WILLAMETTE ACADEMY REVIEW 2014-2015

Based on the results of examining all available Willamette Academy documents, conducting interviews with 50 staff, students, instructors, and University community members, this document will focus on specific questions that were formulated in January, 2015 by the Willamette Academy Steering Committee as well as other questions or issues that may have arisen during the evaluation and assessment process.
Willamette Academy Program Review

2014- 2015

Rita Moore, Ph.D.

Willamette Academy is a free, after-school, supplemental education program for under-represented, motivated students who have the academic potential to attend college. Under-represented students include students of color, low-income, second language learners, recent immigrants, and potentially first-generation college students. Students from Salem Keizer School District apply during their 7th grade year.

While national high school graduation and college enrollment rates have increased slightly, approximately 30% of students are still not graduating high school and, among those that do graduate, only 70% are enrolling in higher education (Snyder & Dillow, 2010). Additionally, recent research has demonstrated that a large proportion of high school graduates have not developed the skills necessary to succeed academically in college (Callan, Finney, Kirst, Usdan, & Venezia, 2006; Greene & Winters, 2005). Perhaps most concerning is the fact that, although college enrollment rates have increased, students of lower socioeconomic status or minority backgrounds, and students whose parents did not attend college, are still considerably less likely than their peers to graduate high school, pursue post-secondary education, and persist upon entry (College Board, 2010).

In 2014, SKSD evidenced a high school graduation rate between the range of 74 and 88 percent. While on the up-swing, Oregon high school graduation rates remain some of the lowest in the nation (Statesman Journal, January 30, 2015). Willamette Academy is one of many supplemental education programs in the Salem-Portland area seeking to reach out to struggling populations who might not otherwise have the preparation, incentive, or financial resources to attend post-secondary education.
The Willamette Academy 2015 Program Review

Based on the results of examining all available Willamette Academy documents, conducting interviews with 48 staff, students, instructors, and University community members, this document will focus on specific questions that were formulated in January, 2015 by the Willamette Academy Steering Committee as well as other questions or issues that may have arisen during the evaluation and assessment process. Recommendations follow each section. The last formal review conducted on the Willamette Academy was completed in 2006 by Patricia Gandera. That report is attached as Appendix A. Comparison and contrast between the Willamette Academy 2006 Evaluation and the 2014-2015 Program Review are found in a summary statement in Appendix B.

Goal of the 2015 Program Review: The overall goal of this review is to determine the effectiveness and efficiency of the Willamette Academy Programs, specifically their design and delivery in preparing students for admission to and success in college. The review offers information that includes an overall assessment of the program with a set of recommendations in general areas which would strengthen the program and be cost effective. The review oversight comes from a steering group that includes Rita Moore as Principal Investigator, Joshua Bilbrew as Interim Willamette Academy Director, Danny Santos as a member of the past Willamette Academy Advisory group, Kelly Carlyle, Assistant Superintendent of SKSD Schools and former liaison between the school district and the Academy, and Deborah Dancik, Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs.

Introduction of Willamette Academy

Background

In 2000, WU faculty and community leaders gathered together to discuss their dreams for the University. Ideas born in the brainstorming session included encouraging young students to go to a four-year college or university. Shortly after Dr. M. Lee Pelton became WU’s 23rd President, he learned about this aspiration to start a college access program for local students, an access program that would also serve as a feeder to diversify the WU student population. President Pelton supported the vision and designated what is now known as the Willamette Academy.
Mission
Willamette Academy reaches out to historically under-represented communities by empowering youth who have the desire and potential to advance to higher education.

This academic program is designed to address a number of factors that may discourage certain students from attending college or otherwise impede their academic progress. We are committed to helping our students achieve at a level that will enable them to attend the four-year college or university of their choice.

Purpose
Willamette Academy provides students who show determination and promise the opportunity to access a college. The Academy offers participants a series of social and academic supports, including a summer academy, a once monthly Saturday instructional program, a study hall with tutors offered four times a week, and a parent involvement program.

Goal
The primary goal is to reach students with desire and potential to advance to higher education and empower, inspire and prepare them to attend a four-year college or university.

To carry out the mission and accomplish its goals, the Academy supports three interrelated frameworks, considered to be its backbone or pillars including:

- Ongoing academic support and tracking, with particular attention paid to college-preparatory skills including those pertaining to writing, reading, math, science, and technology;
- Family and school supports that promote the participation of parents, teachers, and counselors in students’ academic lives;
- Support and assistance in the college application process and obtaining financial aid.

