The SDSU Pre-College Institute (PCI) promotes college access and completion for underserved students, implements innovative programs to enhance excellence in teaching and learning in multicultural settings, and studies their outcomes.

Founded in 1983, by Executive Director, Dr. Cynthia Park, PCI provides an invaluable service to our communities’ multicultural low-income, underrepresented, and underserved students.

SDSU Talent Search is one of PCI’s programs and its overall goal is to enable 1516 low-income and potential first-generation college students to complete secondary school, meeting the requirements of a rigorous curriculum and to enroll in a post-secondary education program of their choice with financial aid.

In this newsletter, you will find a description of the events that SDSU Talent Search offered during the 2019-2020 academic year. In addition, you will find demographic data of our student population, our response to the COVID-19 pandemic and our plan for virtual service offerings!
We serve a multicultural student population representing local communities. Our project participants identified themselves by the following categories:

- Asian: 17.1%
- Black: 11.8%
- 2 or More: 2.1%
- Other/Unknown: 2%

**Grade Level Distribution of Student Participants**

- 6th: 100
- 7th: 50
- 8th: 30
- 9th: 45
- 10th: 20
- 11th: 15
- 12th: 5

**ETHNICITY & RACE**

- African-American: 17.15%
- Hispanic or Latino: 63.73%
- Asian: 11.83%
- Native American: 0.07%
- Pacific Islander: 1.58%
- White: 1.51%
- 2 or More: 2.06%
- Unknown: 0.77%

Our project participants identified themselves by the following categories:

- Low Income & 1st Generation: 62.60%
- Low Income: 16.10%
- Neither: 4.93%
- 1st Generation: 6.37%
- 2 or More: 2.10%

Headline: **1522 TOTAL STUDENTS SERVED**

- Tutoring: 1039
- Advising: 461
- STEM Day: 147
- Destination: College: 116

*Note: some students received more than one service*

**OUR HIGH SCHOOLS**

- Southwest: 62
- Montgomery: 62
- Lincoln: 239
- Crawford: 164
- Castle Park: 125
- Morse: 148
- Hoover: 169
- O’Farrell: 137

**POST-SECONDARY ENROLLMENT**

- 2018-2019 STUDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

- SDSU Pre-College Institute Talent Search Annual Performance Review

- Female: 58%
- Male: 42%

- 93.65% Of our seniors enrolled in a post-secondary institution in the fall semester after high school graduation.

- San Diego State University, CSU San Marcos, San Diego City College, Mesa College, Southwestern College, Grossmont College, and Cuyamaca College.

- Other campuses include: Miles College, Point Loma Nazarene University, University of San Francisco, University of Puget Sound, California Lutheran University, UC Irvine, UC Santa Barbara, CSU Bakersfield, CSU Los Angeles, CSU Monterey Bay, Arizona State University, Grambling State University, Western Washington University, De Anza College, FIDM, and Mount San Jacinto College.

*In any given [Talent Search] project, two-thirds of the participants must be students who are low-income and potential first-generation college students* (U.S. Department of Education)
On September 14th, 2019, Talent Search students arrived at San Diego State University for a college-ready workshop. Our rising seniors received information on the FAFSA application, UC/CSU prompt writing tips and insights for telling their story in their college personal statement. Talent Search advisors and High Bluff Academy AP teacher, Geoff Stevens, presented on the previously mentioned topics and provided students with a folder of senior year tools and worksheets, as well as a pocket-version of our Student Handbook, which contained additional college information.

FINANCIAL AID NIGHTS

COLLABORATION WITH CAL-SOAP & HIGH SCHOOLS
In a collaborative effort to invite students and their families to understand college financial aid, the SDSU Pre-College Institute joined Cal-SOAP and high school staff members facilitating Financial Aid Nights. Both Talent Search and Upward Bound staff volunteered their time to provide guidance and support, translating the presentations and answering questions regarding financial aid and college applications.

MONTHLY GROUP MEETINGS
AT OUR PARTICIPATING HIGH SCHOOLS
Every month, our Talent Search Advisors invite their students to participate in group meetings by grade level. Also known as "pizza meetings", they provide a space for students to have lunch together and hear presentations about college and upcoming events and opportunities. Some of the topics for this semester's pizza meetings included:
- Career Exploration
- Financial Aid
- Resume and Interviewing Tips
- Post-Secondary Education Options, and
- Communication Techniques

ADVISOR SPOTLIGHT: ANWAR SHARIFF
LINCOLN & HOOVER HIGH SCHOOL
This past year, Talent Search Advisors Anwar Shariff and Rachel Rojas created a partnership with Hoover High School’s student-run organization, Brothers of Excellence (BOE). BOE is a group that focuses on the upliftment of young men of color through tutoring, volunteering and mentorship. They meet weekly and discuss important current events that they see as impacting them directly. Thanks to Mr. Shariff, Talent Search was able to partner with the group by offering advising services, assistance with the completion of college applications and mentorship. This program is especially impactful to young men of color as it offers them the experience of personal and professional mentorship.

