

I'M A SCHOLAR-ACTIVIST- HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS' EXPERIENCES IN A SOCIAL JUSTICE COLLEGE ACCESS PROGRAM



UCLA VIP Scholars Program

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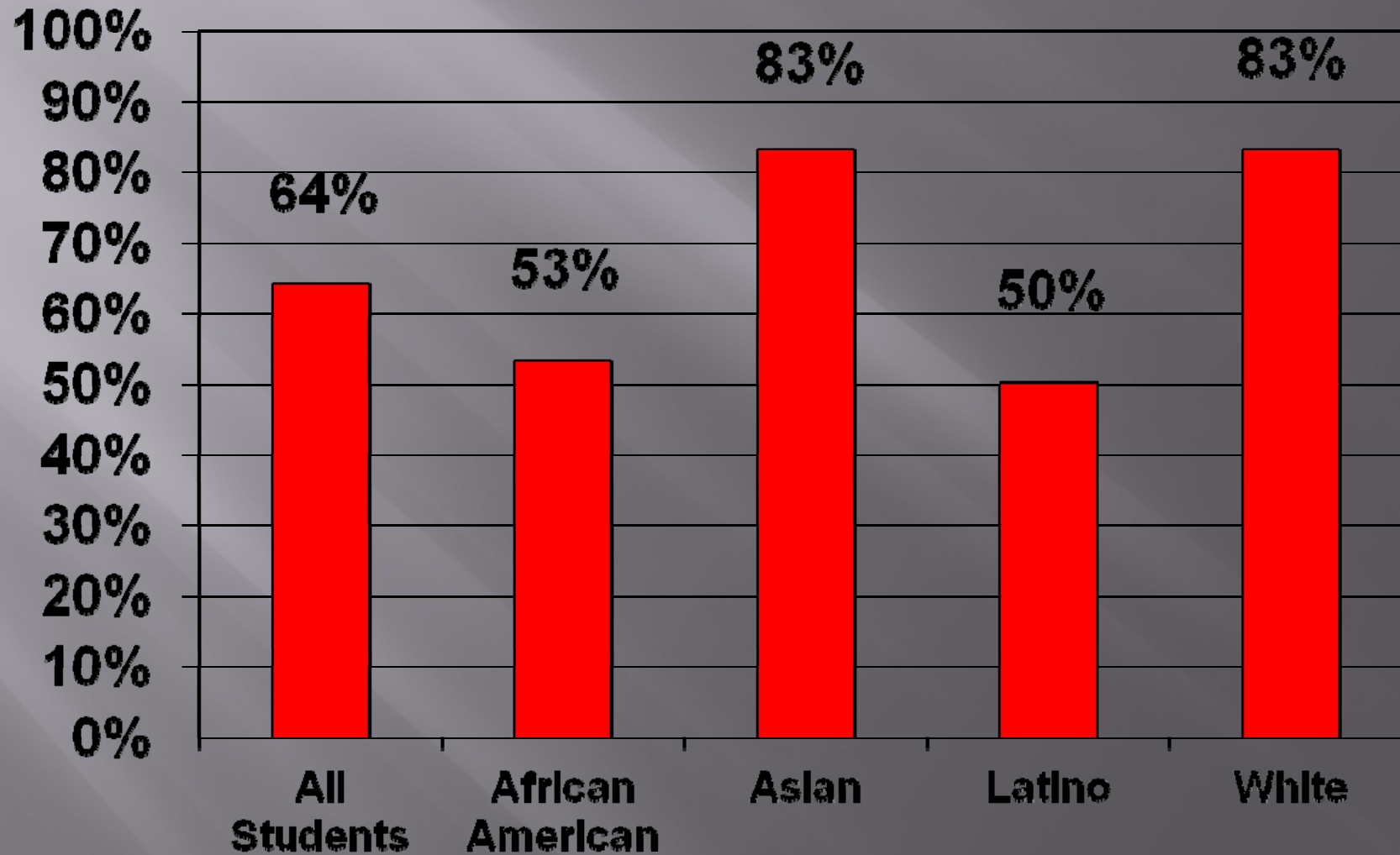
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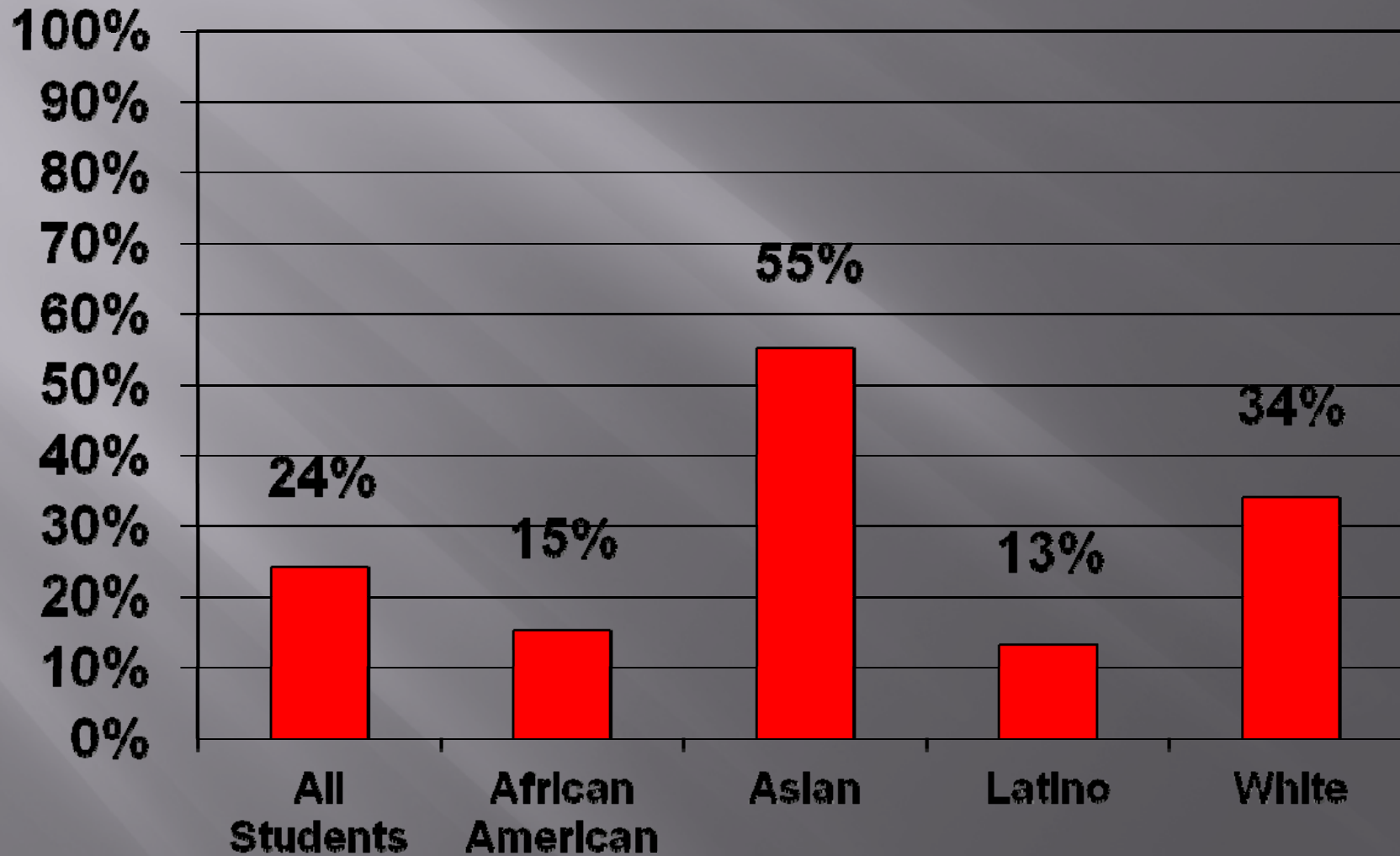
College Board Conference 2012

California Graduate Rates - Class of 2007



Even Fewer Students Are College Ready*

California: Class of 2007



*Includes 9th graders who have completed the A-G course sequence with a "C" or better in each class four years later.

