INTRODUCTION AND RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

The Office of Academic Support and Instructional Services (OASIS) is the learning center at UC, San Diego. The OASIS mission and vision statements, respectively, are included in the appendix. OASIS, which has existed for over thirty-five years, provides much of the university’s academic support for undergraduate students. This report describes OASIS’ programs and services and analyzes the results of a recent survey on the contribution of OASIS to various learning outcomes among UCSD alumni who utilized OASIS.

As UCSD’s learning center, OASIS contributes to the teaching and learning mission of the university. More specifically, OASIS seeks to contribute to a range of student development and learning outcomes for the students we serve, including:

- Persistence to graduation (Tinto, 2012, 2005, 2003; Braxton, 2000)
- Achievement--course grades and subsequent access to post-graduate opportunities (Charles et al., 2009)
- Learning and development outcomes (ACPA/NASPA, 2004; Pascarella and Terenzini, 2005, 1991)—a broad range of student learning outcomes including:
  1. content knowledge
  2. communication (verbal and written)
  3. conceptual, analytical, and critical thinking
  4. problem solving
  5. post-formal reasoning
  6. interpersonal skills and ability to work collaboratively
  7. conceptual differentiation and integration/synthesis
  8. identity
  9. sense of competence
  10. commitments
  11. interdependence
  12. cultural competence
  13. civic engagement and commitment to social justice

The programs and services implemented by OASIS are informed by theory and research on college student development and learning. They reflect a *praxis* or connection between educational theory and practice (Darder, 2011, 2005; Freire, 1970; Maldonado et al., 2005). While an exhaustive treatment of such literature is beyond the scope of this report, OASIS utilizes—from such
scholarship—a number of educational principles and strategies that contribute to student outcomes:

• Providing challenge and support—a pedagogy of excellence rather than remediation (Boylan et al., 2005; King & Shuford, 1996; Kuh et al., 2010)

• Facilitating awareness of and appreciation for students’ diverse backgrounds and their contribution to the learning environment (Milem et al., 2005; Milem and Hakuta, 2000; Smith et al., 1997)

• Providing direct academic support/tutoring (Laufgraben et al., 2004; Nora et al., 1996; Smith, 2009; Smith et al., 1997; Smith et al., 2004; Tinto, 2012; Weinsheimer, 1997)

• Facilitating collaborative learning (Hurtado et al., 1999; Laufgraben et al., 2004; Millis, 2002; Smith, 2009; Smith et al., 2004; Tinto, 2005, 2000, 1997)

• Facilitating consistent student interaction with faculty and staff (Charles et al., 2009; Pascarella and Terenzini, 2005; Tinto, 2012, 1993)

• Providing validation of students through positive feedback, personalized services, dissemination of information about resources, etc. (Rendon, 2012; Rendon et al., 2000)

• Facilitating peer-to-peer learning inside and outside of class (Astin, 1993; Hurtado, 2012; Pascarella and Terenzini, 2005; Tinto, 2012, 1993)

• Mentoring new students, utilizing both undergraduates and professionals as mentors (Gandara and Contreras, 2009; Hurtado, 2012; Tinto, 2012)

• Facilitating “membership” and a sense of belonging in the university community (Hurtado and Carter, 1997; Ortiz and Santos, 2009)

• Facilitating early academic and social integration (Tinto, 2005; Braxton et al., 1997)

• Increasing “time on task” in academic work and other learning contexts (Smith et al., 2004; Tinto, 2000)

• Facilitating involvement—academic and sociocultural (Astin, 1993; Pascarella and Terenzini, 2005)

• Facilitating the acquisition of cultural and social capital (Berger, 2000; Massey et al., 2003; Maldonado et al., 2005; Stanton-Salazar, 2005; Strayhorn, 2012)
• Utilizing culturally inclusive or “culturally sustaining” pedagogy that validates diverse students (Bain, 2004; Gándara and Contreras, 2009; Ladson and Billings, 1997; Paris, 2012; Smith et al., 2004; Wlodkowski and Ginsberg, 1995)

• Facilitating “deep” learning (as opposed to surface learning) and the social construction of knowledge (Bain, 2004; Smith et al., 2004)

• Facilitating interdisciplinary connections (Laufgraben et al., 2004)

• Contributing to the development of students’ ethnic identity, which is associated with academic self-efficacy, sense of belonging, cultural competence, and other outcomes (Maramba and Velasquez, 2010; Ortiz and Santos, 2009)

The use of these principles enables OASIS to provide a challenging, supportive educational environment that uses effective pedagogy and service delivery to maximize student outcomes. These strategies reflect the transformations in undergraduate education described by Smith et al., (2004) as the movement “from a teaching to a learning paradigm (page 12).”

MORE RECENT RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

Other recent sources of scholarly literature on successful college students reflect strategies and services implemented by OASIS. A number of higher education scholars utilize quantitative and/or qualitative data to identify the needs of OASIS priority students, e.g., historically underrepresented students, along with effective educational interventions.

Camille Charles and Douglas Massey-- Retention and Achievement of Students at Selective Universities

Camille Charles and Douglas Massey are members of a research team that published two books examining the educational trajectory of students who attend selective institutions of higher education. The first, The Source of the River (2003), studies the pre-college experiences of African American, Asian American, Latino, and White students, respectively, at such institutions. The second, Taming the River (2009), looks at the educational experiences of the same students throughout their first two years of college. In this second work, Charles et al. focus on two outcomes that are addressed by OASIS: achievement (“getting good grades”) and persistence. The authors conclude:

At the halfway point on the river to college graduation, our results suggest that success in college arises from a complex blend of academic and social processes. Earning good grades is substantially an academic process . . . Although the process of earning good grades may be fundamentally academic, the foregoing academic precursors of grade achievement may be enhanced or undermined by social circumstances on campus . . . In addition to these universal social contingencies, however, minority students face unique social challenges to earning a high GPA (p. 224-225).
Charles and Massey suggest that involvement in academic work, on-campus housing, joining student organizations, and studying with peers contribute to positive outcomes. Their research further suggests:

Student retention should be seen as more a social than an academic issue, one that reflects two interconnected and mutually reinforcing components: satisfaction and integration. Satisfaction stems from engagement . . . Race and ethnicity inevitably come into play when considering student satisfaction. Minority students who perceive a large social distance between themselves and whites are more prone to dissatisfaction, and although a negative racial climate on campus has a strong effect on the satisfaction on all students, it is especially relevant for groups that have historically been excluded from elite settings. It is thus critically important that institutions maintain an atmosphere of tolerance, acceptance, respect, and appreciation for diversity when it comes to race and ethnicity. Doing so is not about being “politically correct” but about enhancing students’ connection to the institution and the learning it dispenses, which is something of great benefit to whites as well as Asians, Latinos, and African Americans (p. 227-228).

The authors suggest that higher education institutions provide more opportunities for student-faculty interaction and appropriate academic advising, and pay close attention to campus racial climate issues that tend to undermine grade achievement for historically underrepresented students. They also emphasize that selective universities are uniquely positioned to train the next generation of leaders so they are equipped with the knowledge and sensibilities to eliminate racial segregation and discrimination. Through programs and services that contribute to students’ intellectual and personal development, OASIS addresses these issues. We facilitate students’ engagement with UCSD—both academically and socially—and encourage their involvement in activities that positively influence the campus climate.

*Patricia Gándara and Frances Contreras-- Raising the Achievement of Chicano/Latino Students*

In their book, *The Latino Education Crisis: The Consequences of Failed Social Policies* (2009), Gándara and Contreras suggest that research supports the efficacy of mentoring for Latino and other Historically Underrepresented Students (HURS):

Mentoring . . . is the single most common characteristic of all of the successful intervention programs we have assessed, and it seems crucial to each program’s success . . . when defined as a caring, monitoring relationship that is not episodic, but ongoing, mentoring of students is clearly key (p. 292-293).
Gándara and Contreras also attest to the research evidence on the success of summer bridge or transition programs in higher education, particularly for HURS:

We have noted that summer bridge programs . . . when carefully implemented also appear to confer considerable benefits—social, psychological, and academic. They help students build networks of support and give them the confidence that they can perform at the college level (p. 325).

Mentoring is one of the most essential strategies found in OASIS services. It occurs in very formal, direct forms (e.g., students and professional staff serving as mentors to students) as well as in more informal, indirect ways (e.g., tutors that also provide mentoring to students). These strategies are an especially critical element of our OASIS Transition Programs--STEP and Summer Bridge.

*Daryl Smith-- Diversity and Equity: Its Contribution to Learning in Higher Education*

Daryl Smith is a nationally recognized scholar of higher education whose work focuses on issues of diversity and equity (2009). In her analysis of “research on institutional qualities that foster student success” (p. 204), Smith identifies several elements which characterize institutions that contribute to positive outcomes among diverse students:

- A mission and philosophy focused on student learning and success closely connected to the institutional culture (p. 206).
- A campus environment focused on learning (p. 206).
- An orientation toward cooperative learning as a central pedagogical strategy (p. 207).
- Clearly marked pathways that inform students how to negotiate the institution for learning and success (p. 207).
- The use of data to make decisions toward serving and teaching students (p. 208).
- A high level of faculty-student engagement in educationally purposeful activities inside and outside classrooms (p. 208).
- Shared responsibility for educational quality and student success that creates “robust and strong webs” of support (p. 209).

OASIS’ services incorporate these principles in our mentoring, tutoring, and the courses we teach. We emphasize learning, e.g., course content and academic skills, as well as achieving high grades. We emphasize collaboration that reflects the social construction of learning. OASIS services also facilitate a high degree of student engagement with faculty and staff that personalizes students’ experiences and ensures an effective “web” of support.
In 2011, the Higher Education Research Institute (HERI) at UCLA held a Retention Summit to present recent research and theory on higher education retention. The directions they identified emerge largely from the multi-institutional data sets maintained by HERI. In 2012, the American Association of Hispanic Education (AAHE) hosted a Latino Student Success Institute. The institute featured several prominent scholars of higher education who provided findings from research and theory on Latino student success (Latinos now comprise over fifty percent of K-12 public school enrollment in California). Members of the OASIS professional staff attended these sessions and obtained summaries of the research and theoretical directions, which are described below.

