



“It was meant for... the smarter kids”: A Qualitative Investigation of Student Enrollment Decisions in the College & Careers Access Pathways (CCAP) Program

Executive Summary

This executive summary provides three key findings and recommendations for action based on the results of a qualitative pilot study with former CCAP (n=1) and non-CCAP (n=3) students who attended Miramar College in Fall 2024 as college students. We performed this study after quantitative analysis revealed racial equity gaps for CCAP enrollment. Thus, the Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Research, in collaboration with the Outreach team at Miramar college, created this study to discover insights about CCAP enrollment from the perspective of students. We aim to understand how students perceive, feel, and learn about the program. In this study, two students are from Mira Mesa High School and two students are from Scripps Ranch High School. While not generalizable to all students within San Diego Unified School District (SDUSD), the results of this study reveal problematic perceptions of the program that SDCCD and SDUSD can help curb.

Three Key Findings

- 1) CCAP enrollment decisions are often informed by social context and peer perceptions.
- 2) Students who are most intended to benefit from CCAP feel isolated from the program.
- 3) Counselors have significant influence over student enrollment in CCAP, especially for the intended student population of AB368.

Next Steps

- 1) **Counselor Support:** SDCCD and SDUSD should provide additional support to counselors and pursue discovery of counselor needs to effectively promote CCAP equitably.
- 2) **Social Perception:** Provide direct CCAP information to students to reduce the impact of social rumor. Cultivate a social perception of CCAP that markets it not as a resource for the academically advanced, but instead a pathway for career exploration and college experience for all students.
- 3) **Targeted Outreach and Program Review:** Engage in targeted outreach to the AB368 population. Continually engage in program effectiveness review and research (qualitative and quantitative) to measure equitable enrollment.

Three Key Findings

- 1) **CCAP enrollment decisions are often informed by social context and peer perceptions.**

Perceptions of what the CCAP program is and for whom it is intended is largely a product of social discourse – friends, peers, and rumors shape imagined perceptions of CCAP rather than CCAP marketing and outreach.

“I don't think I went searching for any CCAP information. And I don't think I've ever had ever seen a website with CCAP information. I've only ever received information from students, or from my friends, or from directly from the teacher.”

– Julie, CCAP

“[CCAP was] a big, big deal... a lot of my friends talked about it a lot, so I always knew what was going on.”

– Emma, non-CCAP

Students discuss CCAP with each other and hear murmurs about the program, who it serves, and what it provides. These perceptions emerged as the strongest force that influences awareness and likelihood to participate in the program; most participants gained information about CCAP through social interaction with other students.

- 2) **Students who are most intended to benefit from CCAP feel isolated from the program.**

This pilot study suggests a division in the student body. The participating CCAP student believed that students who take the courses are generally future-thinking and potentially take other advanced courses. Non-CCAP students believed that anyone *could* take these classes. Yet, they also expressed that only the ‘straight-A’ students enroll. What emerges is an academic hierarchy between those who take CCAP and those who do not. This hierarchy extends beyond the CCAP program into other types of advanced coursework, such as AP classes, and even into athletic and other extra-curricular participation. CCAP has been absorbed into its social influence.

This divide works against the purpose of the program. AB288 created CCAP, which was later clarified for “pupils who may not already be college bound or who are underrepresented in higher education.” This includes “first-time college students, low-income students, students who are current or former foster youth, homeless students or students at risk of being homeless, students with disabilities, students with dependent children, and undocumented students” ([AB368](#)). Yet, the program does not serve its intended audience. Rather, it harms this intended population by replicating existing academic hierarchies (e.g., AP versus non-AP students).

3) **Counselors have significant influence over student enrollment in CCAP, especially for the intended student population of AB368.**

Counselors are a crucial influence for CCAP enrollment. Uncertain if they should enroll, all non-CCAP participants talked with their counselors against the backdrop of the aforementioned academic hierarchy. Counselors suggested students should not enroll because the counselor was unsure if the student could be successful in the college course. Some counselors also lacked detailed knowledge of CCAP, unable to provide students with sufficient information to allow them to make an informed enrollment decision. Evidence from the focus groups suggests that better information about access to services from the college, in particular DSPS accommodations, would encourage students specified by AB368 to enroll in CCAP. SDCCD and SDUSD can provide institutional support in this area.

This is not a sweeping generalization of counselors. The main point here is that counselors are a crucial gateway to CCAP enrollment, especially for CCAP's intended population. Thus, counselors must play an active role in closing equity gaps in enrollment.

Next Steps

1) **Counselor Support: SDCCD and SDUSD should provide additional support to counselors and pursue discovery of counselor needs to effectively promote CCAP equitably.**

Counselors are in a position of power to positively inform student agency and choice regarding CCAP enrollment. Because counselors play a crucial role in CCAP enrollment, they should be well-informed about course content, available student support, and program outcomes so they can provide the most accurate and updated information to students. Counselors should encourage all students, especially the AB368 population, to enroll and follow-through if the student expresses interest. Counselors should engage in dialogue about how CCAP students are recommended or chosen.

Quantitative analysis reveals equity gaps in CCAP enrollment based on race. High school counselors are well positioned to curb these equity gaps because they have strong influence over student decisions to enroll.

SDCCD and SDUSD can provide institutional support to counselors in these efforts. Through their partnership, SDCCD Outreach should continue to provide resources to high school counselors with detailed information about CCAP course content and course transferability. SDCCD Outreach should also provide high school students and

counselors with information related to support programs and services, particularly details about how high school students would be able to access college-based services.

SDUSD can perform program review to understand how their counselors are recommending or selecting students for CCAP enrollment (e.g., if GPA is used as an enrollment filter), a practice that will inform CCAP enrollment practices. SDUSD can also distribute CCAP materials to teachers, who have a less direct, but still significant, social influence with students.

2) Social Perception: Provide direct CCAP information to students to reduce the impact of social rumor. Cultivate a social perception of CCAP that markets it not as a resource for the academically advanced, but instead a pathway for career exploration and college experience for all students.

To avoid replicating existing perceptions of CCAP as another AP program through social rumor, information about CCAP from practitioners should directly impact how the program runs and the social rumor that bounces between students.

Providing this direct information aims to influence rumors about the program (or at least curb the

influence of rumors), enabling students to make more informed choices. Thus, SDCCD and SDUSD outreach teams should provide direct information to students.

CCAP information should be direct. Participants suggested that SDCCD Outreach advertise CCAP during student assemblies, pep rallies, or club rushes.

Participants suggested that outreach teams advertise CCAP during student assemblies, pep rallies, or club rushes. Students requested, “one-on-one live talking” with outreach staff, a suggestion that is highly recommended because students are more likely to receive correct information about CCAP and support services they would be able to access.

Resources, such as QR codes to the CCAP website and a FAQ page, would also be a direct information source to shape perceptions of the program. Another potential solution is providing students with direct accounts of CCAP experiences. This may look like a peer mentor program, a video with student voices, or perhaps a collection of quotes from students. Whatever these resources look like, students should gain information about CCAP from direct sources rather than rumors.

These strategies enable outreach to more directly communicate with students. Direct information will encourage students to make their own choice about CCAP enrollment and potentially curb/shape social perceptions and influence.