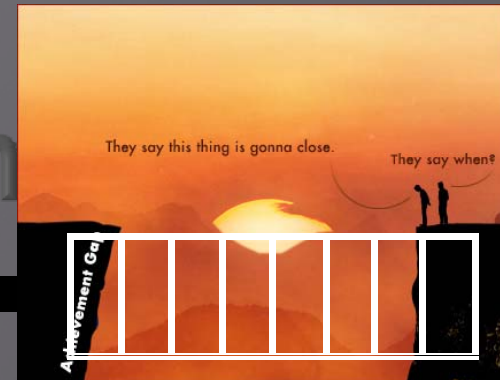
Problems in Urban Schools

- ▣ Increase in Quality of Service Gap
- ▣ Over-crowded Classrooms
- ▣ Lack of Resources (books, computers)
- ▣ Low Teacher Expectations
- ▣ Inexperienced/Unqualified Teachers
- ▣ Dilapidated School Infrastructures
- ▣ Lack of College-Going Culture

Overview of Problem

- ❖ **Under-representation of African American students in higher education**
- ❖ Even with significant gains in the 1990s, students from under-represented minority groups have not experienced substantial increases in college-going rates (Gandara, 2001)
- ❖ African American and Latino students make up over 53% of California's population but less than 20% of the UC system

College-Access Program



- ❖ Mitigate the failures of urban schools to prepare students for college by providing college access information to students who are denied access in urban schools.
- ❖ Counter negative school or community influences (lack of rigorous curriculum, poorly trained teachers, lack of role models) by providing missing elements that help students aspire to, prepare for, and obtain college enrollment (Gullatt & Jan, 2002).

Potential To Do More

❖ Limitations of College-Access Programs

- ✓ Small number of program participants
- ✓ Situated outside of the school
- ✓ Limited holistic concern and focus on community

❖ Shift focus on communities and schools, NOT just individual participants through the inclusion of a social justice framework

- ✓ Development of Critical Consciousness and Engagement in Critical Action

VIP Scholars

❖ VIP Scholars

❖ College-Access program with intentional focus on social justice and developing critical consciousness in participants

❖ College-Access information and preparation

❖ Social justice theme reflected in every aspect of residential summer program: courses, reading material, workshops, field trips, etc.



VIP Scholars Mission

UCLA's VIP Scholars Program is a partnership between UCLA and the Los Angeles and Pasadena school districts that prepares historically underrepresented students, specifically African American students, in 10 high schools to become competitively eligible for admission to UCLA and other flagship universities, and to encourage pursuit of graduate and professional education, using a social justice framework and holistic approach.

High School Sites

▣ Los Angeles

- Crenshaw
- Dorsey
- Hamilton
- King Drew
- LACES
- Westchester

■ Pasadena

- Blair
- Marshall
- Muir
- Pasadena

Program Divisions

▣ Programmatic

- Mentoring
- Parent Night
- Buddy Day
- Saturday Academy

▣ Systemic

- Professional Development
- Partnerships & Networks

▣ Evaluation & Research

- Collect and analyze program data
- Determine program effectiveness

VIP Scholars

RESIDENTIAL SUMMER PROGRAM SOCIAL JUSTICE THEME

-3- Week Program

-

Rising HS juniors
Writing Course

-5- Week Program

-

Rising HS seniors
Education 98

-Both Programs-

Mentoring
Workshops
Films & Discussions

Residential Summer Program

▣ 3-Week Program

- Rising HS juniors
- Writing course
- SAT preparation course
- Book club

■ 5-Week Program

- Rising HS seniors
- Education 98
- Fiat Lux
- Admissions course

■ Both Programs

- Mentoring
- Cultural awareness
- Themes
- Field trips
- Workshops
- Films & discussions

Culturally Relevant Curriculum

- ▣ Values students' lived experiences & language
- ▣ Values the historical experiences and contributions of African-Americans
- ▣ Counters dominant narratives
- ▣ Strengthens students' cultural identity
- ▣ Embraces student-centered classrooms
- ▣ Education 98: Problem-posing, student-initiated research, reflective journals

