Colleges* 27th edition, 2007. As the categories are displayed here, "most competitive" & "highly competitive" are grouped as **highly selective**; "very competitive" & "competitive" are grouped as **selective**; and "less competitive" & "non-competitive" are grouped as **less selective**.

# Pre Questionnaire



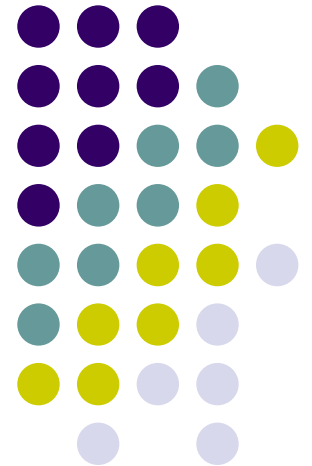
The top reasons students gave for their college choices were based on a specific academic program, location of the school and recommendation from a parent/relative

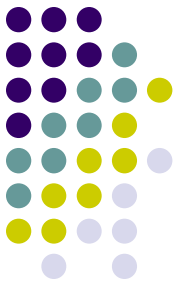


Q13. Think about your top choice and select the 3 most important reasons this is your top school.

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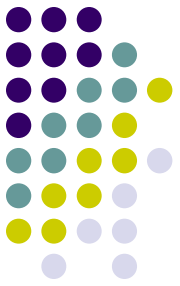
# Post Questionnaire





# Post Questionnaire

- The open ended questions that were asked in the post questionnaire have been summarized as many of them invoked very similar responses from students
- Many of the same questions that were asked in the pre-questionnaire were repeated in the post questionnaire to gage any differences in students' responses. However, there were no significant differences in responses to report.



# Post Questionnaire

When asked what they got out of the Summer Quest program, students most commonly responded with growing intellectually, making friends, and having an increased self-confidence

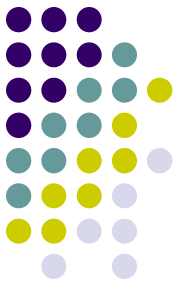




# Post Questionnaire

- When asked what benefits they will gain from going to college, students replied with the following:
  - New surroundings
  - Exposure to the real world
  - Grow more mature
  - Gain intellect/knowledge
  - More opportunities
  - Responsibility and civility
  - Build character
  - Explore new interests, different ways of thought/perspectives, and different lifestyles

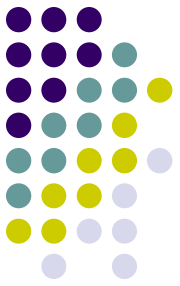
# Post Questionnaire



- When asked what steps they will take towards achieving college plans, students most often mentioned striving for good grades, taking AP classes, joining clubs, participating in internships, and not giving up.
- When asked how their approach to school has changed, students most often mentioned that they will interact with new people other than usual friends, not give up when feeling challenged, making studying a vital component, and using time management skills.