3) Targeted Outreach and Program Review: Engage in targeted outreach to the AB368 population. Continually engage in program effectiveness review and research (qualitative and quantitative) to measure equitable enrollment.

Because typical CCAP students (e.g., AP students) will enroll in CCAP regardless of marketing efforts, outreach efforts should focus on the intended AB368 population. This includes students who are “not already college bound,” which may include students who are low-income, current or former foster youth, homeless, students with disabilities, and students with dependent children. The current strategy appears to only focus on equality rather than equity – this leaves students behind. Targeted outreach is an attempt to close equity gaps. It is not a matter of reducing current enrollment of ‘straight-A’ students. The goal is to fulfill the original purpose of AB368, which is to increase success of students who have historically been left behind by college prep programs. Thus, SDCCD and SDUSD should prioritize enrolling the intended AB368 population.

Changing marketing verbiage from equality (e.g., “anyone can enroll”) to equity (e.g., “you should enroll even if you are not taking AP classes”) speaks to the population that the CCAP program is currently missing and should be serving.

The institution should view CCAP not as a ‘way to get ahead,’ but as a program that fills a social deficit. CCAP marketing can continue to reach all students, but should shift energy and resources to reach CCAP’s intended population. For example, marketing verbiage could encourage students to apply even if they are not taking AP courses. SDUSD can also perform email or text campaigns to reach out to students if their demographic information is available. As changes are implemented, program review and research should continue to be done on CCAP to measure the effectiveness of these recommendations.

Contents

Executive Summary	1
Background	7
Project Overview	8
Aims and Objectives.....	9
Methods	9
Research Questions.....	9
Analysis.....	10
Conclusion: Summary and Recommendations.....	21
Further Research	24
Limitations	24
Appendices	25
Appendix A	25
Appendix B	29
Appendix C	33
Appendix D	34

Background

CCAP at SDCCD is a large and complex program: in 2023-24, 5,114 students enrolled in 363 offerings of 65 different courses across the three credit colleges (including charters). Each year, counseling staff and administrators from SDUSD work with faculty and administrators from SDCCD to schedule, fill, and deliver classes from the SDCCD course catalog at more than 20 high school sites. This process involves the use of complicated legal agreements between the two institutions, reconciling different academic calendars, coordinating complex physical and technical logistics, and many more considerations. The program was severely impacted by COVID-19, with 2020-21 and 2021-22 seeing significant reductions in students served. The program resumed robust growth in 2022-23 and 2023-24, each year serving more students than it ever had before.

This growth has been uneven: across the District, Latinx students have been Disproportionately Impacted (DI) in access to CCAP in each of the last five years, both at Miramar College and across the District. African American students have seen lower rates of participation compared to non-African American students, though not to the level of Disproportionate Impact.

Figure 1. Districtwide Participation Rates for Latinx students compared to non-Latinx students, CCAP, SDUSD Public Schools

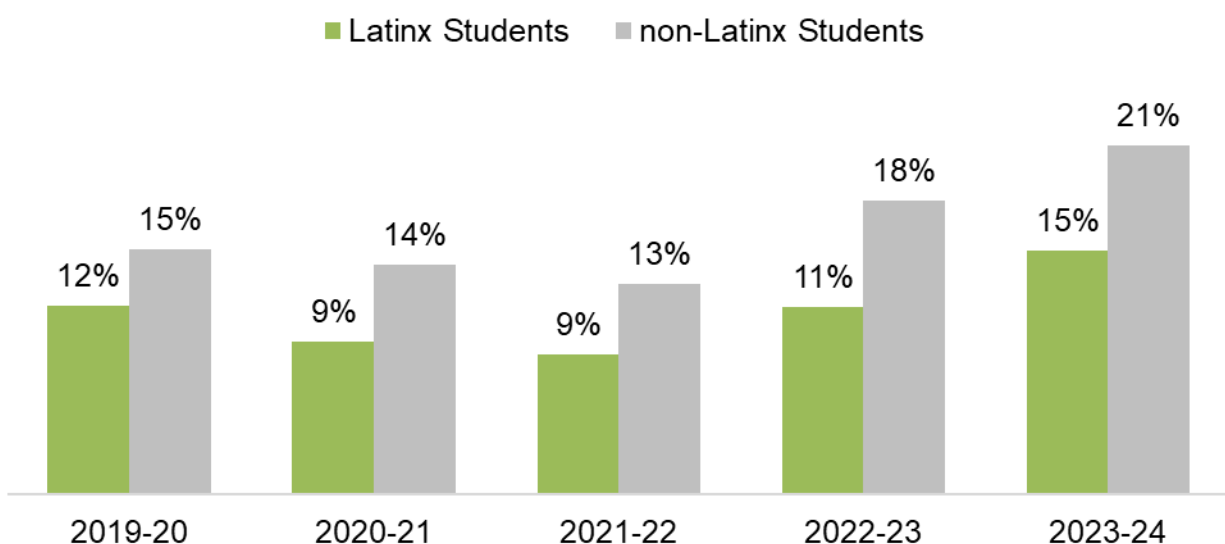


Figure 1 above shows CCAP participation rates – or the number of Latinx students enrolled in CCAP divided by the student population at sites with CCAP – over the last five years. As the percent of all non-Latinx student enrolling in CCAP has grown from 13% in 2021-22 to 21% in 2023-24 (+8.5%), the percent of Latinx students in CCAP has only grown by 6.4%. About 250 additional Latinx students would have been needed in 2023-24 for that group to

have proportional participation in CCAP – this gap shrank from the prior year (~350 in 2022-23) but remains large.

See the [2023-24 Special Admit Comprehensive](#) (*interim link placeholder*) report for more detailed information about Access gaps to college classes for high school students. Note that the report presents DI across all special admit types, which includes CCAP, ACP, and Concurrent Enrollment. While gaps in the CCAP program are generally smaller than for ACP and Concurrent Enrollment, even the CCAP program shows significant evidence of DI in access. Site-level DI data is available in the full report available to SDCCD and SDUSD staff, faculty, and administrators; contact the Institutional Effectiveness and Research for access to the full report and site-level data (sbass@sdccd.edu).

Project Overview

In October 2024, the SDCCD Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Research (OIER) and the Outreach and School Relations team at Miramar College conducted focus groups with Miramar students who did and did not enroll in CCAP. The team sought to understand how and why students decide to enroll or not in CCAP. The purpose of this pilot study was to gain understanding of students' social perceptions of the program to understand how attitudes towards the program itself influenced enrollment decisions, particularly for marginalized student groups.

Due to the laborious nature of qualitative data and potentially lengthy turnaround, Miramar College was chosen to pilot the study. Miramar College was chosen for several reasons: 1) the outreach team was already engaging with the OIER on this topic and expressed interest in pursuing a qualitative study with former CCAP students, 2) Miramar College has a proportionally large CCAP program, and 3) there are well-documented gaps in CCAP enrollment for racially marginalized students, particularly Latine identifying students.