Mr. Shariff was also instrumental in collaborating with the Elementary Institute of Science (EIS). Four Talent Search students took the opportunity to apply and were accepted into the prestigious Lab Assistant Program where they got to work directly with science instructors on a weekly basis to teach STEM basics to local elementary school students. In addition to gaining service hours, they were also able to gain hands-on experience with leadership and applied science. Lincoln High School junior Bryan Benavides also earned an all-expense paid scholarship to a month-long science expedition in the Grand Teton National Park in Jackson Hole, Wyoming!
STEM EXPLORATION DAY
SAN DIEGO STATE UNIVERSITY

On November 8th, 2019, the SDSU Pre-College Institute hosted a community engagement project: STEM Exploration Day. A total of 336 High School students from 14 partner schools participated in this day-long event. As the name implies, STEM Exploration Day focused on workshops, labs, presentations, student panels and hands-on activities related to the Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics fields.

The Pre-College Institute partnered with SDSU professors, student organizations, community organizations, local businesses and subject matter experts to host the event. The implementation of STEM Exploration Day served multiple purposes and allowed all stakeholders to benefit:

- **SDSU PCI**: opportunity to recruit student participants
- **Current SDSU Students**: showcase work & share experience
- **Student Organizations**: fulfill promise to community
- **Future Students**: learn from peer mentors & community
- **Professors**: showcase research, lab & learning opportunities
- **Partners**: share about program & hands-on activities

Each group of students experienced three hands-on workshops/activities and reunited towards the end of the day for a final STEM Exploration Day closing ceremony/rally. Some of the presenters and activities included:

- **Planetarium Show**
- **The Art & Science of Theater**
- **DNA Extraction Genomics 101**
- **Structural Biochemistry Lab**
- **Electronics & Systems Design**
- **Hands-on Molecular Modeling**
- **STEM Library Makerspace**
- **Sediment Microbial Fuel Cells**
- **The Scientific Method**
- **SACNAS**
- **Marine Ecology & Biology Student Association**
- **RP Ocean’s Lab**
- **Hip Hop Math**
- **Viz Center Lab**
- **Smart Budgeting**
- **Chem Sciences Lab**
- **Egg Drop Experience**

Throughout the event, students were encouraged to participate in a social media photo contest that emphasized PCI’s STEM Day, National STEM Day and National First Generation Day. The winners were recognized at our closing ceremony.

**SAVE THE DATE:**
11/6/20 STEM EXPLORATION DAY!
On National College Signing Day, May 1st of 2020, we invited Talent Search students to share with us their post-secondary education plans. Much like the U.S. Department of Education and various programs across the country, we celebrated all of our students, especially our first-generation students, for choosing their destination in higher education. We held a photo contest for our seniors, asking them to send us a picture of themselves and holding a sign of the university or college of their choice. We shared their pictures in our social media platforms and gave away three Amazon gift cards for the 1st, 2nd and 3rd place! Take a look below!

**VIRTUAL OPEN HOURS**

**YOUTUBE**

In April 2020, our team created our own YouTube channel to upload videos explaining college processes and terminology. We wanted to have a way to present information to our students that is clear and available at their convenience. Some of the topics include: financial literacy, student intent to register (SIR), tips for deciding on a college, application process and things to consider when applying to community colleges, and how to use Zoom.

**SIGNING DAY PHOTO CONTEST**

**ALL PARTNER HIGH SCHOOLS**

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1. Mariana Perezchica
   Castle Park
   University of San Diego

2. Byaombe Mloko
   Crawford
   CSU, San Marcos

3. Amy Garcia
   Montgomery
   CSU, San Marcos
Virtual Graduations

TALENT SEARCH GRADUATION SASHES

Every year, we provide our participating senior students a Talent Search sash so they can wear it at their graduation ceremony (if their high school allows it). We didn’t want our students to miss out on this tradition because of COVID-19, so we decided to mail their sashes to them instead!

More than 150 sashes were delivered to students from our eight partner schools and they appreciated the gesture.

Graduation Video

Although our staff could not be present at our students’ graduation ceremonies, as in previous years, we wanted to take a moment to congratulate our Class of 2020 graduates. All our SDSU Talent Search Advisors recorded a short message for their graduating students and we published our finished video on our social media platforms. Click the image at the bottom right to view it.

We also asked our students to share their creative graduation pictures with us so we could celebrate with them!