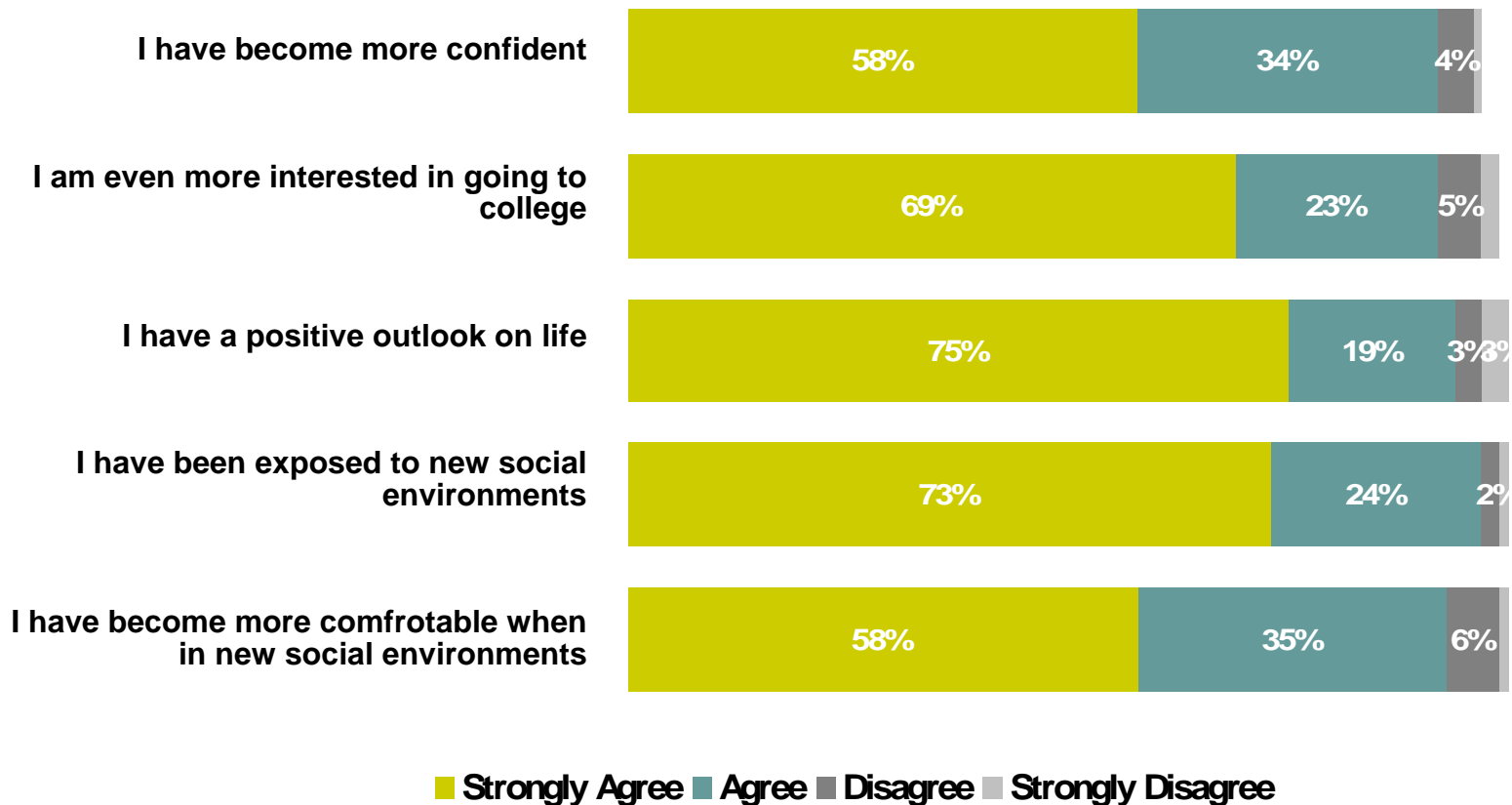
*Q9. Please describe the steps you will take to achieve your college or work plans/plan for future.*

*Q10. How did your Summer Quest experience change your approach to school this year?*