The information gathered at Miramar College may not be entirely reflective of the City and Mesa College programs because of our low sample size. This was the result of purposeful recruitment and sampling; we recruited for specific participants (current Miramar students who did/did not participate in CCAP). Nonetheless, districtwide implementation of CCAP programming and outreach has some consistency and these focus group findings may provide a preliminary understanding of issues that impact CCAP enrollment access that can be acted upon. These preliminary findings are meant to kickstart future conversations and interventions about the program. For example, the results from this study may inform the creation of a districtwide survey instrument. The survey might include a question asking former CCAP students how CCAP informed their college experience and a question asking

non-CCAP students why they did not enroll. We would also like to expand focus groups to City and Mesa colleges.

Aims and Objectives

The aim of the pilot study is to improve the CCAP program across the District by identifying gaps in enrollment from a qualitative perspective, attempting to fill in the “whys” behind the access gaps that are already well documented quantitatively. We hope to understand why students choose to enroll or not in CCAP. SDCCD has never systematically spoken with feeder school students who did not take CCAP in particular, beginning to fill a major gap in knowledge to understand what CCAP could be doing better for the students it misses. Our main objective is to provide actionable recommendations based on the findings.

Methods

In collaboration with the OIER, the outreach team at Miramar College recruited participants through an email and text campaign. Participants were given lunch and Miramar merchandise for their time. There were two focus groups: a CCAP focus group (n=1, which became an in-depth interview) and a non-CCAP focus group (n=3). Both focus groups had an interview panel of District researchers and Miramar outreach employees, all of whom received appropriate human participant research ethics certification. All employees directly interacted with participants. Focus groups lasted about an hour each. The OIER transcribed each focus group and extracted key themes and quotes using ATLAS.ti.

Member checking is a key method of this study. The Miramar outreach team held an invaluable role in this study by creating and disseminating recruitment fliers, assisting in focus group facilitation, and provided participant incentive. They also provided their insights on the analysis and recommendation in drafts of this report to ensure their knowledge, perspectives on the focus groups, and expertise are reflected in the results and recommendations provided.

Research Questions

The following research questions were developed collaboratively between the OIER and the outreach team at Miramar College. The OIER drafted these questions and adjusted with feedback from the Miramar team.

- 1) How do students from Miramar College's feeder schools learn about CCAP and decide whether or not to participate?
- 2) Are there differences in our findings for Question 1 for students who are marginalized on the basis of race, immigration status, housing status, or any other identities compared to less marginalized peers? Are there differences by CCAP program?
- 3) Is a lack of clear information about the CCAP program and its mission impacting participation in the program?
- 4) Does participation in the CCAP program influence student feelings of college readiness and/or belonging?
- 5) How can Miramar College Outreach better include students and parents from all backgrounds in its efforts to recruit for the CCAP program?

Analysis

This section explores the voices of participating students. The results mainly focus on non-CCAP students, who participated in greater number and have strong feelings about the program itself and who it is for. They describe negative self-branding that taps the academic hierarchy of high school academics. The participating CCAP student voice supplements these accounts by providing some additional context to the social reach of the program.

Biosketches

All participants are Miramar students in Fall 2024 who attended a feeder high school. All had heard of CCAP before participating in the focus groups. There are four participants total, each given a pseudonym:

Paula did not enroll in CCAP while attending Scripps Ranch. She was a busy high schooler involved in sports and marching band. Paula had a mixed friend group – not everyone took AP courses.

Kate did not enroll in CCAP while attending Mira Mesa High. She moved to San Diego during the latter half of high school, so she heard about CCAP during her senior year. This is later than other participants.

Emma did not enroll in CCAP while attending Scripps Ranch. She has ADHD, which played a part in her decision to not enroll. Emma has a passion for film.

Julie enrolled in two CCAP courses Mira Mesa High. Her social circle had students who took AP and CCAP classes too.

College Readiness

Our CCAP student, Julie, reported that the program helped her prepare for the logistics of college. College courses “made an impression” on her. She realized that college courses are not as difficult as she thought, believing that she could “actually do college.” Julie was surprised by the course’s flexibility, making the workload manageable.

Beyond logistics, CCAP courses prepared Julie for the social aspects college. Her CCAP instructors were helpful, and she believed “that must be generally what the teachers are like [at] Miramar.” Her instructors treated students “like adults, and they make us responsible for our work.” Thus, CCAP not only helped her prepare for the logistical aspects of college (e.g., workload and course rigor), but also the social aspects (e.g., being treated with more respect as a student).

This supports what the team already suspected: CCAP better prepares some students for college and can enhance their overall feelings of readiness for college-level work. However, the program does not prepare *all* students – as the remainder of the analysis shows, many students do not access CCAP because they face barriers that prevent their enrollment.

Julie: I mentioned how it surprised me how the college courses were easier than I thought. I think that did influence me to think that, or to believe that I could actually do college. And like I could pass the classes because I already did it in high school.

Julie: I think, at least for me, one of the biggest differences is that college classes actually treat us like adults. And they make us responsible for our work.

Course Difficulty

CCAP

As previously mentioned, Julie thought that CCAP classes were “easy.” One reason is because “there just wasn’t a lot of work compared to my other classes.” Even compared to AP classes, CCAP classes were easier for Julie because of the pacing of work and instruction. Whereas AP classes “smush a bunch of subjects together... super fast,” CCAP classes were “kind of slow.” Despite the perception of the intimidating college class that persists in both CCAP and non-CCAP student groups, Julie felt like CCAP classes were easier. Julie thought that her peers did not struggle either: “I don’t think they were struggling too much.”

Non-CCAP

This is in direct contrast to the non-CCAP participants, who all initially perceived CCAP classes as difficult. Paula had a busy schedule, and Emma struggled with ADHD. Paula worried that CCAP was “gonna be really hard [and] super strict on deadlines.” Thus, because Paula felt that she was not on her “A-game” throughout high school, she worried that a college class would be too intense. Emma also struggled in school and feared the perceived strict academic rigor of CCAP classes. Kate did not have a “built opinion on it,” but still perceived CCAP as “super hard.” Clearly, then, there is a perception among these non-CCAP students that CCAP classes are difficult.

However, two participants’ views of CCAP changed. Over time, Emma realized that CCAP did not consist of “all straight-A students... [it was] a more diverse group of people.” Reflecting on this, Emma suggests she “could have maybe gotten a [CCAP] class for next semester,” but ultimately did not enroll – she still felt like she would not be able to handle the course. Kate’s perceptions also shifted. She originally thought only “smart people” take CCAP courses, but realized that “anyone’s just gonna take these courses.” Like Emma, Kate exhibits a moment of reflection: “I could have taken that.”

Paula’s perception did not change, perceiving that the courses would be too much for her to handle with her already booked schedule. Her friend group was “really smart,” and Paula saw them excel in CCAP courses. This dissuaded her from enrolling.

From this discussion, we see a socially constructed academic division. Students who excelled in school take CCAP. Students who faced struggle, such as Paula and Emma, do not take CCAP and do not receive the program’s benefits. Non-CCAP participants perceive the program as too difficult, using their friends and peers as a relative indicator of course rigor. Thus, friends and peers play a vital role in perceptions of CCAP.

Julie: But there just wasn't a lot of work compared to my other classes... So in my experience, I thought it was like pretty easy.