Solórzano (2012) presented research on the academic success of Chicanos and other underrepresented students through the lens of Critical Race Theory (Solórzano et al., 2005). He described cultural capital as the accumulation of knowledge that enables students to navigate institutions of higher education, exploiting their resources and employing successful strategies. While some research identifies the incongruity or mismatch between the cultural capital of underrepresented students and the cultural capital valued by higher education institutions (Berger, 2000; Charles et al., 2009), Solórzano emphasizes that underrepresented students actually bring very useful, positive cultural capital that has the potential to facilitate their success in higher education. Solórzano describes this knowledge as “community cultural wealth, an array of knowledge, skills, abilities, and networks possessed and utilized by communities of color to survive and resist racism and other forms of oppression” (2012). Thus, higher education institutions, including service units such as OASIS, must recognize and reinforce such students’ community cultural wealth and facilitate its application toward effective strategies for their academic and sociocultural involvement. Through our courses, mentoring, seminars, and tutoring, OASIS builds on students’ cultural wealth and facilitates the development of their “dominant” cultural capital (Paris, 2012).

Rendón (2012) developed a theory of “validation” based on U.S. Department of Education funded research on the educational experiences of underrepresented students in higher education. She identifies a number of differences between “traditional” and underrepresented students that affect their transition to the university:

- Family college-going (cultural and social capital)
- Finances
- Expectations
- Congruity between the world of the student and the world of college
- Differences in ways high schools prepare students to attend college
- Overall representation in higher education

These differences often result in a more difficult, complex transition process for underrepresented students as they navigate the university’s institutional culture. Rendón suggests that validation can be employed as an effective institutional
strategy to support underrepresented students. She describes validation as “an enabling, confirming, and supportive process initiated by in-and-out-of-class agents that fosters academic and personal development” (2012). Rendón identifies two dimensions of such validation: an academic dimension that “validates students’ innate capacity to learn and build students’ academic confidence,” and an interpersonal dimension that “fosters students’ sociocultural adjustment and personal development” (2012). She also provides a number of concrete strategies through which validation can be provided to students. Her summary comments regarding validation reflect a number of the strategies employed by OASIS, particularly with new UCSD students:

Validation, when it is administered early in the student’s transition to college, and consistently throughout the college experience, may be the key to helping students get involved and believing they can learn and achieve their goals (2012).

Sylvia Hurtado, Director of UCLA’s Higher Education Research Institute (HERI) presented the results of multi-institutional research on college students that yield directions toward a greater understanding of student persistence. Building on the work of other scholars, Hurtado developed a model of persistence and college success based on empirical evidence gathered by HERI. The model considers a number of variables including the socio-historical context, institutional context, climate for diversity, and both curricular and co-curricular processes. Student success or outcome variables include retention and achievement, competencies for a multicultural world, and habits of mind/skills for lifelong learning, all of which contribute to the mission of public institutions such as UCSD: the fulfillment of social equity, democratic, and economic outcomes (Hurtado, 2012).

A key component of Hurtado’s model is the central location of student identity, attesting to its strong association with positive student outcomes. She identifies a number of actions available to higher education institutions in order to support the success of underrepresented students:

- Know our students’ cultures, histories, needs (financial, academic, familial responsibilities)
- Revise our practices to accommodate students’ academic, cultural, psychosocial, and spiritual development
- Take students from where they begin to the next level (talent development, accelerate developmental education, opportunities)
- Acknowledge the fact that our institutions were not build to advance underrepresented students in the same way Historically Black Colleges and Universities were missioned
- Realize that low-income and first generation students rely more on peers and institutional agents to navigate college
- Realize that climate issues and stereotyping, as well as finances, still play a role with high-achieving and middle income underrepresented students
In addition, Hurtado identifies a number of strategies found in the research to be successful with most college students, including underrepresented students. These include student interactions with faculty, older students mentoring younger students, students discussing course content outside of class with their peers, and students developing a sense of belonging at their institution. These are all strategies deployed by OASIS in our work with students.

Shaun Harper-- Focusing on Black Males in Higher Education

Shaun Harper has conducted a number of studies on Black students in higher education (Harper, 2012, 2010, 2009). His most recent scholarly investigation is a qualitative study of successful Black males (Harper, 2012). Harper interviewed 219 Black men on forty-two college and university campuses throughout the U.S. to identify the variables that contributed to their academic success. Among his findings is the importance of the students’ early transition to higher education:

Participants believed they were successful in college because they got off to a good start. Some entered their institutions through summer bridge programs that brought them to campus 6-8 weeks before the start of their freshman year . . . Bridge programs made large institutions feel smaller and easier to navigate (p. 11).

Harper also noted that all of the Black students he interviewed were “extensively engaged student leaders on their campuses” (p. 12). According to Harper, his study confirmed previous findings that document a positive link between active engagement outside the classroom and both achievement and persistence. Harper identified student organizations, relationships with professors outside the classroom, and academic collaboration with peers as important sources of student engagement. OASIS emphasizes engagement with all of these and additional variables in our work with students.

Terrell Strayhorn-- Sense of Belonging in Higher Education

Strayhorn’s work (2012, 2011) focuses on the construct “sense of belonging” developed by Hurtado and Carter (1997; cited in Strayhorn, 2012). According to Strayhorn, “sense of belonging refers to students’ perceived social support on campus, a feeling or sensation of connectedness, the experience of mattering or feeling cared about, accepted, respected, valued by, and important to the group or others on campus” (2012, p. 3). Strayhorn’s review of research on sense of belonging finds it to be a positive influence on student retention and achievement in higher education, and that it is associated with a number of learning outcomes (Strayhorn, 2012). He concludes that college students seldom excel without a sense of belonging and that higher education faculty and staff must create conditions that foster a sense of belonging. Situated within the retention theory and research of Tinto (1993) and others, Strayhorn asserts that sense of belonging “is a critical aspect in retaining all students and particularly students of color” (2012, p. 9). Students who struggle to establish a sense of
belonging are often subject to feelings of marginalization, isolation, and alienation at their institution.

In addition, Strayhorn describes some of the institutional strategies that contribute to students’ sense of belonging. His quantitative and qualitative studies reveal how student involvement, often facilitated by institutional mechanisms, can increase students’ sense of belonging. Strayhorn identified four ways in which involvement can contribute to sense of belonging:

(1) connecting students with others who share their interests, values, and commitments; (2) familiarizing students with the campus environment and ecology; (3) affirming students’ identity, interests, and values; and (4) generating feelings among students that they matter and others depend on them (2012, p. 115).

Many of the institutional strategies suggested by Strayhorn parallel the principles articulated in the research on validation of students (Rendon, 2012). He suggests that tutoring other students, participating in academic support programs, contact with faculty, participation in student organizations, and similar forms of involvement facilitate a sense of belonging among students. OASIS provides or encourages all of these activities with our students. Strayhorn also emphasizes the important role of summer bridge programs in contributing to students’ sense of belonging and overall college readiness: “...the weight of empirical evidence suggests that summer bridge programs can be effective interventions for improving students’ readiness for college” (2012, p. 53). Because feelings of belonging can change over time and in changing contexts, Strayhorn suggests that summer programs include an intrusive academic year component for continued support. The OASIS approach to summer programs includes such an academic year dimension.

Vincent Tinto—A Synthesis of Research and Best Practices in Higher Education Retention

Tinto is generally considered our nation’s foremost scholar of retention in higher education (Rendon et al., 2000). His 1993 publication, Leaving College: Rethinking the Causes and Cures of Student Attrition, established a theory of retention that approached paradigm status in higher education scholarship. In 2012, Tinto published an updated analysis of principles and strategies that contribute to postsecondary retention, Completing College: Rethinking Institutional Action. His current analysis of retention claims that research converges on four conditions that facilitate retention and graduation: expectations, support, assessment and feedback, and involvement. For each principle or best practice he identifies within these four conditions, Tinto describes a model program implemented at a higher education institution in the United States. To identify a model program that exemplifies effective summer bridge programs, Tinto utilizes the OASIS Summer Bridge Program at UCSD. His description of the program highlights several of its features:
All Summer Bridge students, including those who will be commuters in the fall, live together in a residence hall during the program. Their common experiences in both academic courses and residential life enables them to form important friendships, which ease their transition . . . An important feature of the program is its connection to other programs that follow in the fall. Summer Bridge students transition into the OASIS Learning Communities and Academic Transition Program, which provide each student with an individualized package of tutoring, mentoring, counseling, and networking.

Summary

Because learning is constructed largely through a social process (Bain, 2004), OASIS places a strong emphasis on collaboration among both professional and student staff. Such collaboration contributes to a more effective process of providing services and serves to model collaborative learning for OASIS students. OASIS seeks to facilitate “deep learning” (Smith et al., 2004), a transformative process in which students experience a “positive, substantive, and sustained change in the way they act, feel, and think” (Bain, 2004, p. 5). Such collaboration also provides a “culturally sustaining” pedagogy that supports historically underrepresented students (Paris, 2012). As indicated above, OASIS also recognizes the need for a holistic model of academic support that contributes to “both the intellectual and personal development of students” (Bain, 2004, p. 85). Thus, OASIS services include rigorous, course-specific tutoring in math, science, and writing; they also include counseling that addresses “external factors” (Tinto, 1993), and mentoring that helps students to set goals, to accumulate cultural and social capital (Berger, 2000; Stanton-Salazar, 2005), and to utilize institutional resources. With synergy and collaboration, these multiple approaches enable OASIS students to focus effectively on their learning and development.

In addition, the mission of OASIS has always placed emphasis on contributing to institutional diversity and equity at UCSD and to prepare students to enact roles that contribute to social justice. Such an emphasis underlines UCSD’s responsibility as a public institution to provide equitable, supportive conditions for all students (“institutional viability,” Smith, 2009). It also reflects the considerable research evidence (Chang et al., 2003; Milem et al., 2005; Milem and Hakuta, 2000; Smith, 2009) that documents the positive contribution of institutional diversity to the educational environment and learning of all students.

The range of outcomes addressed by OASIS necessitates the utilization of multiple strategies to assess our effectiveness. These strategies, the manner in which they are employed, and the results they yield will be described throughout this report.
OASIS PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

OASIS has four broad programs in which students may participate somewhat separately as well as initiatives featuring a strong degree of collaboration between these programs to serve students more effectively. In addition, the four discrete programs are intertwined in OASIS Learning Communities for students who participate in OASIS Transition Programs. All OASIS programs work to contribute to the outcomes described above. A brief description of each OASIS program is provided below (see also appendix: OASIS organizational chart).

The OASIS Transition Programs (OTP)

OASIS Academic Transition Program/Summer Bridge

The Academic Transition Program (ATP) is designed to contribute to the academic success and the satisfaction of first-year UCSD students. It achieves this objective by providing a strong, holistic support system throughout students’ freshman year. It begins with a four-week, residential program called Summer Bridge that provides an “early socialization” (Attinasi, 1999; Tinto, 2012, 1993) experience in the academic and sociocultural dimensions of university life.