Student Resource Website

Our Student Resource Website has a new look! As you already know, this website is designed specifically for you, SDSU Talent Search student. Click on the following links to explore our Resource Website:

- COVID-19 Resources (NEW)
- Calendar Events (NEW)
- Scholarships
- Career Exploration
- College Preparation (financial aid, A-G, tips for choosing a college...)
- Professional Development (interviews, resume, study tips, self-care...)
- Community Resources (crisis hotlines, low-cost/free counseling...)
- About Us (NEW)
- Contact Us

Click here to view our Grad Video!
Summer Leadership Academy

For the third consecutive year, SDSU Talent Search hosted the Summer Leadership Academy (SLA), a week-long early outreach intervention experience for incoming 9th-12th graders from our 8 participating high schools. The week-long camp took place virtually via Zoom from August 10th to August 14th, 2020. This year, SLA focused on Digital Story Telling and student participants had the opportunity to create stories around three different topics:

1. Coming to America: An Immigration Story
2. COVID-19: A Survival Story

Participants learned the key aspects of storytelling and the program culminated in the presentation of their digital narratives to an online audience. Talent Search was also able to partner with SDSU students via the Pathways program who provided interested college students with the opportunity to support, guide and inspire the next generation of scholars!

Young Scholars Program-REACH

YSP-REACH is a program through the Center for Neuro-technology, a National Science Foundation Engineering Research Center headquartered at University of Washington, with MIT and SDSU as core partners.

SDSU professor, Dr. Mahasweta Sarkar, is the center’s co-director of education, and partnered with the SDSU Talent Search to connect with talented young scholars from local high schools. This highly selective week-long summer program exposed 14 students to neural engineering research.

The camp took place virtually through Zoom and was completely FREE and phone-friendly for the student participants. Each student had the opportunity to present their idea for a health application, potential contributions to the neuroscience field, and their possible interest of study to the rest of the class.
Beyond summer melt, students might face additional obstacles during their time in college, especially their first year and with COVID-19 ramifications. Destination:Degree is another SDSU Pre-College Institute initiative to support our students in the completion of their post-secondary education. During Destination:College, Advisors identified the priority students who might need additional assistance once in college. Our Research Assistant will reach out to these students during Destination:Degree, determining needs and issues to address, and creating protocols and best practices to implement for following years.

Meet your Destination:Degree advisor, Fernanda Miramontes! She will be available to support you during your first year of college.
Who are we?

San Diego State University Talent Search is a program funded by the U.S. Department of Education to assist students in pursuing a post-secondary education. **Talent Search is a FREE program** open to eligible 9th-12th grade students at participating high schools. Contact your advisor today to see how Talent Search can help you!

What do we do?

- Help you choose the classes you need for college
- Career exploration
- In-class tutoring provided by Pathways tutors
- Assist you with selecting/applying to university, college or vocational schools
- Assist you with applying for financial aid, grants & scholarships
- Provide information on SAT/ACT tests, fee waivers & assist with registration
- Field trips to college campuses!
- Graduation sash for active participants!

How do I join?

A completed application is required for participation. Though our program targets students from low-income households who are the first in their families to pursue a college degree, up to 1/3 of our students do not meet these qualifications. A signed verification of your family’s income is needed for reporting purposes. This information is kept confidential and used only to meet U.S. Department of Education regulations.

Participating Schools:

**High schools:** Castle Park, Crawford, Hoover, Lincoln, Morse, Montgomery, O’Farrell and Southwest

**Middle schools:** Horace Mann, Monroe Clark, O’Farrell, Woodrow Wilson and Bell

Contact Us:

If you have any questions or you would like a Talent Search Advisor to do a class presentation about college or university, feel free to contact us.
ONE-ON-ONE OUTREACH

**Students:** Talent Search Advisors will reach out to students after school or during independent study time via phone call, text, email or Zoom meeting.

**Parents/guardians:** Advisors will discuss student's college application and financial aid plan, upon availability.

RECRUITMENT

Our recruitment strategies include teacher referrals, **STEM Exploration Day** participation and the following student referral campaign:

Current students and Talent Search alumni are encouraged to refer a friend or family member to our program. Each referral is an entry to win a $50 gift-card!

WEEKLY MESSAGE

Talent Search Advisors will send weekly text messages regarding upcoming opportunities, important deadlines, motivational messages, etc.

MONTHLY MEETINGS

**Students:** Grade-specific group meetings with students from our partners schools. Taking place at the end of the month to inform students and engage them with interactive activities that enhance their skills and support their socio-emotional well-being.

**Parents/guardians:** Two meetings per semester to share general information about student participation.

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER CALENDAR

**Students:** Participants will receive a digital, grade-specific calendar with embedded links for relevant events, wellness opportunities, career-related opportunities, college-related dates, and major scholarship deadlines, etc.

**Parents/guardians:** Similar to our students, we will send a grade-specific newsletter-calendar to their families.

CURRICULUM OFFERINGS

**School partners:** Talent Search Advisors can provide college-related information and workshops to your students. Our areas of expertise include: financial aid, personal insight questions writing tips, setting SMART goals, digital story telling, and service learning projects, among others.

TUTORING BY PATHWAYS

**Students** have access to free one-on-one tutoring from SDSU students in the following subjects:

- Math I
- Math II
- Math III
- Calculus
- Biology
- Chemistry
- Physics
- Economics
- History
- English/Language Arts
- Spanish

[Click here to request a tutor!](#)
MEET OUR STAFF

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