Julie: I think we mostly just thought of it as another high school thing... it was super normal.

Paula: I thought it was gonna be hard. And then I also had a packed schedule doing sports, and I was in band- marching band. So I was thinking about like college classes. I thought that was gonna be really hard. I thought it was gonna be like super strict on deadlines. And I was already not- I was getting through school, but I wasn't really on my a game the entire time. So I didn't think I could handle like a college class during high school. So I thought it was scary.

Emma: I also have struggled with ADHD my entire life. So like what [Paula] said with like deadlines and strict, very, very, academic stuff, I was scared that it would be too intense for me. And I was already struggling with normal academic subjects. So you know.

Kate: It seemed super hard, in my opinion. But that's all I would really hear about it. I didn't have that many friends that were in like the CCAP program. So it was hard to kind of have, like, a really like built opinion on it.

Social Millieu – Academic heiarhies and the “smart kids”

Perceptions of course difficulty, and of CCAP in general, stem from friends, peers, and social networks. This is something that outreach and marketing efforts *must* take into consideration – it is a main influence for interest in CCAP and the ultimate decision to enroll.

CCAP

Julie originally learned about CCAP through word-of-mouth accounts, receiving “information from students, or from my friends, or directly from the teacher,” rather than the CCAP website or other promotional materials. In fact, Julie says that “we didn’t use the term CCAP. We [say] ‘my college class.’”

This tells us that perception of CCAP, and therefore the makeup of CCAP program, is largely shaped by conversation between friends and peers. Julie does not recall promotion of CCAP – rather, “it was mostly just students talking about it.” Julie was enrolled in AP classes too, and stated “almost everyone I knew was in AP classes.” Information flow about CCAP was social, where it transferred via word-of-mouth between peers. And these conversations were with the same AP, college-bound students. CCAP enrollment may be iterative, where the same kinds of students enroll in CCAP semester after semester.

Non-CCAP

This social information transfer is true for non-CCAP students who participated as well. All non-CCAP participants had friends or peers in CCAP classes who played a vital role in the social imaginaries of the program. Emma saw that CCAP students were “more academically involved and much, much better at school than me,” which intimidated her. Paula had friends who said that CCAP classes were “loaded” with homework, indicating the class was difficult. Kate feels like she did not have a built opinion of CCAP but would “hear about” how hard the classes were from two of her friends. Thus, word-of-mouth accounts amongst the student body shaped perceptions of the program rather than from CCAP outreach sources.

All three were aware of CCAP. Kate felt like “the program was pretty much open to anyone” and knew non-straight A students in CCAP courses. Paula says that at Scripps, “everyone knew about [CCAP].” Paula and Emma, attending Scripps Ranch, knew about CCAP from the Falcon 5 school news and various peer connections. CCAP was a “very big deal” among the student body at Scripps because of the academic status that it held.

However, despite being open to all students, what emerges is the replication of an academic hierarchy that CCAP’s creation was intended to dismantle between ‘advanced’ college-bound students and those who are commonly left behind by traditional advanced or college-prep programming. CCAP is meant to fill equity gaps by providing “pupils who may not already be college bound or who are underrepresented in higher education” (AB368) with an accessible learning pathway. Yet, Emma felt that “mainly [straight-A students] were encouraged” to enroll in CCAP rather than herself. Not seeing themselves as the “smarter kids” (Paula) who were “very good at school” (Emma), they were deterred from enrolling. While Kate does not share the same beliefs as Paula and Emma regarding CCAP, she shares the sentiment surrounding an existing academic hierarchy.

We can see this hierarchy emerge by examining ‘popularity.’ This emerged as a key theme for non-CCAP participants, where CCAP classes are popular courses for popular people. Emma shares that at Scripps, CCAP courses “get taken up really quickly. They’re very popular, so I wasn’t able to get a college class for next semester.” These classes (at least at Scripps) are competitive. They fill up quickly, pressuring students to make swift enrollment decisions to secure a spot.

Non-CCAP participants believe that the ‘smarter students’ are also the popular students. Kate felt like “a lot of the popular kids were also academically talented and in college classes. So it felt like if you couldn’t be at their level, you kind of didn’t matter.” This is because of the nature of “social circles” in high school, where people project academic inferiority upon others: “‘I’m better because I’m in college classes.’ That kind of thing.”

The structure of the CCAP courses themselves inadvertently contributed to this hierarchy, where CCAP students got free periods because CCAP courses are not every day. Kate describes this social dialogue: “people who are in college classes are better. They get to leave school [early]. They get to do all of these other things that we’re not allowed to do because we don’t have any college classes.”

Emma relates to this. She also felt that “the kids that were very into academics were the popular kids.” She felt a distinct social rift between herself and CCAP students, hearing that some CCAP students would “often call other kids stupid.” This bullying is amplified for Emma, who had an individualized education plan (IEP) because of her ADHD. Because of the academic shaming, “it was always very hard for me to tell people around me that I had to have these accommodations.” CCAP is a small part of the bigger picture here – the

academic hierarchies in high schools discouraged Emma from fully expressing herself. The mobilization of CCAP is but another branch of this hierarchy.

This analysis does not suggest that all CCAP students are ‘straight-A’ students who shame others. Rather, this report puts forth a nuanced perception of the program that considers the social factors that surround decisions to enroll. All students in this focus group felt like CCAP was not for them because: 1) CCAP was only for the smart kids, 2) CCAP was only for the popular kids, or both. This study claims that these social perceptions may manifest through enrollment trends.

Thus, while CCAP enrollment may be high, there is a problematic feedback loop within its success. Though not all CCAP students are popular or have straight A’s, non-CCAP students hold a preconceived notion that CCAP was not for them. This enables the aforementioned student archetypes to fill CCAP spots, further reinforcing the CCAP social imaginary to the student body. This logic supports the equity gaps among CCAP student enrollment, shown by the [CCAP Access reporting](#) provided by the OIER (see background section, above). These gaps may be connected to academic and social division, where the more privileged have more social access to and comfort with college courses.

Through this lens, we can most clearly understand the case for equity rather than equality. While there were other factors impacting decision to enroll, the academic-popularity perception was a major influence on participants. As we saw above, Emma was toying with the idea of enrolling in CCAP. Though she decided not to enroll, she ultimately did not have the option to – there were no spots left. And because the popular, ‘academically talented’ students fill classes quickly, that does not leave ample space for the students like our participants. Emma could not enroll in a CCAP course, even though she may have wanted to. She was not given the social space to explore this. However, though this may be true at Scripps Ranch, CCAP may operate differently at other high schools. This warrants further research.

Similarly, Kate thought it was too late to participate in CCAP because she was a senior. While Kate felt that CCAP was “pretty open to anyone,” she “heard” that other students take CCAP in their sophomore year. She feared it would be “awkward” to be the only senior in the room. She too was isolated, where she believed CCAP is for a specific group of students. In this case, it was by school year.

Thus, to these students, if you are not smart or popular, you feel deterred from taking CCAP courses. And while Kate held no malice against any one (“[no one said] you shouldn’t take it”), she felt strong social deterrence, the racial undertones of which cannot be ignored particularly given the more affluent and suburban context of these high schools. As we see above, other participants shared a similar sentiment – social pressure convinced them to not pursue CCAP. Counselors also impact this discourse, as we will explore below.