Summer Bridge engages students in two credit-bearing courses. One, Contemporary Issues I: The University in Society, addresses policy issues that link higher education and society with an emphasis on equity and diversity. The other course, Education Studies 20, provides an introduction to several areas of math and science (e.g., nutrition, oceanography, statistics, and physics) as well as strategies for collaboration to enhance learning in these subjects. These courses provide students college-level content that facilitates a realistic expectation of academic year demands while refining their skills in strategic reading, composition, conceptual and analytical thinking, critical thinking, problem-solving, theoretical differentiation and integration, etc.

In addition to these credit-bearing courses, Summer Bridge provides a very structured residential experience in terms of both content and process. The residential staff facilitates frequent discussion of “non-academic” issues that can impact students’ first year experience (e.g., identity development, relations with family, work and finances, involvement in student organizations, substance abuse, sexual harassment, etc.). These discussions are conducted on both a one-to-one basis and in groups. The staff also works to facilitate the formation of strong peer networks among the Summer Bridge students since research has documented the powerful effects of peer-to-peer learning (Astin, 1993; Pascarella and Terenzini, 2005). The residential staff receives strong and active support from a number of campus offices, including Counseling & Psychological Services, Student Financial Services, and the six UCSD colleges. These entities, external to OASIS, also collaborate to conduct a series of sessions for all Summer Bridge students called College Success Strategies. These activities form a basis for one of the main strategies of Summer Bridge: to acquaint new students with helpful, supportive resources and to encourage their engagement with such resources, i.e., the acquisition of social capital.
At the conclusion of Summer Bridge, the ATP continues its structured support throughout the participating students’ first year at UCSD. Students sign a “contract” to utilize a number of OASIS services that are bundled to form OASIS Learning Communities (OLC’s). The elements of the OLC’s include:

- Individual conferences with peer counselors referred to as Academic Transition Counselors (ATC’s). The students are generally assigned to the same ATC who supervised them in the residential halls during Summer Bridge. ATC’s are undergraduates, most of whom participated in Summer Bridge and have been trained through the Education Studies 116 course’s mentor practicum.
- Individual conferences with professional staff to provide support for students’ academic and sociocultural issues.
- Tutoring in students’ math and science courses through weekly workshops facilitated by undergraduate tutors in the OASIS Math & Science Tutorial Program (MSTP).
- Tutoring in students’ courses that feature writing assignments. A strong focus is placed on the students enrolled in “preparatory” courses leading to the fulfillment of the university’s basic writing requirement. The tutoring is provided through both workshops and individual conferences facilitated by undergraduate tutors and/or professional staff in the OASIS Language & Writing Program.
- Weekly seminars that employ a “college success” model (Laufgraben et al., 2004) to address academic and sociocultural dimensions of the students’ transition to UCSD. The seminars are facilitated by a combination of OASIS professional staff, OASIS undergraduate mentors, and staff from UCSD’s six colleges.

ATP employs a system of more intense follow-up for its students who are placed on academic probation or subject to dismissal status following the fall and/or winter quarters.

Students invited to apply to participate in the ATP/SB Program are primarily from Quintiles 4-5 (bottom two-fifths) of high schools in California, i.e., high schools that produce the least amount of UC eligible students. Other criteria for selection include first-generation college status, low-income status, GPA, SAT scores, and Entry Level Writing Requirement scores. Other new, first-year UCSD students are welcome to apply.

OASIS Student Support Services Program

The OASIS Student Support Services Program (SSSP) is part of the national TRIO network of federally funded, educational equity programs that include the Upward Bound Program for pre-college students and the Ronald McNair Post-Baccalaureate Achievement Program that provides undergraduate research experience for students. Directed by federal Department of Education guidelines, the OASIS SSSP serves students who are low-income and/or first-generation college students (as well as students with disabilities). The program provides a holistic set of services that include individual counseling, mentoring,
and tutoring. The services are provided by both professional and student staff. Like Summer Bridge and ATP, most of the student mentors and tutors are former participants of SSSP who have completed the EDS 116 course.

The SSSP serves at least two hundred students annually. Approximately forty of the students (two thirds of whom enter UCSD as transfer students and one third as freshmen) begin their SSSP experience through the Summer Enrichment and Transition Program (STEP), a one-week residential program before their first quarter. STEP provides a comprehensive experience that contributes to students' cultural and social capital and their subsequent ability to negotiate UCSD's institutional demands. Learning about UCSD's academic and sociocultural resources and the development of a supportive network among students (and SSSP staff) are key elements of STEP. Once students have been accepted into STEP and/or SSSP, the program provides them support through their graduation from UCSD. One other facet of this support is special financial grants to SSSP students provided in collaboration with UCSD's Student Financial Services office.

The OASIS Tutorial Programs

OASIS provides two tutorial programs for UCSD undergraduates. The programs are designed to contribute to students’ course achievement, learning, and persistence.

OASIS Language and Writing Program

The OASIS Language and Writing Program (LWP) provides a wide range of services, in the areas of composition, text analysis, and writing practice, to UCSD undergraduate students for whom English is not their First Language (ENFL). It also provides writing practice and grammar sessions for undergraduate students enrolled in Spanish language classes.

The LWP’s services are delivered through workshops and individual tutoring sessions. They cover a wide range of disciplines in lower and upper division courses. Individual assistance is available during the entire writing process, from interpreting a prompt to the final draft. Well-trained, knowledgeable tutors who have already taken the class or specialize in a given topic or area, work with students in various aspects of the preparation of academic papers.

LWP also provides writing workshops for students enrolled in SDCC 1 or SDCC 4 classes (so-called “preparatory” courses generally taught by local community college instructors; these courses provide no academic support or instructor’s office hours). This two-hour, weekly activity conducted by experienced LWP facilitators focuses on the organization of ideas and the structure of argumentative writing. The workshops are complemented by individual practice of writing and grammar sessions that focus on the student’s specific needs.

LWP also offers workshops for DOC (Dimensions of Culture, the Thurgood Marshall College Writing sequence), where students discuss readings, analyze texts, and plan their writing assignments guided by facilitators who have
taken the class and attend DOC’s lectures. Individual assistance, special
discussion, planning, and editing sessions are also available for transfer students.
The LWP tutors are UCSD undergraduates who have completed the Education
Studies 116 course, including an intense practicum in composition theory and
practice. LWP student and career staff periodically examine the effectiveness of
the program and, when necessary, design new material or approaches to support
students’ academic work.

OASIS Math & Science Tutorial Program

The OASIS Math & Science Tutorial Program (MSTP) provides course-
specific group workshops in biology, chemistry, math, and physics. The program
is open to all UCSD undergraduates.

The MSTP workshops are offered twice weekly throughout the quarter
and feature the same facilitator working with the same group of students who
are enrolled in the same course. Thus, it features key elements of learning
communities that have been documented as effective educational practices,
especially with historically underrepresented students (Kuh et al., 2008; Smith et
al., 2004; Tinto, 2012, 2000). Based on the model developed by Uri Treischman at
UC Berkeley and subsequently replicated on a national level (Bain, 2004), the
MSTP workshops provide challenging material from course concepts that
students engage in a collaborative learning strategy. As such, the workshops
increase students’ comprehension of course content, conceptual understanding,
and collaboration skills.

The workshops are focused primarily on math and science courses that
feature enrollment by lower division students and often represent a significant
challenge to new students’ academic transition to UCSD. The MSTP workshop
facilitators are UCSD undergraduates who have had high achievement in the
course they facilitate. They are also trained through the Education Studies 116
course that includes a math-science practicum.

OASIS Learning Communities: Integrating Academic and Sociocultural Support

Within the last decade, learning communities have emerged as a proven,
“high impact” institutional strategy to maximize learning among students in
higher education (Kuh et al., 2008; Laufgraben et al., 2004; Smith et al., 2004;
Tinto, 2012, 2000; Tinto and Goodsell, 1994). As an instructional strategy,
learning communities employ structures and pedagogy based on recent research
findings on student learning. Among such findings are the nature of learning as
a social process and the efficacy of interdisciplinary instruction to facilitate “deep
learning” (Bain, 2004; Smith et al., 2004). Learning communities also explicitly
link students’ academic and sociocultural transition to higher education.

One of the most impressive research findings on learning communities is
that their effectiveness seems most pronounced with students who often
underachieve in higher education:

The effects of participating in high-impact practices are positive for
all types of students. But historically underserved students tend to
benefit more from engaging in educational purposeful activities
Tinto’s research on learning communities (Tinto, 2000; Tinto and Goodsell, 1994) finds that their use of student cohorts and collaborative pedagogy contributes to increased student learning and a greater sense of responsibility among students to contribute to their own learning environment. He finds that learning communities contribute to a significantly higher level of engagement among students in their courses with subsequent higher levels of student persistence.

The curricular structures of learning communities vary among a range of models. While there are significant differences in the degree of interdisciplinary course clusters and team teaching among learning communities, perhaps their core element is the utilization of cohorts of students placed in the same course lectures, discussion sections, seminars, etc. According to Tinto, such cohort placements help college students bridge the gap between their academic and social lives, which contributes to higher rates of persistence and meaningful learning. It also contributes to a greater sense of belonging (Hurtado and Carter, 1997) among students and more time on task through student collaborations outside of class.

OASIS applies this element of student cohorts in our OASIS Learning Communities (OLC’s). Those students who participate in the Academic Transition Program (including Summer Bridge) or the Student Support Services Program’s STEP are enrolled by cohort in a number of the first quarter courses (e.g., chemistry and math) and in the OASIS workshops (e.g., chemistry, math, and writing) that correspond to those courses. Such cohort placement reduces perceptions of isolation by ensuring that a relatively small number of students will see one another frequently across several academic activities with subsequent engagement in collaborative learning.

In addition, the students are enrolled by cohort in weekly OLC seminars. The seminars incorporate content and elements from the nationally successful model of freshman seminars (Kuh at al., 2008). In the fall quarter OLC seminars, themes include:

- Academic success strategies, including study skills and use of faculty office hours
- Effective use of institutional resources
- Setting and achieving goals
- Strategies for achieving a satisfying sociocultural transition to UCSD
- Managing relationships with parents and siblings

The winter quarter OLC seminars focus on exposing students to additional, critical resources (e.g., the undergraduate library, Student Health Center, Career Services Center, Student Financial Services, etc.). The spring quarter seminars focus on students’ long-range goals and the UCSD experiences in which they can engage to facilitate those goals.

The one-hour, non-credit bearing seminars are highly interactive and collaborative. Most of the OLC seminars enroll students according to their UCSD college. An OASIS professional staff member, an undergraduate student mentor,
and at least one staff member from a UCSD college facilitate the seminars. Seminars are generally located at one of the six colleges. In addition, each quarter the colleges’ academic advisors visit OLC seminars to assist students with their course enrollment for the following quarter.