Matriculation for the First Four Cohorts

	Size	UCLA		Other UC Campus		Cal State University		Private University		Other 4 Year College or University		Community College		Other*	
		n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Cohort I	30	47%	14	23%	7	7%	2	7%	2	7%	2	10%	3	3%	1
Cohort II	29	21%	6	45%	13	10%	3	10%	3	7%	2	10%	3	7%	2
Cohort III	31	26%	8	19%	6	10%	3	23%	7	1%	1	10%	3	10%	3
Cohort IV	29	38%	11	35%	10	10%	3	17%	5	0%	0	1%	0	0%	0
Total	119	33%	39	31%	36	9%	11	14%	12	6%	5	10%	9	7%	6

Table 1 summarizes where VIP Scholars are now attending. Private universities include Emory, Morehouse, Oberlin, Stanford, Yale, and Wellesley. Table 1. VIP Scholars College Matriculation for the First Four Cohorts* Other = community colleges; technical colleges/schools, or armed forces (1); unknown or did not enroll

Critical Consciousness- Action

“Critical consciousness in terms of like just being a student is acquiring this knowledge right, and now being cognizant of all the injustices or the prejudice in school or in life period, right, and not only that and kind of holding it and striking when you see it, but actually educating and actually like acting on it. ..It’s just putting that knowledge to play, not just letting it go to waste sort of just keeping it yourself ” (Junior, Cohort 3)

The Mis-Education

INDIA

“ I used to think it was just individual problems. Oh you couldn't go to college I was going to college we were from the same neighborhood there was something wrong with you, like you didn't have the motivation. But now I've noticed that, it's bigger than the individual. Its systematic, institutional problems. So I've learned that, and also to like have more agency. And also make people accountable, I didn't usually make people accountable” (Cohort 2)

Collective Consciousness- Action

- ❖ “...it was really important that we learned what we did and kind of came together, so we can be able to not only understand for ourselves what’s going on but sort of educate our fellow black community...” (Nicole, Cohort 3)
- ❖ “Critical consciousness taught me it’s not just about yourself, it’s about everybody in the community. You gotta build the community help. And if anybody needed help, I would be sure to help them. ...” (Rock, Cohort 2)

II. Critical Action

Development of critical consciousness leads to involvement in critical action

“I just know that I want to change injustice...”

(Camille, Cohort 3)

Student Activism in Communities and Schools

- Student participants advocate for change
- Students provide resources school campuses lack
- Students spread knowledge
- Student improve school conditions



VIP Scholars Clubs

- ▣ Develop Student Leaders
- ▣ Students Serve as Ambassadors
- ▣ Students Organize:
 - College Preparation Workshops
 - College Visits
 - Cultural Events
 - Academic Workshops

Critical Action-Information Sharing

- ❖ **Junior VIPS Club**
 - ✓ Freshmen Retention
- ❖ **YEBOS**
 - ✓ College-Access Information
- ❖ **Informal Sharing and Assistance**
- ❖ **Current Positions**

Individual Action

Cohort 1 Student: Asia Wilson

- ▣ Created Research Project
- ▣ Arranged Presentations at School
- ▣ Demanded School be Given Resources

Collective Action

Meeting with the Chancellor

- ❖ “... We organized a meeting with the Chancellor, and we did all this research to present like what was going on...we had like a survey...just asking people do you see any racial tension around UCLA’s campus...” (Sarah, Cohort 3)

The “N-Word”

- ❖ “Before, Sarah said that “I think I would have let it go. That word, when other people use the word, like other races, that always bothered me, but I definitely wouldn’t have responded prior to the program.”

Impact on College Involvement and Experience

- ❖ Extracurricular Involvement
- ❖ Jobs
- ❖ Black student on a college campus
 - ✓ Micro-Aggressions
 - ✓ Teaching/Learning Experiences

Impact on Education and Career Goals

- ❖ Careers in Education
- ❖ Inclusion of social justice in non-education fields

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