While degrees of socio-academic separation differ per high school, each has some degree of academic division. The social hierarchy of each high school impacts how students viewed each other, and therefore CCAP. As Kate indicates above (e.g., CCAP is “pretty open to anyone”), this division appears to have been happening to a lesser degree at Mira Mesa High School. Yet, it still persists. While the comparison of samples between Mira Mesa High and Scripps Ranch could not yield statistical significance, there is major overlap between perceptions of for whom CCAP is for.

The question then becomes: should SDCCD work change the social perception of the program, or focus on reaching the students who ‘fall through the cracks’ based on their social milieu? The results of this report support a focus on addressing the latter, which will then impact the former. Expanding the image of who can be successful in college classes may be one approach to disrupting the self-reinforcing cycle that keeps some students from choosing to enroll in CCAP.

Thus, while CCAP may be intended to expose traditionally left-out students to college pathways, it has unintentionally replicated the academic hierarchies seen in existing advanced placement classes; the decision to enroll is partially based upon an individual’s relative social and academic position to other students. As noted, this academic hierarchy is not new – it is visible in AP discourse. But the difference between AP and CCAP is that SDCCD and SDUSD has more agency to challenge these perceptions of its own programming to better reflect the belongingness of these students.

Julie: I don't think I went searching for any CCAP information. And I don't think I've ever had ever seen a website with CCAP information. I've only ever received information from students, or from my friends, or from directly from the teacher.

Julie: Oh, yeah. Almost like everyone I knew was in AP classes, so... The people who do AP classes are usually the people who are thinking ahead. So yeah, they probably are going to college classes.

Paula: I really felt like [CCAP] was meant for those people that really wanna strive to take a college class... basically just kind of the smarter kids.

Kate: A lot of the popular kids were also academically talented and in college classes. So it felt like if you couldn't be at their level, you kind of didn't matter. So it was definitely an internal thing for a lot of people because of how the social circles in high school worked.

Emma: But like all the people that were in like classes, doing all the APs and the kids that were very into academics were the popular kids. And often, strangely, I would hear a lot of people, not people I knew personally, but like people that were much better at school would often call other kids stupid for either not being able to get a certain grade in a certain class,

or be, you know blah blah blah, you know? As a kid with an IEP, it was always very hard for me to tell people around me that I had to have these accommodations, that I had to have the these certain things in order to be successful in school.

The role of teachers and counselors

Non-CCAP

Counselors serve as a major passage point for non-CCAP students. Paula says that “I wish my counselor asked me about [CCAP],” rather than Paula bringing the idea to her counselor. Counselors should discuss CCAP with students regardless of their placement on the unspoken but existing socio-academic hierarchies, encouraging them to enroll if they are interested. Paula wishes her counselor brought forth more information about the program. She says her counselor was “being real” about the academic rigor, which “scared me away a little bit.” Counselors should be encouraging students to consider college courses, especially if they fall into target service populations (AB 368).

Emma says it was “discouraging” that her counselor told her to not take CCAP courses, citing her ADHD and busy course load. She knows that students in her position “can be very successful in college courses,” but felt like she was not supported in that specific CCAP conversation. Both her IEP coordinator and school counselor came to a “consensus that it would be too much to add” to Emma’s schedule. It is unclear if Emma had a comfortable, active voice in that decision. This is tied to Emma not knowing about DSPS accommodations for CCAP courses, which she learned about during the latter half of her senior year.

On the other hand, Kate’s counselor encouraged her to take CCAP courses, but lacked the information to effectively convey how college classes would benefit her. The information was “surface level” – Kate was not interested because her counselor did not clearly convey how CCAP could benefit Kate’s future. Thus, if a student was unsure like Kate was, they would be less likely to enroll than a the ‘straight-A’ student archetype.

Thus, we see two potential issues emerging. First, counselors may not be presenting all potential students with CCAP information or access. Even if they discuss it with students, counselors may not have an in-depth understanding of the program’s benefits. Second, counselors, although with good will, may be dissuading students from taking CCAP courses. Paula says that her counselor was “being real,” but wished that they showed her more information. Emma says that her advisors came to a “consensus,” but it is unclear if Emma had a strong voice in the decision.

In short, counselors are an influential channel of information and support for students. Students have strong preconceived notions of what CCAP is and who it is for. When approaching the CCAP conversation, counselors should be aware of this. Students cannot be expected to have program knowledge or an understanding of how CCAP will benefit them. Counselors can fill this gap in knowledge. In fact, counselors should bring up CCAP to precisely those students who haven't displayed an understanding of or interest in continuing their education to college.

SDCCD and SDUSD can provide institutional support by addressing their administrative needs to allow them to most effectively support students. The institution can host trainings and workshops for counselors to create an active dialogue about CCAP enrollment. Counselors and SDCCD outreach should ensure that students know there are services available for CCAP classes, just like they would receive in their regular classes. Students should learn this information early. SDCCD and SDUSD can support these efforts with greater funding for staffing and marketing projects.

While this section of the report focuses on counselors, teachers are in a similar position of authority and influence over students. Kate says that teachers “knew about [CCAP], but they didn't really push it.” Though influencing student enrollment may be more in-line with the job description of counselors, teachers are able to encourage and influence students to enroll into CCAP.

Kate: For me, I felt like she definitely like wanted me to kind of show interest in it. But there wasn't a lot of information about it, and she didn't really go into like depth about like what programs were available, or what I could do, or how it would kind of affect me and my education. So it just kind of felt like surface level. And it wasn't as interesting for me.

Paula: So yeah, I wish my counselor asked me about it. Because I remember coming to her and I was like 'well like I want to. That'd be like cool. [But] it's a college class. And I don't know if I should do it.' And she was being real with me. She was like, 'well it is more work.' So she was basically telling me the truth, which then kind of like scared me away a little bit. Because she was true, you know.

Paula: I wish she like came to me about it as my counselor... I wish they kinda like sat down and was like explaining it. Like saying like the whole thing and its benefits, besides me coming to her be like, 'maybe I should. I don't know if I want to take it,' you know?

Emma: In general, I felt supported. Just with that specific conversation, it felt discouraging and kind of you know- which a lot of kids with- that are in my situation, it could seem like the counselors or the people around them would tell them not to do that. And sometimes they can be very successful in college courses or not, you know? It depends. But it kind of felt like a more kind of... less like encouraging than it might have [or] should have been.

Emma: They're not like forcing you not to. But that was the conversation I had with my counselor, too. It's just very much like, 'I don't know if you should.' Which I don't know if that would have [made a difference].

Informed Decisions: Wish versus Regret

Non-CCAP

Not everyone is going to take CCAP classes – that is okay. Not all students need to take these courses. The issue is that dialogue with counselors, limited marketing reach, and social discourse, the last of which is covertly influenced by the very social forces that engineered racial equity gaps in education broadly, are dissuading the AB368 intended student population from enrolling in CCAP. Students should have ultimate agency to enroll. The institution should support students in full to have a complete, informed choice. But as our non-CCAP participants show us, not all potential CCAP students receive the proper informational, administrative, and emotional support from their institution, and therefore their counselors, that allow them to make a fully informed decision.