Responding to the general pattern of higher education in which students often experience a diffused, disconnected set of academic and sociocultural experiences that undermine learning (Kuh, 2004), the OLC seminars serve as a unifying element in students’ learning. The OLC seminars integrate students’ coursework, academic support, and sociocultural transition in a manner that maximizes their learning experiences. Given the wide range of variables that affect the early adjustment of university students, this multidimensional integration of their transition process is critical.

Living-Learning Communities

Beginning in fall 2010, OASIS began another collaboration with UCSD’s six colleges—the OASIS Living-Learning Communities. The colleges offered on-campus housing to students who participated in STEP and Summer Bridge, respectively, arranged so that they lived in close proximity to other students who participated in OASIS Transition Programs. In many cases, the students were also enrolled in the same lecture and/or section of their college writing program. This strategy facilitated more discussion among students of course material outside the classroom, a variable found to contribute to students’ learning and persistence (Hurtado, 2012). It also provided students a sense of belonging and “membership” in another supportive network. The Living-Learning Communities were offered to OASIS Transition Program students in 2011 and 2012 as well.

OASIS Partnerships

The effectiveness of OASIS services lies in both their holistic strategies that avoid fragmentation of students’ learning and the many partnerships OASIS enjoys with other campus resources. Such partnerships that feature direct collaboration with OASIS to serve students include:

- Academic Enrichment Programs
- Career Services Center
- International Center
- Six Colleges (Academic Advising, Residential Life, Student Affairs)
- Counseling & Psychological Services
- SPACES (student initiated outreach and retention)
- Admission & Enrollment Services
- Student Financial Services
- Student Legal Services
- Campus Recreation
- Conference Services
- Development Office
These partnerships are essential to providing services that meet the myriad of students’ needs, provide “high impact” involvement (Kuh et al., 2008), and support students’ learning.

2010 ALUMNI SURVEY

OASIS is aligned with theories of learning that emphasize its developmental, long-range nature, sometimes described as “deep learning” (Bain, 2004; Pascarella and Terenzini, 2005; Smith et al., 2004). In particular, we endorse Bain’s definition of learning: “a sustained, substantive, and positive influence on how students think, act, and feel” (p. 5). Thus, learning is transformative and students are changed when they learn. The scholarly literature on teaching and learning identifies the elements of students’ experiences that contribute to such deep learning. Certainly one such element is “time on task” (Tinto, 2000). In OASIS, that concept speaks to the amount of time our staff is able to spend with students and the subsequent contribution of OASIS services to students’ learning.

These are critical considerations in assessing the effectiveness of OASIS services. When students take part in our OASIS Learning Communities, e.g., participate in the four-week, residential Summer Bridge Program and subsequently participate in OASIS academic workshops and meet regularly with an Academic Transition Counselor, we expect that our sustained frequency of contact with such students will make a significant contribution to their outcomes. Infrequent contact with students cannot be expected to achieve such a contribution. The nature of academic support is such that some students desire and/or need a short-range service (e.g., one conference with a writing tutor) while others prefer a much longer-range service that entails multiple contacts during the course of a quarter or even an academic year. Both types of students are considered “OASIS students” but assessment of the impact of OASIS on their learning may differ considerably.

While we assess both short and long-range use of OASIS services, we consider it especially important to measure the effect of our services on UCSD graduates. Our assumption is that “OASIS alumni,” particularly those who utilize OASIS services over a long time period and/or intensively for a short time, will experience a “sustained, substantive, and positive influence” on their learning. Therefore, in 2010, OASIS worked with Student Voice (a consultant firm specializing in quantitative research to assess student learning in higher education) to design and implement a survey to assess the impact of OASIS on the learning of UCSD alumni who used our services.
Methods

The survey we developed was designed to assess students’ self-described gains in several dimensions of learning outcomes. Most of those outcomes were extracted from the broad clusters of student learning outcomes developed jointly by the American College Personnel Association and NASPA-Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education (Keeling, 2004). Other outcomes were identified from academic literature on learning outcomes in higher education (Bain, 2004; Pascarella and Terenzini, 2005; Smith et al., 2004). The subsequent questionnaire we developed included seventy-two items. Only seven items were demographic; the others measured students’ perceptions of their learning. In addition, several open-ended questions gave students an opportunity to voice their responses in more detail. A copy of the questionnaire and its results is found in the appendix of this report.

We used a five point Likert scale to gather responses. The first series of questions asked alumni to describe the degree of contribution that UCSD in general made to the various learning outcomes. The Likert scale responses utilized the points: “A great deal,” “Considerably,” “Moderately,” “Slightly,” and “Not at all.” The second series of questions asked alumni to describe the degree of contribution that OASIS specifically made to the same learning outcomes. Two open-ended questions asked students to describe the learning outcome(s) in which UCSD and OASIS, respectively, contributed the most. Two additional open-ended questions asked students to describe the learning outcomes in which they received the least contribution from UCSD and OASIS, respectively. Finally, an additional open-ended question enabled respondents to add any comments not specific to the previous questions.

To disseminate the survey, we used an email list of slightly over 500 alumni who had utilized OASIS services while enrolled as UCSD undergraduates. Thus, the respondents are not a random sample of alumni who utilized OASIS and our ability to extend generalizations beyond this sample is limited accordingly. However, the 314 responses represent a reasonable response rate (Schuh, Upcraft and Associates, 2001). Thus, the responses are assumed to be a reasonably accurate representation of the sample.

We emailed alumni a brief letter describing our study and its importance to the assessment of OASIS services. The alumni were directed to an online site at which they could complete the survey. The results were gathered and compiled by Student Voice, which then produced tables and charts that included the percentage of responses for each of the seventy-two items. The staff of OASIS then produced tables that combined the two responses considered positive: “A Great Deal” and “Considerably.” The responses to the five open-ended questions were clustered by alphabetical order of the first word in each response, thereby providing a somewhat cohesive clustering of responses to each question.

Results

We found that the alumni’s graduation date clustered in four basic time periods: 20% graduated from UCSD between 1984 and 1993, 21% graduated in 1994-1998, 27% in 1999-2003, and 32% in 2004-2009. Most alumni respondents
graduated relatively recently so their engagement with OASIS was with programmatic models of service delivery that are fairly current. In response to the question regarding in which OASIS program(s) they participated, the highest percentage (34%) participated in Summer Bridge followed by 18% in MSTP, 13% in LWP, 12% in ATP, and 7% in SSSP.

Approximately 65% of respondents indicated that they worked in OASIS. This constitutes an important subgroup of respondents as our working assumption is that students who utilize OASIS services and also work at OASIS will receive our highest degree of contribution to their learning outcomes. Again, this high percentage of OASIS alumni who also worked in OASIS signifies the non-random nature of our sample. In any given academic year, OASIS serves approximately 2,500 students while employing approximately 200 students.

The ethnicity of respondents reveals a similar phenomenon. Among the alumni respondents, 39% were Chicano/Mexican, 25% were Pilipino, 10% were African American/Black, 8% were Latino, and 1% were Native American. While these five ethnic groups comprised 83% of our sample, they typically represent approximately 30% of students who utilize OASIS during the academic year. An additional 4% of respondents were Chinese, 3% were white and 2% were Vietnamese; 7% reported mixed-race backgrounds. Of the sample of respondents, 61% were female and 39% male, which is representative of the use of OASIS academic year services.

Effective Communication

We asked alumni “How much did UCSD contribute to your development in the following area” in regard to three questions that reflect communication skills, a very important student outcome for OASIS. We then asked “How much did OASIS contribute to your development in the following area” for the same three outcomes. Thus, we asked students to compare their specific learning experience in OASIS programs with their general UCSD learning experience outside OASIS. Combining the two most positive responses (“A great deal” and “Considerably”), we found that 69% of alumni believed that OASIS contributed positively to “oral presentation skills” compared to 42% who believed that UCSD contributed positively (a 27% difference). On the second question regarding “written communication,” the positive responses attributed to UCSD were among their highest ratings: 68% compared to 75% for OASIS. A much larger difference was found in the alumni’s responses regarding “ability and confidence to express ideas,” 83% positive for OASIS and 54% for UCSD.
Effective Communication

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcome</th>
<th>UCSD</th>
<th>OASIS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Oral presentation skills</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Written communication</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability and confidence to express ideas</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>83%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Percentage of responses under “A great deal” or “Considerably”

Intellectual Growth

Another critical outcome for OASIS is intellectual growth, an outcome we associate with academic achievement (Charles et al., 2009). We asked alumni eight questions that reflect intellectual growth. This cluster of questions led to some of the alumni’s most positive ratings for both UCSD and OASIS. The greatest differences among the responses are found in “ability to conceptualize solutions to social problems” (80% positive for OASIS and 52% positive for UCSD), “ability to construct my own learning” (79% positive for OASIS and 55% positive for UCSD), “ability to choose support for conflicting ideas” (75% positive for OASIS and 52% positive for UCSD), and “making connections between theory and practical applications” (74% positive for OASIS and 59% positive for UCSD). The question regarding alumni’s ability to construct their own learning is particularly poignant as literature that describes “deep” learning (Bain, 2004; Smith et al., 2004) emphasizes the constructivist nature of such learning. Again, 79% of respondents felt that OASIS made a positive contribution to such knowledge construction.
Personal Development

Because literature on retention and learning (Bain, 2004; Rendon, 2009; Smith et al., 2004; Tinto, 1993) emphasizes the relationship between students’ intellectual and personal development, our respondents’ perceptions of their personal development are also a high priority for OASIS. We asked six questions regarding various dimensions of alumni’s personal development. Most of the responses indicated large differences between the respondents’ view of how much OASIS contributed to their personal development compared to their UCSD experience in general: in “ability to balance life” (76% positive for OASIS and 38% positive for UCSD) and “ability to set personal, academic, and career goals” (83% positive for OASIS and 48% positive for UCSD). Even larger differences were found in respondents’ perceptions of “competence in my own culture” (81% positive for OASIS and 27% for UCSD) and “competence in other cultures” (89% positive for OASIS and 33% positive for UCSD). Literature (Pascarella and Terenzini, 2005) on college student success often describes identity as the most significant developmental challenge for such students. Alumni indicated more differences in perceptions of their identity development, including “individual identity” (84% positive for OASIS and 35% positive for UCSD) and “ethnic identity” (80% positive for OASIS and 27% positive for UCSD).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcome</th>
<th>UCSD</th>
<th>OASIS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ability to balance life</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>78%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability to set personal, academic, and career goals</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competence - my own culture</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>81%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competence - other cultures</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>89%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual identity</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>84%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnic identity</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Percentage of responses under “A great deal” or “Considerably”

Civic and Community Engagement

The OASIS mission has always emphasized our contribution to diversity and equity. Part of this social justice commitment is to facilitate the tools and dispositions that enable OASIS graduates to contribute to community and civic life (Bowen and Bok, 1998). We asked our alumni six questions that tapped their development in the area of civic and community engagement. The differences alumni identified between UCSD’s and OASIS’ contribution to those outcomes is
rather large, especially in the development of alumni’s “commitment to racial equity” (87% positive for OASIS and 28% positive for UCSD), “commitment to social justice” (83% positive for OASIS and 29% positive for UCSD), and “participation in community organizations” (75% for OASIS and 27% for UCSD).