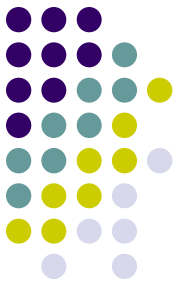


# Post Questionnaire

## After completing the program...

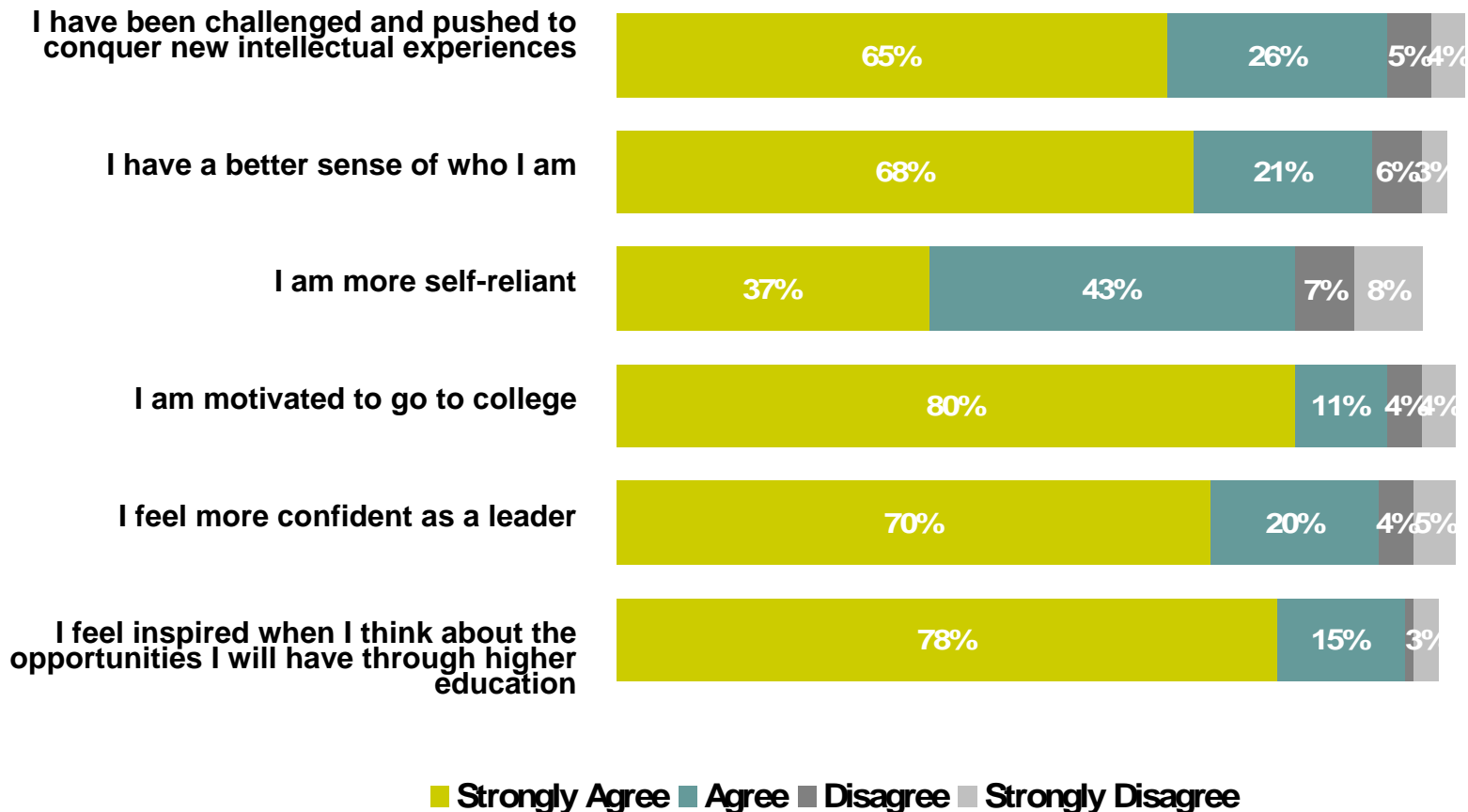


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# Post Questionnaire

## After completing the program...

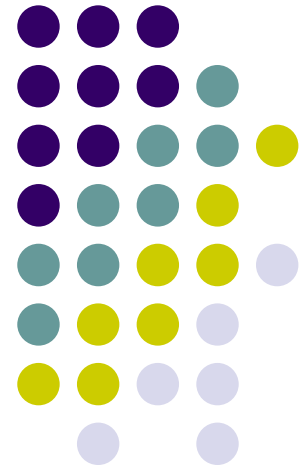


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# Wrap-Up Session

Group Discussion  
Student Interviews  
Student Essays





# Group Discussion

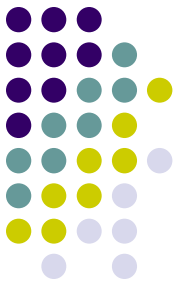
- During the Wrap-Up session, students broke into groups and discussed the following questions:
  - Describe 2 highlights from your summer program
  - What did you gain or learn from your summer program?
  - Based on your experience this summer, what do you plan to do differently this school year
- The highlights students mentioned tended to be specific events, skills, and character traits that have made a mark on their experience.
- Many students said they gained a real college experience, knowledge that has helped them decide on an area of study, and, again, specific academic and social skills.
- Overwhelmingly, students said they will put more effort into their schoolwork, become more involved in clubs and extra curricular activities, use time management skills, and be more organized.

# Student Interviews



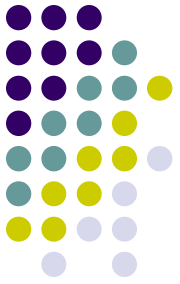
- At the Wrap-Up, students also broke into pairs to conduct interviews. They discussed the following questions:
  - Describe 2 highlights of your Summer Quest Program.
  - What was your most difficult challenge of the summer?
  - Explain how you overcame the challenge.
  - Between now and the time you enroll in college, what skills do you need to develop further in order to be successful?
  - What did you find most interesting or memorable about this conversation with your partner?
- Again, the highlights students mentioned centered primarily on specific events that occurred during their experience as well as obtaining or strengthening certain social and academic skills.
- Challenges discussed included being away from home, the amount of work that needed to be completed, and balancing school work and social activities.
- Students overcame these challenges by trying to be social to get over their homesickness, asking questions and getting help with homework, and staying organized and using time management skills to create balance.
- The most common skills students cited as necessary for success were keeping on top of deadlines, time management, and specific academic skills (i.e. writing, typing, studying, reading, etc.).