All three non-CCAP participants reflected on their decision to not enroll in different ways. Emma does not regret missing out on CCAP – she would have “not been able to keep up with it” since she was not being medicated for ADHD at the time. But elsewhere in the focus group, Emma expressed that she was considering taking a CCAP course once she heard more about it. While Emma does not regret her ultimate decision, she might have enrolled if her counselor shared more information and was more supportive of her taking CCAP courses: “I don’t know if that would have [made a difference].” Emma lives with no regret, but lives with wonder: would she have enrolled if the CCAP conversation went better with her counselor?

Paula exhibited some regret. Halfway through her senior year, Paula realized she could have handled the course load of a Computer Science course: “I feel like I wish I joined that class.” Yet, she is satisfied with the ultimate decision to not enroll because her counselor was being “honest” and did not “sugarcoat things.”

For Kate, it was hard for her to “have a built opinion” about CCAP. She did not have as many friends in CCAP courses as Paula and Emma did. Kate’s counselor did not “go into depth about what programs were available, or what I could do, or how it would kind of affect me and my education.” Kate lacked information from her friends and her counselor. Despite this lack of information, the social hierarchy persisted in her perception of the popular, talented students who take CCAP.

All participants had a preconceived understanding of CCAP through social discourse. But when they went to a counselor, the one person who is supposed to help them navigate programs and coursework, they were all not supported in various ways. SDCCD and SDUSD should strive to support counselors, and therefore students, which grants students with the agency to make informed choices.

Emma: I think around like senior year when people actually started taking those college classes... A lot of them were like, 'oh, it's just like a lot of work a lot. It's usually easy, but it's a lot of work.' Or they were just like, 'Oh, it's the easiest thing in the world,' or whatever. Which [made me think], 'Oh, maybe I should have taken a college class.'

Paula: But then it was like halfway through my senior year. I was like, 'Oh, okay, I don't think I can join that.' But yeah, I feel like I wish I joined that class.

Looking at the Future

CCAP

Julie believes that CCAP is “mostly for people who have planned out what they want to be, have the ambition of what they want to be, or the people who want to get a jump start.” From Julie’s account, folks who take CCAP have a drive to succeed in school, where students “in those classes usually know why they’re in that class [and they] really wanted to pass that class.” She speaks with a breadth of intentionality, where she perceives CCAP students as driven individuals who think about their future.

Non-CCAP

In both focus groups, participants mentioned that CCAP students think about their future and are generally good at school (Paula calls these students “super scholars”). Emma says that Scripps is a “very good school,” where many students are “very good planners and [are] always looking at the future.” Following this logic, super scholars that take CCAP classes think about their future. But where does that place non-CCAP students?

This is a very particular kind of future with a very specific path to get there. If a student does not perceive themselves on the same academic level as a CCAP student, using CCAP for their future can feel like less of an option. Of course, the non-CCAP participants think about their future – all students do. What is troubling here is the sentiment that equates ‘good students’ to ‘students who plan for the future,’ which brands non-CCAP students as less smart and less academically capable than CCAP students. Thus, CCAP benefits the ‘future thinkers’ who sit atop the academic social ladder rather than the intended AB368 population.

Julie: I think it's mostly for people who have planned out what they want to be. Or either have the ambition of what they want to be. Or the people who want to get a jump start... The people that signed up to be in those classes usually know why they're in that class... But the people in a normal class that I would be in usually are like 'I don't want to be in this class, and I don't want to try, because I don't see myself with this kind of future.'

Emma: I don't know. I think Scripps Ranch is just a very good school academically. So there's a lot of kids that are very, you know, very good planners and always looking at the future. So yeah, a lot of my friends talked about it a lot. So I always knew what was going on.

Participant suggestions

Given how perception of CCAP is largely a social issue, CCAP improvements should be approached with the same social angle – in the name of equity, the institution and outreach should meet students where they are.

Participants suggested that CCAP advertisement should be done during student assemblies, pep rallies, or club rushes. They requested “one-on-one live talking” with outreach staff, a suggestion that is highly recommended because it is a direct information channel from program to student that equips students with ample information. These strategies enable outreach to directly communicate with students.

Outreach and marketing could also involve students to impact social imaginaries of CCAP. Kate suggested that SDCCD should involve the high school student councils. Because perceptions of CCAP are socially relative between student networks, involving the student council may be a particularly fruitful strategy. This could potentially influence social perceptions of the program among high schoolers, though this overall goal may be difficult.

Emma: I prefer better just a one-on-one live talking through benefits and stuff. So that would have been that would have been nice.

Julie: I was thinking assemblies... I think that's really cool because you get the entire school there to listen to you guys, so you guys can go into more depth.

Conclusion: Summary and Recommendations

In conclusion, the findings of this study shows that CCAP implementation (at least at two San Diego high schools), does not reach its intended student population for various social and institutional reasons. Student beliefs about the program are largely shaped by

friends, peers, and anecdotal accounts about the class (e.g., workload, course rigor, homework, and due dates). This fuels a pre-existing academic hierarchy (the hierarchy that the CCAP program was developed to dismantle) and divides non-CCAP students from more 'academically talented,' 'future thinking' students. This academic hierarchy existed before CCAP, but the program contributes to the hierarchy's continued harm to the student body by isolating non-CCAP students from CCAP students.

Uncertain about if they should take a CCAP course, students turn to their counselors for academic advising. While students generally felt supported by their respective counselors, they felt unsupported or uninformed for the CCAP conversation. Their social perceptions of CCAP coupled with their experiences with counselors shaped their decisions and sentiments about CCAP. These perceptions could be curbed with additional institutional support from SDCCD/SDUSD to counselors and students. While the sample size of this study was small, it nonetheless reveals gaps in support for students and counselors.

Thus, the status quo is twofold: 1) perceptions of CCAP influences how students view other students and themselves, and therefore CCAP enrollment, and 2) counselors have significant influence over CCAP enrollment. Considering these two areas, we present the following recommendations.

1) Counselor Support: SDCCD and SDUSD should provide additional support to counselors and pursue discovery of counselor needs to effectively promote CCAP equitably.

Counselors are in a position of power to positively inform student agency and choice regarding CCAP enrollment. Because counselors play a crucial role in CCAP enrollment, they should be well-informed about course content, available student support, and program outcomes so they can provide the most accurate and updated information to students. Counselors should encourage all students, especially the AB368 population, to enroll and follow-through if the student expresses interest. Counselors should engage in dialogue about how CCAP students are recommended or chosen.

SDCCD and SDUSD can provide institutional support to counselors in these efforts. Through their partnership, SDCCD Outreach should continue to provide resources to high school counselors with detailed information about CCAP course content and course transferability. SDCCD Outreach should also provide high school students and counselors with information related to support programs and services, particularly details about how high school students would be able to access college-based services.

SDUSD can perform program review to understand how counselors are recommending or selecting students for CCAP enrollment (e.g., if GPA is used as an enrollment filter), a practice that will inform CCAP enrollment practices. SDUSD can also

distribute CCAP materials to teachers, who have a less direct, but still significant, social influence with students.