**Civic and Community Engagement**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcome</th>
<th>UCSD</th>
<th>OASIS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge of California state social and political issues</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge of national USA social and political issues</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation in political processes (e.g. voting)</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation in community organizations</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commitment to social justice</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commitment to racial equity</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>87%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Percentage of responses under “A great deal” or “Considerably”

**Interpersonal Skills**

Certainly the ability to work effectively in groups is essential to success in virtually every profession. This is increasingly the case as more research on the efficacy of cooperative or collaborative learning is documented (Bain, 2004; Millis, 2002; Smith et al., 2004). We asked alumni to reflect on OASIS’ and UCSD’s contribution to the development of three dimensions of their interpersonal skills while in college. They reported considerable differences in “ability to collaborate and work in groups” (88% positive for OASIS and 35% positive for UCSD), “sense of social competence” (93% positive for OASIS and 41% positive for UCSD), and “understanding and appreciation of diverse ideas and opinions” (93% positive for OASIS and 47% positive for UCSD).
Leadership Skills

Finally, we asked alumni about their development in four dimensions of leadership skills. With 95% of the respondents being non-white, the ability of these alumni to provide needed leadership in their communities is critical (Hurtado, 2012; Milem et al., 2005). Although leadership development is not a core priority of OASIS, we work to ensure that OASIS students engage the leadership development opportunities offered by other entities on campus. In addition, our student counselors, mentors, and tutors conduct considerable group facilitation, an important dimension of leadership. The alumni assessment of OASIS’ contribution to this outcome is more positive: 82% positive for OASIS and 32% positive for UCSD on “facilitating positive group dynamics,” 76% positive for OASIS and 36% positive for UCSD on “building consensus in a group,” 78% positive for OASIS and 32% positive for UCSD on “facilitating group effectiveness in reaching objectives,” and 76% positive for OASIS and 36% positive for OASIS on “providing a leadership role in groups.”

### Leadership Skills

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcome</th>
<th>UCSD</th>
<th>OASIS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ability to collaborate and work in groups</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understanding and appreciate of diverse ideas and opinions</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>93%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sense of social competence</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>93%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Percentage of responses under “A great deal” or “Considerably”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcome</th>
<th>UCSD</th>
<th>OASIS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Providing a leadership role in groups</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building consensus in a group</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facilitating positive group dynamics</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>82%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facilitating group effectiveness in reaching objectives</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>78%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Percentage of responses under “A great deal” or “Considerably”
Summary of Results

The degree of difference between UCSD’s and OASIS’ contribution to learning outcomes varies widely:

- Interpersonal Skills—49% difference
- Personal Development—48% difference
- Leadership Skills—46% difference
- Civic and Community Engagement—44% difference
- Effective Communication—21% difference
- Intellectual Growth—16% difference

However, a clear trend emerges from the data. For all learning outcomes, the contribution of OASIS assessed by alumni consistently exceeded that for UCSD in general. There was a high degree of positive perception of OASIS’ contribution to the great majority of the thirty specific outcomes. Twenty-five of the thirty outcomes reflected a positive assessment of OASIS’ contribution by at least 75% of alumni who responded. Thus, it appears that for these UCSD alumni who participated intensively with OASIS, a considerable degree of their intellectual and personal development during college resulted from their OASIS experience.

In addition to the directions indicated by the percentages of alumni responses, the alumni also wrote responses to the open-ended questions described previously. An analysis of those responses identifies several trends in alumni perceptions.

Comments from Alumni Survey

The survey asked alumni to submit responses to five open-ended questions:

1. In which learning outcome did UCSD contribute most?
2. In which learning outcome did UCSD contribute least?
3. In which learning outcome did OASIS contribute most?
4. In which learning outcome did OASIS contribute least?
5. Do you have any additional comments?

The compilation of alumni responses by Student Voice clustered responses in alphabetical order for each question. This clustering facilitated the process of coding responses according to their content and compiling the codes to identify trends and directions in responses (Watson et al., 2002). Because the primary concern of this study is the assessment of OASIS services, it will concentrate on the responses regarding OASIS with less discussion of UCSD outcomes in general.
Responses—OASIS’ Strongest Contribution

There are six themes that clearly emerge from alumni responses to the question that asked them to identify to which learning outcome OASIS contributed the most. The six themes in order of frequency are:

1. Academic skills and learning
2. Sense of community
3. Cultural competence
4. Critical analysis of racial equity
5. Civic engagement
6. Personal development

A brief summary of each of these six themes follows.

Academic Skills and Learning

The highest number of open-ended responses describing OASIS’ strongest contribution was in academic skills and learning, a logical result for a learning center assessment. The core of OASIS services focuses on this theme. Alumni responses described OASIS’ contribution to their academic skill development and learning, particularly when they made the transition to UCSD. Some representative comments from alumni:

I strongly believed that OASIS greatly contributed to all areas of my academic, social, and cultural development. Academically, OASIS summer bridge classes and tutoring sessions gave me much needed study skills. Being surrounded by minority students allowed me to feel part of UCSD.

OASIS contributed most to my development in the area of working collaboratively in groups. During the 4 weeks I spent in Summer Bridge, I had many times that I had to figure out solutions to problems with a diverse group of people that I did not previously know. The problems went beyond academic to include issues about life in general (coexisting in the dorms, functioning as a suite group, etc.) This was extremely beneficial to me.

OASIS contributed the most to my development in the area of intellectual growth. The OASIS program provided an environment that expected academic achievement and civic engagement while providing a very supportive diverse staff who understood the challenges of underrepresented students at UCSD.

OASIS got me through my fundamental math and science work as an engineering student. I am convinced those are the courses that aim at weeding out students, but I got through them. The writing
programs helped me through my general education writing courses. Most importantly, OASIS was a second home where I was able to study and meet up with my fellow Summer Bridge students in a supportive, multi-cultural environment. I owe my success to OASIS.

Because of OASIS I not only survived UCSD’s first year, but I learned a lot about myself. OASIS programs helped identify for me the ways I can study. Also, OASIS helped me to approach my classes, prepare, manage my schedule and most importantly I had a safe space to come and vent my frustration where I was not being judged but just being listened to. OASIS helped me to understand and cope with UCSD, and allowed me to propel myself into my academic career and now my professional career. I successfully graduated from UCSD because of OASIS.

These quotes describe the significant impact of OASIS services on the academic adjustment and development of alumni.

**Sense of Community**

The second highest number of comments described OASIS’ contribution to the alumni’s sense of community. While not a learning outcome, this theme describes a variable, “sense of belonging”, found in the scholarly literature to impact the adjustment and success of historically underrepresented students (Hurtado, 2012; Hurtado and Carter, 1997; Smith, 2009). Likewise, Ibarra (2001) finds that historically underrepresented students of color require the close social conditions of a community to succeed in “dominant culture” institutions of higher education. A few representative comments illustrate this theme:

Awareness of my social obligation to my community; I would have dropped out of school had it not been for the community they created on campus for myself and my fellow OASIS alumni.

OASIS gave me the confidence to feel like I could master my rigorous course loads while at the same time contributing to my sense of belonging. I got the best of both worlds. Not only that but OASIS was like family in the sense everyone was there cheering me on me during the good times and lending a shoulder to lean on and an ear to listen during the not so good times.

Through OASIS I had a sense of belonging that allowed me to have introspective conversations, participate in workshops, and be a part of an advocating community that helped mold me a professional, as a man, as a member of the community, and as an advocate. The academic workshops were literally the reasons why I passed many of my classes. Not only did those workshops
provide guidance towards the academic material, but more importantly it created a community within those classes that helped facilitate my learning process through a group, and made me feel supported and not alone through my college classes.

OASIS provided a way for me to connect with others, create the support networks necessary for a first-generation student to successfully earn a BA/BS at UCSD. There was no doubt that I was "intelligent" enough to be a university student; however, many times the difference between success and failure is attributed to the support that a student receives from peers and university personnel.

OASIS provided me with the ability to build a network of friends and support before I came to UCSD. When I struggled during the first year at UCSD, I had OASIS and those fellow Bridge students to get support from. I could not turn to my college, my suite mates or anyone else, because I didn’t know how to ask for the help I needed. I was ashamed that as a stellar high school student and high achiever, I was on the brink of failing, and no matter how much I studied and tried, I was underachieving. OASIS had provided me with that space to seek help, get help, and when the help wasn’t enough, they recognized that I was coping with deeper issues then just being academic ones- depression, bipolar disorder, high functioning ADHD. They provided a safety net for me. I got a sense of family. I got a sense of nurturing.

The alumni comments poignantly connect their sense of community to their engagement with the UCSD campus and subsequent success (Strayhorn, 2012).

Cultural Competence

Many of the alumni comments identified cultural competence as the learning outcome to which OASIS contributed most. Some descriptive comments:

Definitely in the areas of dissecting my own ethnic identity since I am an individual of mixed race. Prior to the Summer Bridge program it was the one issue that I had never seriously analyzed or addressed yet was a key and crucial part of developing my college experience and furthermore, my individual identity. In addition, providing an avenue to learn and delve into the ethnic and cultural identities of others, and maintaining a commitment to social justice has provided me with an understanding of the world and my place in it that I wouldn’t have gotten anywhere else.

My involvement in Summer Bridge changed the entire trajectory of my college experience. The experience opened my eyes to the
importance of culture and development. I stayed involved with OASIS my entire four years there and really gained an appreciation for my culture and the culture of others. It helped me learn respect for other cultures. It planted the seeds of knowledge, and helped me learn new ways to acquire knowledge and express myself. I still employ many of the lessons I have learned both at UCSD and through OASIS. They have helped me in my profession as a physician and as a Assistant Professor at the University of ___ School of medicine.