# Student Essays



- When students came back from their summer programs, they received letters asking them to compose an essay reflecting on their experience. Students were asked to write about: (insert essay question)
- A total of 128 essays were analyzed in this report.
- Some clear patterns can be identified in terms of what students wrote they learned about themselves and the experience in general. Certain topics occurred repeatedly. Specifically, students often commented on:
  - Self Awareness
  - Perception of college
  - Ability to succeed
  - Perception of career goals

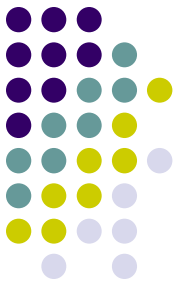
# Student Essays



## Self Awareness

- This category describes instances where students mentioned things about their own personality or mind set that were either just realized or grew stronger.
- Examples of responses:
  - *“I feel that I have truly matured from having this Summer Quest experience. I have become more responsible which helps me focus more and pushes me to reach for my goals.”*
  - *“My personal growth from this summer experience has grown tremendously. I have found an inner-strength inside myself that I never knew I had.”*
  - *“Not only did [my painting/drawing skills] grow, but I grew myself. I didn't believe that I should or can rely on others. I changed that way of thinking. I learned that if I reach out I can learn a lot from others.”*
  - *“The impact this [experience] will have will be very noticeable. I now feel confident as a musician and student, no longer underestimating myself, but conquering any battle that may come my way. Truly, this was my dress rehearsal for what will launch the rest of my life.”*
  - *“I learned to allow myself to be open with others and not be so guarded about my thoughts and opinions. I feel I improved on this area substantially because I feel more comfortable openly discussing my ideas with others.”*
  - *“If [this] session has taught me anything, that is to believe in myself, believe that I can succeed in college and in life, and believe that I can do anything I set my mind to. I hope that Summer Quest will continue with its programs of enriching students with life changing opportunities.”*

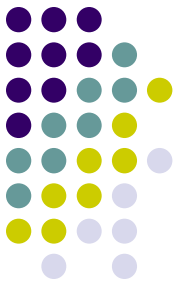
# Student Essays



## Perception of College

- This category includes statements that reflect a student's greater understanding of what college is like as well as the location/type of college they want to attend.
- Examples of responses:
  - *"[Summer Quest] created a deeper sense of motivation for my future plans and goals. College is now the main goal and not just any old college, but I've decided that a liberal arts college is the way to go for me."*
  - *"I knew that I wanted to go to a great college, but I couldn't imagine going to Harvard. I just know that I am going to apply because I am sure that I have a chance at getting in. There are so many colleges out there to apply to that I never thought about."*
  - *"My experience changed my whole outlook on college and how to find the right one for me. [I know what questions to ask when looking for a school with a nursing program that is for me]."*
  - *"This experience has prepared me for college in that I have learned that success is an output of whatever effort I put into something. The greater the input, the greater the output."*
  - *"Taking the summer program at a highly esteemed university gave me the opportunity to challenge myself and truly experience college academia. After taking advantage of learning about possible fields of study I wanted to get into, this sparked my interest even more."*

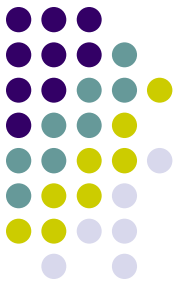
# Student Essays



## Ability to Succeed

- This category includes responses that specifically mention the student realizing the capability of succeeding at school work, goals they set for themselves and different accomplishments in general.
- Examples of responses:
  - *“My outlook on school and education has changed completely after attending this program. Now I see what can be provided to you if you are an attentive good student. I am 110% sure that I will go to college because now I am truly inspired.”*
  - *“This experience changed my ordinary thinking [about studying]. I am now accustomed to studying for hours. In addition, I am now developing better study habits which, of course, are important since I am considering liberal arts colleges on the East coast”*
  - *“This trip actually tested me. I proved to myself that I can achieve greatness if I took a chance and just tried. The camp was an incredible ride of self-discovery and personal empowerment.”*
  - *“After settling in, I encountered my next epiphany: the importance of time management. Learning to be efficient with my time is a critical component to being successful in college as well as life.”*

# Student Essays



## Perception of Career Goals

- This category includes responses concerning students' realizations of what careers will best suit them as well as specific mentions of intended areas of study.
- Examples of responses:
  - *"I want to get as much education in law and law enforcement so that I can get a better idea of being a homicide detective for the Chicago Police Department."*
  - *"I have no doubt that fifteen years from now I will be a pediatrician and I can thank Summer Quest and all the people that I met [at the program] for providing me with the opportunity of a lifetime; the opportunity to find out who I am and what I truly want out of life."*
  - *"This program impacted my upcoming school year because as soon as I came back I went to my school counselor and changed my schedule to have all the needed classes for nursing. Now I'm working on my applications for the colleges that have good nursing programs."*

# Appendix

- Summer Quest programs that students attended
- High schools represented