2) Social Perception: Provide direct CCAP information to students to reduce the impact of social rumor. Cultivate a social perception of CCAP that markets it not as a resource for the academically advanced, but instead a pathway for career exploration and college experience for all students.

To avoid replicating existing perceptions of CCAP as another AP program through social rumor, information about CCAP from practitioners should directly impact how the program runs and the social rumor that bounces between students. Providing this direct information aims to influence rumors about the program (or at least curb the influence of rumors), enabling students to make more informed choices. Thus, SDCCD and SDUSD outreach teams should provide direct information to students.

Participants suggested that outreach teams advertise CCAP during student assemblies, pep rallies, or club rushes. Students requested, “one-on-one live talking” with outreach staff, a suggestion that is highly recommended because students are more likely to receive correct information about CCAP and support services they would be able to access.

Resources, such as QR codes to the CCAP website and a FAQ page, would also be a direct information source to shape perceptions of the program. Another potential solution is providing students with direct accounts of CCAP experiences. This may look like a peer mentor program, a video with student voices, or perhaps a collection of quotes from students.

Whatever these efforts look like, students should gain information about CCAP from direct sources rather than rumors. These strategies enable outreach to more directly communicate with students. Direct information will encourage students to make their own choice about CCAP enrollment and potentially curb/shape social perceptions and influence.

3) Targeted Outreach and Program Review: Engage in targeted outreach to the AB368 population. Continually engage in program effectiveness review and research (qualitative and quantitative) to measure equitable enrollment.

Because typical CCAP students (e.g., AP students) will enroll in CCAP regardless of marketing efforts, outreach efforts should focus on the intended AB368 population. This includes students who are “not already college bound,” which may include students who

are low-income, current or former foster youth, homeless, students with disabilities, and students with dependent children. The current strategy appears to only focus on equality rather than equity – this leaves students behind. Targeted outreach is an attempt to close equity gaps. It is not a matter of reducing current enrollment of ‘straight-A’ students. The goal is to fulfill the original purpose of AB368, which is to increase success of students who have historically been left behind by college prep programs. Thus, SDCCD and SDUSD should prioritize enrolling the intended AB368 population.

The institution should view CCAP not as a ‘way to get ahead,’ but as a program that fills a social deficit. CCAP marketing can continue to reach all students, but should shift energy and resources to reach CCAP’s intended population. For example, marketing verbiage could encourage students to apply even if they are not taking AP courses. SDUSD can also perform email or text campaigns to reach out to students if their demographic information is available. As changes are implemented, program review and research should continue to be done on CCAP to measure the effectiveness of these recommendations.

Further Research

As most qualitative research results in, this project unveiled more avenues of inquiry than we began with. Future research considerations include focus groups conducted with current high school students. Students who express interest in CCAP in a Spring term – when they make their schedules for the following year – and then do not enroll the following Fall term, may yield impactful data to recruitment and retention efforts. We should also speak to current CCAP students, an endeavor that should be a joint effort with SDCCD and SDUSD. We also would like to speak with employees who facilitate CCAP, such as counselors and instructors, to understand how their sentiment about CCAP impacts the delivery of the program.

A future project could also investigate how high school students view college (i.e. what it means to be ‘collegebound’) in the context of their academic performance and enrollment choices. ‘College’ as a theme surfaced in CCAP interviews – social discussion of college is the backdrop in which students decide to enroll or not into CCAP, and therefore should be explored.

Limitations

While this project was successful in unveiling student voices around CCAP, the scope of the study limited our participant numbers. More project funding would have enabled a stronger incentive (e.g., gift cards) to boost participation. Furthermore, this was a pilot study that limited participation to one of three credit colleges. Expanding this project to explore other themes and campuses would increase our sample size and data pool.

Appendices

Appendix A

Consent Form: Former CCAP Student Focus Groups

Study Purpose:

The Outreach Team at Miramar College is conducting focus groups with Miramar College students who have previously participated in the CCAP (College and Career Access Pathways) program at their high schools to better understand how the program impacted their experience in school. This study aims to improve the CCAP program by hearing from students who have gone through the program. Former CCAP students who are 18 or older and are currently enrolled in at least 4 units at Miramar College are invited to participate in this study.

Procedures:

If you participate in the focus group, you will be in a group with about six former CCAP students. The focus group will take between 1.5 and 2 hours. There will be one researcher from the San Diego Community College District guiding the discussion, and one other research staff taking notes and asking additional questions. Two members from the Miramar College Outreach Team will also be present to listen to you and ask additional questions. The focus group will take place at the Miramar College campus. Research staff will audio record the focus groups through Zoom and will transcribe the recordings afterwards.

If you choose to participate in the focus group, you will be asked questions about your experience as a former CCAP student. The answers provided by focus group members will be used to better understand the CCAP program and the impacts (if any) of CCAP on student educational experiences (e.g. high school, college, technical training etc.).

Your participation is voluntary. You may choose not to participate in this study or refuse to answer specific questions at any time without penalty. If you initially choose to participate but change your mind, you may stop participating at any time in the process.

Benefits and Risks:

As a thank you for participating in this study, the Miramar Outreach team will be providing you with giveaways and lunch. There are no other direct benefits or compensation for your participation. Your participation may benefit future San Diego Community College students by helping improve the CCAP program for current and future students.

Minor risks are expected in this study. If you choose to participate, you may experience discomfort similar to discomfort experienced in regular conversations discussing high school and current educational experiences. There is some risk that anonymity may not be fully protected, as certain SDCCD administrators may examine materials from the study, including this form. Confidentiality, however, will be protected to the fullest extent by all SDCCD personnel, and no identifying information will be released in transcripts of the focus groups or any reports referring to the focus groups.

There is also risk that other participants in the focus group will share information discussed in this study. All participants sign this document stating that they will not share any information provided by other students in this focus group. All participants also agree to keep the identities of other participants in this study confidential. Participants also agree not to take photographs or audio recordings while the focus group is in session.

Confidentiality:

Data from the focus group is confidential. All audio recordings and documents will be password protected in secure drives in the San Diego Community College District research office, and only key research personnel will access the data. Digital materials will be kept in password-protected folders on a secure drive. Transcriptions of the recorded focus groups will not contain names. Student Services administrators may have access to materials from this study, including this form. Only authorized, paid personnel will be able to access materials from this study. Analyzed information from this study will be provided as a report and/or presentation to SDCCD leadership or other stakeholders. No reports created using the information from these focus groups will contain any information that would identify participants.

Participant Consent:

- I am choosing to participate in this study.
- I understand the purpose of this study.
- I understand that notes will be collected during this focus group.
- I understand that this focus group will be audio recorded.
- I understand that I may choose to withdraw from the study, or choose not to answer certain questions at any time without penalty.
- I understand that there are minimal risks to this study.
- I understand that my confidentiality will be protected, but that some key SDCCD staff will have access to this form and other study materials.
- I understand that I may not disclose information provided by other participants in this focus group to anyone after the conclusion of the group. I understand that I may not share the identities of other participants in this study. I understand that I may not take photographs or recordings of the focus group.
- I understand that the information collected from this study will be presented to SDCCD leadership and other stakeholders. I understand that these reports or presentations will not contain my name, or other identifying information.
- I understand that if I have any questions or concerns, I may contact the persons listed at the bottom of this form.
- A research staff member will read me this form, and I understand its contents.