OASIS helped me graduate and get through classes, but MOSTLY, it taught be to be an effective leader for my community. Through programs like ATP and Summer Bridge, I learned how to facilitate difficult conversations, learned how to analyze and think critically, learned how to manage my time, prioritize, and moreover, how to take care of myself AND participate in taking care of my community simultaneously. I learned simply, to become a leader.

OASIS contributed the most to my social development, especially within a diverse community. I was exposed to a very diverse group of people in terms of ethnicity, cultural background, socio-economic status, and learned how to communicate and work effectively within a diverse group.

In terms of preparing students for an increasingly diverse society (Kuh et al., 2010; Smith, 2009), the alumni clearly felt that OASIS contributed significantly to their knowledge of their own culture and the culture of other ethnic communities.

Critical Analysis of Racial Equity

The fourth most repeated theme represents a dimension of a broader learning outcome in the survey, critical thinking. Many alumni responses indicated that OASIS helped them to understand, analyze, and articulate the critical social issue of racial inequality. Some representative comments:

Because of the OASIS and Summer Bridge, I was exposed to the effects of economic and educational stratification on students and their communities. I was able to develop skills to effectively analyze inequality on a social level as well as politically and economically. The experience of being in Summer Bridge inspired me to eventually apply and become an Academic Transition Counselor myself. After graduating, I decided it was important to commit to working towards socio-economic justice. I have worked the last six years as a union organizer to motivate and empower workers to take control of their lives.
OASIS contributed the most to my development in racial awareness, importance of community, preparation for the real world and allowing me to form my own identity. I learned about the importance of giving back and how to apply my skills and abilities to a worthy cause.

Oasis greatly supplemented my UCSD education by demonstrating the connections and relevance from the books to current issues with my community, my family and myself. This understanding of social issues empowered me to have opinions and further develop the classroom ideas in group discussions. Hopefully my contribution to those discussions helped students from other backgrounds different than mine further their understanding of the issues in America today.

The alumni’s increased ability to analyze educational equity appears an important element of the development of critical thinking (Pascarella and Terenzini, 2005), another outcome that reflects the focus and priorities of OASIS services.

Civic Engagement

Civic engagement is another learning outcome reflected in the alumni’s comments about the OASIS contribution to their learning and development. Some comments describe how OASIS facilitated the post-graduate civic engagement of alumni:

Because of the social justice and responsibility focus of OASIS I now sit on two non-Profit boards in my community- one providing social and mental health care to minority and underprivileged communities and the other which works to civically engage youth. Because of OASIS’ emphasis on multi-cultural bridging I am able to lead teams and manage complex social and political situations to successfully manage large projects. In fact my ability to lead teams is through OASIS's hands on and challenging workshops, interactive ATC's and administrators. I go out as a ambassador for UCSD and encourage students to participate in OASIS, as well as to approach their university experience based on the techniques and tools OASIS provided me. OASIS provided me with a variety of transferable skills, a challenging intellectual course work that allowed me to question accepted norms, and a model for what social justice, civic engagement and equality looks like in America. I also got to see and interact with actual role models who applied those principles and skills. OASIS has shaped not just me, but the community I am now part of because of my leadership. If UCSD provided anything significant at my time there, it boils down in essence to- OASIS.

Engagement in issues that are important to the community. OASIS engaged me in politics and awareness of social consciousness and the
importance to continue into graduate school to be an effective change agent for my community.

OASIS provided me with opportunities to explore aspects of my identity that had not been presented elsewhere on campus. OASIS presented critical issues that were affecting students on campus and presented opportunities to get involved on campus and work on issues of social justice. I was able to foster my leadership skills and become active on campus.

Given the high representation of historically underrepresented alumni in the survey’s sample, these comments echo the research on students who benefited from affirmative action programs and were subsequently more likely to be engaged in civic contributions (Bowen and Bok, 1998).

Personal Development

A smaller number of alumni considered personal development the strongest contribution by OASIS. Some illustrative comments:

OASIS has actually been beneficial to my outcome as a medical professional. OASIS has helped me grow as an individual and has helped me learn more about my culture and become more in touch with current events. There aren't enough words to express how much OASIS has helped me through the college process and achieving all of the goals that I have obtained since graduating.

OASIS provided me with a SOLID foundation—personally, socially, academically, and professionally. Utilizing their services as a student and being a student worker facilitated my overall growth. I felt empowered by this center and was made to feel like I mattered on campus. OASIS gave me the confidence to succeed and prepared me for life after college; I developed interpersonal skills and cultural competency unmatched by any other service at UCSD.

These responses reflect OASIS’ attention to academic and personal development, both of which are important learning outcomes in higher education (Bain, 2004; Smith, 2009).

Responses—OASIS’ Weakest Contribution

There were considerably fewer responses to the open-ended inquiry regarding what OASIS contributed least to alumni’s learning. In fact, the response with the highest frequency was that the question was not applicable. However, other themes did emerge from an analysis of these responses, including:
• Lack of inclusiveness
• Work demands that prohibited deeper engagement with OASIS
• Inadequate contribution to academic skills
• Inadequate civic engagement
• Lack of political awareness

For most of these themes, only a few alumni commented that OASIS made a minimal contribution. However, a slightly larger number of alumni felt that the sense of community fostered by OASIS was not sufficiently inclusive. It appears that some alumni felt that the “OASIS community” was too narrowly defined in terms of identity (i.e., ethnic diversity rather than gender or LGBT) or political orientation (i.e., progressive versus moderate or conservative). Some comments:

Based mostly from curriculum in Summer Bridge, I felt that it focused too much on the cultural barriers that make it difficult for RACIAL minorities to succeed. I would like to see OASIS curriculum expand to include the struggles of the women, the LGBT community and other disenfranchised groups.

I felt that racial/ethnic/socio-economic stereotypes were encouraged. Though I am a Filipina, I was not raised in the ghetto culture. I did not identify with people in my so-called ethnic group because I did not listen to the same music, dress in a similar fashion, etc. It seemed as though the Filipino culture promoted in OASIS was that of a different socio-economic group that I was accustomed to.

I honestly do not have any comments on how OASIS did not contribute to my development--that office did nothing but contribute to my life in a positive way. I did acquire critical thinking skills that made me critically examine my city, state and even country. However, and this could also be a function of the fact that I was there 20 years ago, I think that OASIS could be strengthened by expanding the critical examination to a more global perspective. This shift has probably already taken place.

OASIS contributed least to my personal individual cultural identity. Because my identity was increasingly defined not in terms of my nationality or ethnicity and more by my faith I felt that OASIS offered little opportunity to explore, learn and develop in that direction. However, that is not to say that OASIS did not contribute to my ability to question, reflect and critically think about components that made up my identity, and furthermore, the process to engage, dialogue, create sense of community and
intellectually explore my faith identity were all founded on OASIS's programs, sense of community and support from employees, fellow students, and administrators.

Some alumni used this section to underline the significant, holistic contribution to outcomes made by OASIS:

I cannot think of anything that least contributed to my development. Again this is one of the environments that provided the most space to actually apply the theories and thoughts that I had. If they were communicated effectively, I received feedback and went back to the drawing board and tried again.

I can't really say because OASIS offers the academic and social support. Where as UCSD mostly just offers the academic tools. But OASIS needs UCSD and UCSD needs OASIS.

Not sure. If I'm thinking about it for a long time, it just simply doesn't stand out; OASIS was my college experience; without it, I would not have graduated. I would not today have the leadership and confidence to become a small business owner, to serve as a mentor to a young underprivileged and low income Latina who has the potential of going to college, nor of serving on the Board of Directors of a worthwhile non-profit.

OASIS made a life changing difference. I am a better person and a better professional because of OASIS! There's not one area OASIS didn't change for the better.

OASIS was instrumental in all areas of my development while at UCSD and even after graduating from UCSD. This question is Not Applicable in this case.

Responses—Additional Comments

The survey’s final open-ended question asked alumni to provide any “additional comments” they might have regarding their learning experiences while attending UCSD. This actually provoked the greatest number of comments among all five open-ended questions. A good number of these comments repeated the themes identified in the section on OASIS’ strongest contribution. However, rather than focus on a single learning outcome or process (e.g., sense of community), the great majority of these comments described the more comprehensive, holistic contribution of OASIS. Some representative examples of these responses:

Being a Latina in the sciences, I truly was a fish out of water. The resources and the community that OASIS built through Summer
Bridge and throughout my time at UCSD, were essential to my success as a student. I cannot imagine what my UCSD experience would have been like if there was no OASIS there to be the calm of the storm in the sea of UCSD.

For a first generation, working-class, Guatemalan-American, my undergraduate studies at UCSD were challenging, because of the isolation and marginalization I experienced. OASIS provided an important sense of community and empowerment. Without places like OASIS, and programs like Summer Bridge, my goals of not only entering the university but also finishing would have been very difficult to achieve. I am forever grateful to the staff at OASIS for their dedication and support. It made a wonderful impact in my life.

I absolutely believe I would have either dropped out of UCSD or performed poorly if it weren't for OASIS. Summer Bridge prior to the start of fall quarter helped transition me to the UCSD culture when I watched many struggle without such support from the ongoing OASIS programs I participated in. I am truly blessed to have that opportunity and I really hope they get the funding to continue.

I credit OASIS, particularly the Summer Bridge experience, as the number one support that enabled me to complete my educational career at UCSD. Had I not received the program's guidance, my fears and doubts would have taken over the skills and talent I am so proud of today. UCSD is an extremely intimidating institution for students from urban, low-income high schools.

I feel bad for students who are unable to reap the benefits of such an amazing and helpful program. Not only did this program provide a work-study job for me, but also helped me succeed in my classes. When donating money back to the school, I would only donate back to OASIS, as it has been an integral part of my experience at UCSD. The knowledge and friendships that I made while at UCSD are boundless and I am thankful for the opportunity to have participated in Summer Bridge and having been welcomed into the OASIS family.

I feel OASIS was more than half of my experience at UCSD. I know I will always have a strong connection with the Summer Bridge program and its mission. Although UCSD keeps growing, it is forgetting about the little things that do matter. Having a place for all students to go to and feel welcomed is essential to an educational experience. I remember going up to the third floor and
overlooking the campus and taking a deep breath in appreciation of its existence. It allowed me to grow as a young adult and believe in myself. I knew that I was not the only one struggling and OASIS provided the support I needed in order to keep on going. Whenever I think back about my UCSD years, I always remember Summer Bridge and the great times I had. Thank you.

I honestly can't imagine UCSD without Summer Bridge. It flavored my entire experience at UCSD. The experience gave me confidence and helped me to feel that I belonged. It was such a comfort to see other Bridge students on campus and know I wasn't alone.

I would not have survived in UCSD had it not been for Summer Bridge and OASIS writing courses. As a student coming from a low-income area, the skills provided by my high school were simply not competitive enough to help me at this fantastic institution. Thanks to the tools and contacts I received through Bridge, I was able to feel confident in my years as a student in UCSD. OASIS also showed me a love and respect for my university, which is why I now proudly work for this institution.

Virtually all of these comments were positive in describing OASIS’ contribution. However, from an assessment perspective, not knowing when the commenting alumni attended UCSD makes it difficult to identify which period of OASIS’ long existence was their context. Additional examples of the alumni responses to this question are found in Appendix 1.

**UCSD’s Contribution to Learning**

Because this assessment focuses on the effectiveness and contribution of OASIS services, we provide less attention to the more general contribution of UCSD to our alumni’s learning outcomes. However, some presentation of findings in this area is warranted.

The highest number of responses to the open-ended question regarding UCSD’s greatest contribution centered on intellectual development. Several alumni praised the scholarly competence of UCSD faculty and described the high degree of classroom learning they experienced at UCSD. Some examples of comments:

Academically UCSD contributed to my development tremendously because of the high expectations set by professors.

As a non-science major, I am grateful to UCSD for helping me build my "soft skills" - research, writing, analysis, problem-solving. These are the skills I use every day as a city planner.
Although I do not have the technical training of the engineers and architects I work with, I am very expert at wading through mountains of information, distilling essential issues, and sometimes even saving the day with an out-of-the-box solution.

As a student with a technical major UCSD prepared me most in the ability to think critically to resolve my technical issues. The university did an excellent job of providing the necessary knowledge to overcome such problems.

Intellectual Development. UCSD provided an intellectual environment that stood in harsh contrast to any of my previous experiences. Through patience and diligence I was able to catch up and even flourish. Today, I still find myself benefiting from the challenging days at UCSD.

Intellectual growth - attending UCSD enabled me to grow intellectually and contributed the most to my development. My high confidence level in having the ability to learn new things and take on new challenges was a direct result of the education I received from UCSD.

Most alumni comments attested to the strength of the academic experience they found at UCSD.

In response to the question about UCSD’ weakest contribution to learning outcomes, the alumni identified the lack of a sense of community and belonging, lack of personal development, insufficient civic engagement, and lack of cultural competence. A number of responses exemplify these perceptions:

UCSD provided a great foundation to learning, theory and practical application. What was lacking was seeing the foundation put into action. For instance, I learned a lot through books and reading, but what I saw on campus was different. We read about equality and what I saw on campus was a lack of equality. I saw privileged students that did not worry about equality, and showed little care or concern for those on campus who had less. I read about working together to find common solutions. But what I saw and felt at UCSD were students that did not work together, but fought to keep the status quo instead of being open-minded to new ideas from people that had different experiences.

Although UCSD promoted diversity and support for students, the overall experience of the campus was individualistic and somewhat segregated. Offices like OASIS and the Cross-Cultural Center were two of the small number of spaces where I felt welcome, secure about my aptitude and ability as a student. More
often than not, many of the other offices and services created a considerable level of anxiety for me, making me question my success in the university. I found it a little ironic that administration sent a personal request for me to participate as a "poster-child" for the university (my image was used in various brochures) to represent the presence of members from my ethnicity, though I had to seek out (on my own) the small number of niches for cultural support and understanding.

Ethnic Identity. To succeed academically I turned away from my cultural identity to adapt to the prevailing cultural context at UCSD. I suspect most students share this experience to some extent regardless of cultural background. But I believe that since my ethnic background was far more different, I was forced to promptly detach from my ethnicity to prudently adapt and succeed. This dramatic uprooting left me without the tools to integrate my new academic identity with my ethnic background. There was a time in my years as an undergrad when I felt like I didn't fit in at school and at home.

Going to UCSD helped me to realize that there are very few students with my same socio-economic and racial background that are accepted, choose to attend and graduate from a university directly from high school. Some of the attitudes from my colleagues (my college years happening just after the repeal of affirmative action) did not help me feel that the college environment was a welcoming one, but I was able to find a community nonetheless thanks to OASIS, the Cross Cultural Center and the Ethnic Studies Department.

I think UCSD fails in putting into practice what is taught in the classroom. For example, I am a political science major, but I have never taken a class that discussed important contemporary issues or social movements. And only one of my professors ever advocated getting involved in the political process. The style of teaching focuses on gaining knowledge for its own sake, not to benefit anyone in society.

UCSD contributed the least in the areas of civic and community engagement. While at UCSD, the University did not prioritize having a direct connection with the greater San Diego community. The establishment of the Cross-Cultural Center in the Spring of 1995 contributed to a commitment to hold the University accountable to the community. It is critical that UCSD reflects the diversity of San Diego and of CA.
UCSD’s inability to effectively implement its principles of community and commitment to diversity, especially for underrepresented students, made it difficult for me to feel socially connected to the campus. I felt the campus services and academic departments I felt most comfortable with (including OASIS, the Campus Community Centers, Critical Gender Studies, and Ethnic Studies) were peripheral to the institution, and thus made me feel marginal.

Thus, a number of critical learning outcomes were found lacking among some alumni regarding their general UCSD experience.

CONCLUSION

The survey responses from alumni provide unequivocal support for the positive, significant contribution of OASIS to their learning outcomes. Although much of the survey is necessarily quantitative, the responses to open-ended questions provide a more qualitative dimension of assessment. Since the degree to which the alumni respondents’ representativeness among users of OASIS services is limited by the characteristics of the sample, our subsequent ability to generalize findings beyond our sample is likewise limited. However, for this sample of over 300 UCSD alumni that are largely underrepresented students that had frequent, often intensive contact with OASIS, the OASIS contribution to their learning is strong. It appears that for underrepresented students that engage OASIS at a deep level, e.g., through our OASIS transition programs and academic year follow-up services and/or as student employees, their learning outcomes are quite positive.

REFERENCES


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APPENDIX 1: OASIS Mission and Vision Statements

Office of Academic Support & Instructional Services

Mission Statement 2012-13

The mission of OASIS (the Office of Academic Support & Instructional Services) is to facilitate the intellectual and personal development of UC San Diego students, particularly underrepresented and underserved students. Through a challenging and supportive environment that emphasizes collaboration, validation, equity, and social justice, OASIS contributes
significantly to students’ retention, achievement, learning, and empowerment.

**OASIS Vision Statement**

**2012-13**

The Vision of OASIS is to play a prominent role in collaboration to ensure a greater institutional focus on teaching and learning and to contribute to a more equitable, inclusive and supportive campus climate at UC San Diego. This focus will ensure that OASIS provides a transformative learning experience that prepares students to provide leadership in a diverse society and be agents of change and social justice.

Our Core Values:

- Diversity
- Social Justice
- Equity
- Student Development (intellectual and personal)
- Community (sense of belonging)

**APPENDIX 2: Alumni Survey Questions**

1. Year when you graduated from UCSD (drop down menu with years 1980-2009)

2. If you participated in Summer Bridge, indicate the year in which you participated (drop down menu with years 1978-2006)

3. Indicate all OASIS programs in which you participated (drop down menu with Academic Transition Program, Summer Bridge, Language and Writing Program, Math and Science Tutorial Program, Student Support Services Program, Study Management Program).

4. If you worked for OASIS, indicate the program(s): Academic Transition Program, Summer Bridge, Language and Writing Program, Math and Science Tutorial Program, Student Support Services Program.

5. Did you enroll in the TEP 116 or EDS 116 course in order to work at OASIS? (yes/no)

6. Your ethnicity (drop down menu with Black/African American, Chicano/Mexican American, Latino, Pilipino, Vietnamese, Korean,
Chinese, other Asian, Pacific Islander, White, Middle Eastern, Native American, Mixed Race).

7. Your gender (drop down menu with female, male).

Questions for learning outcomes

Set up as dual matrix:

How much did UCSD contribute to your development in this area?  
A great deal, Considerably, Moderately, Slightly, Not at all

How much did OASIS contribute to your development in this area?  
A great deal, Considerably, Moderately, Slightly, Not at all

Learning Outcomes

1. Effective Communication
   - My oral presentation skills
   - My written communication
   - My ability and confidence to express ideas

2. Interpersonal Skills
   - My ability to collaborate and work in groups
   - My understanding and appreciation of diverse ideas and opinions
   - My sense of social competence

3. Leadership Skills
   - My ability to provide a leadership role in groups
   - My ability to build consensus in a group
   - My ability to facilitate positive group dynamics
   - My ability to facilitate group effectiveness in reaching objectives

4. Personal Development
   - My ability to balance life
   - My ability to set personal, academic, and career goals
   - My competence—my own culture
   - My competence—other cultures
   - My individual identity
   - My ethnic identity

5. Intellectual Growth
   - My ability to analyze ideas and policies
   - My ability to think critically
   - My ability to conceptualize solutions to social problems
• My ability to choose support for conflicting ideas
• My intellectual curiosity
• My ability to make connections between theory and practical applications
• My sense of intellectual competence
• My ability to construct my own learning

6. Civic and Community Engagement
• My knowledge of California social and political issues
• My knowledge of national social and political issues
• My participation in political processes (e.g., voting)
• My participation in community organizations
• My commitment to social justice
• My commitment to racial equity

Open ended questions

• From the student outcomes listed above, in which areas did UCSD contribute the most to your development? How did they contribute to those outcomes?

• From the student outcomes listed above, in which areas did UCSD contribute the least to your development?

• From the student development outcomes listed above, in which areas did OASIS contribute the most to your development? How did OASIS contribute to those outcomes?

• From the student development outcomes listed above, in which areas did OASIS contribute the least to your development?

• Would you like to make any additional comments about your experience at UCSD and/or with OASIS?

APPENDIX 3: Alumni “Additional Comments” to Open-Ended Survey Questions

The Summer Bridge Program really did help me "bridge the gap" between high school and college. Once my first Fall Quarter started, I felt I had a good idea of how to approach the fast pace learning at UCSD. The OASIS Tutorial programs gave me additional help with my science and mathematics. When I had difficulty with a particular concept, I felt better when I was with my peers in the tutorial center, knowing that I was not the only one. OASIS has helped me broaden my understanding of other cultures and was definitely there when I
needed extra help in passing my classes. I hope OASIS continues to help students
at UCSD for many more years to come.

I only wish that UCSD had the diversity that I experienced while there. In
fact, my hopes are that they do better. No one should feel like a pioneer in
college, breaking barriers in 2009 to promote diversity. It is incumbent on the
college to rise to the occasion, step to the challenge, provide scholarships at the
point of admissions to promote diversity.