Participant signature: _____

Printed name: _____

Date: _____

Researcher Signature:

- I will read this form to participants before collecting any information.
- I will not disclose participant information to unauthorized persons.

- I will protect the confidentiality of participants, and maintain all raw study materials in a secure location within the SDCCD research office.

Researcher signature: _____

Printed name: _____

Date: _____

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study, please contact your facilitator Jaime Sykes (*they/them/theirs*) at jsykes@sdccd.edu/619-388-6802, or the Director of the SDCCD Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Research Natalia Córdoba-Velásquez Alarcón (*she/her/hers*) at nalarcon@sdccd.edu/619-388-6723.

Appendix B

Consent Form:

CCAP Non-Participant Student Focus Groups

Study Purpose:

The Outreach Team at Miramar College is conducting focus groups with Miramar College students who did not participate in the CCAP (College and Career Access Pathways) program at their high schools to better understand why students choose to participate or not in the CCAP program and how participation in the program impacts student education experiences. This study aims to improve the CCAP program by hearing from students who have not gone through the program. Students who are 18 or older and are currently enrolled in at least 4 units at Miramar College and did not participate in CCAP are invited to participate in this study.

Procedures:

If you participate in the focus group, you will be in a group with about six other students. The focus group will take between 1.5 and 2 hours. There will be one researcher from the San Diego Community College District guiding the discussion, and one other research staff taking notes and asking additional questions. Two members from the Miramar College Outreach Team will also be present to listen to you and ask additional questions. The focus group will take place at the Miramar College campus. Research staff will record the focus groups through Zoom and will transcribe the recordings afterwards.

If you choose to participate in the focus group, you will be asked questions about your former and current academic experiences, and why you did not participate in CCAP. The answers provided by focus group members will be used to better understand the CCAP program and the impacts (if any) of not participating on enrollment on student education experiences (e.g. high school, college, technical training etc.).

Your participation is voluntary. You may choose not to participate in this study or refuse to answer specific questions at any time without penalty. If you initially choose to participate but change your mind, you may stop participating at any time in the process.

Benefits and Risks:

As a thank you for participating in this study, the Miramar Outreach team will be providing you with giveaways and lunch. There are no other direct benefits or compensation for your participation. Your participation may benefit future San Diego Community College students by helping improve the CCAP program for current and future students.

Minor risks are expected in this study. If you choose to participate, you may experience discomfort similar to discomfort experienced in regular conversations discussing high school and current educational experiences. There is some risk that anonymity may not be fully protected, as certain SDCCD administrators may examine materials from the study, including this form. Confidentiality, however, will be protected to the fullest extent by all SDCCD personnel, and no identifying information will be released in transcripts of the focus groups or any reports referring to the focus groups.

There is also risk that other participants in the focus group will share information discussed in this study. All participants sign this document stating that they will not share any information provided by other students in this focus group. All participants also agree to keep the identities of other participants in this study confidential. Participants also agree not to take photographs or audio recordings while the focus group is in session.

Confidentiality:

Data from the focus group is confidential. All audio recordings and documents will be password protected in secure drives in the San Diego Community College District research office, and only key research personnel will access the data. Digital materials will be kept in password-protected folders on a secure drive. Transcriptions of the recorded focus groups will not contain names. Student Services administrators may have access to materials from this study, including this form. Only authorized, paid personnel will be able to access materials from this study. Analyzed information from this study will be provided as a report

and/or presentation to SDCCD leadership or other stakeholders. No reports created using the information from these focus groups will contain any information that would identify participants.

Participant Consent:

- I am choosing to participate in this study.
- I understand the purpose of this study.
- I understand that notes will be collected during this focus group.
- I understand that this focus group will be audio recorded.
- I understand that I may choose to withdraw from the study, or choose not to answer certain questions at any time without penalty.
- I understand that there are minimal risks to this study.
- I understand that my confidentiality will be protected, but that some key SDCCD staff will have access to this form and other study materials.
- I understand that I may not disclose information provided by other participants in this focus group to anyone after the conclusion of the group. I understand that I may not share the identities of other participants in this study. I understand that I may not take photographs or recordings of the focus group.
- I understand that the information collected from this study will be presented to SDCCD leadership and other stakeholders. I understand that these reports or presentations will not contain my name, or other identifying information.
- I understand that if I have any questions or concerns, I may contact the persons listed at the bottom of this form.
- A research staff member will read me this form, and I understand its contents.

Participant signature: _____

Printed name: _____

Date: _____

Researcher Signature:

- I will read this form to participants before collecting any information.
- I will not disclose participant information to unauthorized persons.
- I will protect the confidentiality of participants, and maintain all raw study materials in a secure location within the SDCCD research office.

Researcher signature: _____

Printed name: _____

Date: _____

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study, please contact your facilitator Jaime Sykes (*they/them/theirs*) at jsykes@sdccd.edu/619-388-6802, or the Director of the SDCCD Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Research Natalia Córdoba-Velásquez Alarcón (*she/her/hers*) at nalarcon@sdccd.edu/619-388-6723.

Appendix C

Guided Questions (90-100 minutes)

For groups of students who **did** participate in CCAP:

1. How did you learn about the CCAP program at your high school?
 - a. Prompt on first encounter
 - b. Prompt on parent night
2. Who or what influenced you to participate in the CCAP program?
3. Did you experience any challenges in getting started with the CCAP program or was the process easy for you?
4. Was it easy or difficult for you to find information related to the CCAP program at your school?
5. What is your understanding of which students the CCAP program at your school is for?
 - a. (potentially follow up) At your high school, what kind of a reputation did CCAP classes have?
 - b. (in layman's terms, if needed) In your view, who is CCAP for?
6. What was your experience like in your CCAP classes?
7. Why did you decide to continue with Miramar College?
 - a. Did your experience in CCAP help shape that decision, or was it unrelated?
 - b. What was your impression of Miramar College before you became a student at the college campus? What about now that you attend? Did your experience in CCAP influence your general feelings towards Miramar College?
8. How ready did you feel for college after high school? Do you feel that the CCAP program influenced your readiness for college in any way? Please let us know how if it did!
9. When you were a CCAP student, did you feel supported by your college?
 - a. How can we better support students with information, services, etc.?

Appendix D

Guided Questions (90-100 minutes)

For groups of students who **did NOT** participate in CCAP:

1. Were you aware of the CCAP program at your high school?
 - a. If you were aware, what was your first encounter with the CCAP program?
2. Who or what influenced your decision not to participate in the CCAP program if anything?
3. Was it easy or difficult for you to find information related to the CCAP program at your school?
4. What is your understanding of which students the CCAP program at your school is for?
5. Why did you decide to attend Miramar College?
 - a. What was your impression of the college before you were a student here?
How about now that you are attending?
6. How ready did you feel for college after high school?
 - a. Are there any programs or services that you think may have helped you get ready for college at your school?

Do you have any ideas for the Miramar College Outreach team on how they can better support students learn more about CCAP at your school with more information, services, etc.?