If it weren't for my experiences with Summer Bridge and OASIS, I don't
think I would have seen the successes that I benefit from today. While UCSD was
the vehicle that provided me with the opportunity, OASIS was the engine that
made UCSD work for me. I owe a debt of gratitude to OASIS for what they have
done for me and numerous other students. The lessons learned, friendships forged,
and personal development encouraged is something that has been priceless to me.

If it weren't for Oasis, I would have moved back home. UCSD was an
awful place with out OASIS' programs and staff.

If not for OASIS and SSSP, I would not have graduated from UCSD. I
struggled with academics early in my time at UCSD and was dismissed. I was re-
admitted and OASIS/SSSP provided the support to put me on the right track and
give me the additional skills needed to graduate.

Most of my learning academically and professionally took place in
OASIS. It is because of the culture that oasis created that allowed for a sense of
belonging that fostered engagement with other peers and the ability to give back
to a community. I t created a community where I belonged to, received help from
and was able to help others creating a sense of worth and value to a community.
This was extremely important since it was difficult to feel of value at UCSD as a
student of color.

My cultural awareness and political identity development occurred
because of the collaboration that occurred with the UCSD Cross-Cultural Center.
I worked for both places and both places played a huge role in my life, both
places I believed are very complementary to one another. I learned about my
culture and race in the Cross-Cultural Center, but in OASIS I learned about how
to work with students of color and through the TEP course, I learned the
educational discourse surrounding race and ethnicity. Thus, I think looking at how
OASIS and CCC worked together needs to be taken a looked at.

Now as a University Administrator, I see that benefits of programs like
OASIS. Not only are they working to provide services to retain underrepresented
students, they are also doing things that assist white students as well. The tutoring
offered supports all students and makes classes much more bearable. I feel also
that the co-curricular learning that is done is phenomenal. You will not find that
kind of learning environment anywhere else on campus. I also enjoyed the opportunity to serve as a TA for the Summer Bridge program. This offered me the opportunity to learn some things that were fundamental for graduate school. This was the best place to learn how to set up a lesson plan, provide a lecture, ask students critical questions, and prepare them for exams. I don't know of too many programs that provide that opportunity. I wish that my current institution had a program such as this because I believe that it truly is forward thinking. It would be a shame to see UCSD not do the right thing and support this type of program.

OASIS is an AMAZING program. To this day I attribute OASIS with introducing me to a career path I had never considered. I met some of my best friends in Summer Bridge and grew more through OASIS programs than I did in the remainder of my time at UCSD. The Math/Science Tutoring offered at OASIS is the ONLY reason I passed chemistry in my first year, and helped me to get an acceptable grade in math; it has been very disheartening watching the number of workshops offered be cut because so many students need help like this in their courses. Working in academics now, I see the need for tutoring programs and areas on campus where students can feel accepted, which OASIS always offers. Although I did grow at UCSD and found numerous opportunities that led me to where I am today, OASIS truly is the only reason I had access to these programs. I hope that in time OASIS can receive more funding because it really is an opportunity that not enough students get to experience.

OASIS is the reason I graduated. OASIS is the reason I am a professional today. Through the academic workshops I got through the classes. Through Summer Bridge I established a sense of belonging in such a huge institution, and that created a family for me that got me through the years at UCSD. Summer Bridge opened my eyes to all the facets that come with being a college student, and supported me every step of the way. I was an Academic Transition Counselor, and that experienced helped me learn more things about myself than I ever dreamed of learning. The Student Support Services Program was my home as well, and I learned most of my interpersonal, professional, and leadership skills through SSSP. Without OASIS, I know that I would not be where I am today, and proudly representing UCSD to all my peers.

OASIS made UCSD bearable for me. UCSD is a cold, merciless environment that focuses too much on academic independence and competition. OASIS opened the door to new friendships and networks that helped me be successful in more ways than just as a student, but as an community member, a leader, and a friend. I learned more behind OASIS' doors than in any classroom I entered in UCSD. And once I left those doors behind, the connections I made and the growth I saw within myself and the people I've worked with still resonate. OASIS creates family.

OASIS provided effective tutoring on a vast variety of subjects to all students. Along the way I introduced many of my classmates, of practically all
ethnic backgrounds, to tutoring courses offered by OASIS. They were as pleased with the help as I was.

OASIS provided me the foundation for a solid beginning in a rather intimidating environment of UCSD. OASIS opened my eyes to the beauty of difference and the ability to not only appreciate others and their ideals & culture, but at the same time foster my own. I would not be where I am, nor would I have realized who I am without OASIS and their programs.

OASIS truly made my UCSD experience memorable and enjoyable since I first set foot on campus. Had it not been for OASIS, I may have dropped out of UCSD. I was on Academic Probation, struggling at UCSD, and not enjoying myself. I got more and more involved with OASIS, was employed with them for over 2 years, and have multiple networks and contacts because of it. I took advantage of Summer Bridge, ATP, MSTP (tutoring and workshops), and numerous other programs and events. Most of the friends I made on campus were all through OASIS. As an Alumni, I have continued to give back to OASIS by volunteering for events, working with OLC’s, and serving on Alumni panels. OASIS is what keeps me connected to UCSD.

OASIS was the single most important element of my years at UCSD. It helped me to develop a sense of self-confidence and empowerment in that it gave me the tools with which to understand my experience as a working-class first generation college student.

OASIS was very special to me as a first generation student. As always, Chicana/Mexican-American students are not prevalent on the UC campuses. OASIS welcomed me on campus, did not water down the reality that I was one of a few on the campus and taught me how to embrace and share my experiences with others. My experience was just as valid as anyone else on the campus and OASIS helped me see why my experience was important to share. I attended UCSD at a time when the argument for affirmative action was in question. Students were upset at minorities for "taking their spots." I was empowered by OASIS to not let it get to me, but to make sure I succeeded and to take advantage of the opportunity to learn, succeed, and prove to myself and others that I deserved to be on that campus, affirmative action or not. I believe OASIS set a strong foundation for me and after summer bridge I knew, without a shadow of a doubt, that I would be successful. There was a comfort on the campus for me. I knew I belonged, I knew I could do the work, and I knew that I had the support all thanks to OASIS.

The academic and social support that OASIS provided me were critical in my ability to persist and succeed at UCSD and beyond. OASIS significantly enriched my academic and personal growth. OASIS helped to develop my political activism, expand my social consciousness and strengthen my commitment to under-served communities.
The programs and staff at OASIS contributed to my development in countless ways. OASIS provided a platform for me to become a student leader, on a predominantly white campus, and helped me develop skills in the areas of counseling and teaching. Because of OASIS I was able to feel connected to UCSD and decided to persist, previously to joining the programs at OASIS I considered transferring to another university. OASIS provided opportunities for employment, academic enhancement, personal development that I am eternally grateful for. If it were not for OASIS I don't think I would graduated from UCSD.

UCSD is a very rigorous academic environment and form many including myself there was also much of a cultural shock. Thus it was particularly difficult for me to make the transition from HS to University. Without Summer Bridge and Oasis I may have never completed my studies at UCSD.

UCSD is a wonderful university that has so much to offer to all students. It is truly an ocean of knowledge and opportunities. However, for first generation students, such ocean can be overwhelming. OASIS truly is there to help any student navigate.

UCSD is an excellent university and was a wonderful experience for me. I do not think it would have been the same if I had not participated in OASIS activities. The people I met through OASIS remain my good friends to this day. In addition, I developed leadership skills and confidence through working as a Summer Bridge Facilitator and an MSTP tutor and workshop leader.

UCSD was a very cold place. OASIS provided a home on campus. OASIS was the sole reason I decided to stay and graduated from UCSD.

UCSD was critical to me. I would not want to exchange or forget any part of my UCSD experience. All of it has come to define me today. However, the OASIS program was my first UCSD experience. It was also the most important UCSD experience because it reached into every aspect of my UCSD experience-academic, personal, professional, and religious. OASIS also was how I related to UCSD. I found my degree department, college, academic advisers and other UCSD administrators hard to engage, difficult to relate to and often times quite unhelpful. But I can understand that some of those UCSD employees are not there to serve those purposes, however, the thing about OASIS is that it offers so much more then what it seeks to provide, because people like me invest into OASIS and make it a living experience that is handed down from one class to the next. That is something UCSD fails to do, outside of OASIS, and I speak from experiencing two college residential life programs at UCSD as a student and then as a employee.

When I immigrated to this country, I was just starting high school and I was so traumatized by culture shock that I became fearful and withdrawn. I am
forever grateful for being a participant in Summer Enrichment, Summer Bridge and the ATP during my freshman year at UCSD. These programs changed my life because I was able to re-discover my voice and to be myself again. The program structure and the staff provided a loving foundation that allowed me to succeed at UCSD, and to continue in developing into my highest potential in life. OASIS was my family and my mentors during my college years; the program improved my quality of life while I was at UCSD. OASIS inspired me to be involved with struggle to establish the Cross-Cultural Center, to be more involved in the Pilipino community in San Diego, and to be more active and engaged in civic issues affecting our state and this country. These are lessons that went beyond the classroom setting and yet just as critical in anyone's development. Most of all, the folks whom I met have through the OASIS program have remained my dearest and cherished friends for life. The OASIS program is very valuable to the recruitment, retention, matriculation, and success of underrepresented students at UCSD. It also contributes to the diversity of the UCSD community and to the academic rigor of the University.

Without OASIS, I would not be the person I have become who is able to be well rounded and a strong competitor in my field. OASIS provided me with the resources to help myself and gave me a foundation that has helped me beyond my years at UCSD to continue further in academia and within my chosen field.

Without OASIS, I would not be where I am today. Starting my college career with the Summer Bridge Program set the tone for the rest of my time at UCSD. OASIS staff have played an integral role in my personal development--providing me the necessary support as an underrepresented college student. It was one of the few places on campus where I was able to see other people who looked like me and where I felt like I belonged. Moreover, the Summer Bridge Program was the catalyst that sparked my interest in social justice and planted the seed for my current endeavors as a Ph.D. student. OASIS made UCSD bearable.

Without the OASIS program I am certain my ultimate success as a student at UCSD would have been in jeopardy. It was there that I was able to make a transition from high school to college, to start out on the right foot in a community that was not all that welcoming. It was there that I made life long connections and was inspired to community service. It is one of the most valuable programs at UC San Diego in my opinion.

Without the support I received from the OASIS staff, both professional and student, and the general OASIS community, I do not think I could have successfully navigated the UCSD system. OASIS is one of the primary reasons I was able to graduate and is one of the few reasons I feel a sense of connection to UCSD in general.