The Academy’s approach to programming includes regular after-school tutoring and mentoring, monthly Saturday Sessions, parent workshops and college information sessions, as well as Summer Camp, a summer residential learning program.
**Description**

**Willamette Academy**, located on the [Willamette University](http://www.willamette.edu) (WU) campus in Salem, Oregon, is an after school and week-end, college access initiative. Since early college planning is a crucial, but often overlooked by students from underserved backgrounds,¹ the Academy partners with the eleven middle schools in the Salem-Keizer School District (SKSD) to recruit and nominate program applicants in grade 7. SKSD is the second largest school district in Oregon. Successful applicants and their families are expected to commit to five (5) years of participation in the Academy. Willamette Academy provides a number of academic and information support systems that equip students and their families for the college enrollment process. Once students are accepted to the Academy, a network of program staff provide curriculum to promote the Academy’s goal of supporting the students’ successful progress through high school and matriculation into a four-year college.

There are two parallel programs operating within the Academy: the traditional, full-length Willamette Academy and Project Promise, a shortened version of the Academy with similar goals. Project Promise began serving students in 2012. Students are known as Promise Scholars in the Academy.

The target population for both programs is the same; however, students are not dual enrolled. With application numbers to the Academy on the rise, the leadership staff of the Academy established Project Promise seeking to include more students in need of assistance and support in reaching college potential using existing Academy and University resources. Enrollments in both programs have remained constant since 2012.

Willamette Academy is currently serving 225 students from the Salem area in grades 8 through 12. Of those, 75 students are enrolled in Project Promise, while the remaining 150 are enrolled in cohorts in the traditional five-year Willamette Academy. The last cohort to graduate in 2014 was comprised of 40 students. About 88% of the students served are from ethnic minority backgrounds and about 63% come from households that fall below the Federal Poverty Line. Only about five percent of the students’ parents attended college; therefore, many parents may not have the knowledge, skill, or experience to direct their own children to college not matter how important it might seem to them. For this reason, Willamette Academy makes a special effort to inform, include, and consistently reach out to parents and guardians of all the Willamette Academy students.

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The Traditional Academy

Upon acceptance, traditional Academy students begin in their 8th grade year and are invited to participate until they graduate from high school. For each grade level there are age and developmentally appropriate activities. This long-range planning process includes some academic preparation, mentoring, and support in addressing each student’s fiscal, social, and academic needs on the path to college entry. The Academy works with families of the students, as well, providing them information and guidance about how to successfully enroll their child in a post-secondary institution.

In the Willamette Academy, as it is currently structured, the stated emphasis is on students enrolling in four-year institutions of higher education that match their academic and vocational aspirations; however, substantial scholarship incentives offered by the local community college and WU sometimes make it difficult to maintain this focus.

To date, the Academy is serving 150 students from SKSD in grades 8 through 12 in the traditional Academy. There are 75 additional students enrolled in Project Promise for a total of 225 participants.

The Academy functions on a rolling enrollment model, that is, during the month of March, all middle schools in the SKSD are invited to nominate 7th grade students meeting the acceptance criteria as 8th grade candidates for the Academy. The average student completion rate is 84% percent. Students may not complete due to a family move, behavior, participation issues, failure to maintain at least a 2.0 GPA, or the student or family self-selects out of the program. Perceived as highly selective, the Academy garners considerable attention in the community. It receives over 500 applications for 40 participant slots annually. Eighth grade cohorts during 2007, 2008, and 2009 were comprised of 89 students who were beginning the traditional Academy program.

Project Promise

Project Promise, a modified format of the traditional academy, is an open enrollment after school pre-college program. It was established in 2012 with an enrollment of 28 students, eight of whom eventually, dropped out. Students who applied to Willamette Academy, but were bit admitted were invited to participate in Project Promise. Also, students who applied only to Project Promise and were accepted may utilize after school support at the Willamette Academy Annex on Fridays. This support includes access to technology (i.e. computers, internet, calculators, and a printer, mentorship, tutoring, family workshops, college visits, and some community building activities. Promise seniors currently have an expectation of attending two Communities of Respect for Everyone (CORE)
sessions a month. CORE is further explained in Section II of this report. Throughout these sessions, students and staff focus on several aspects of the college and scholarship application process. Project Promise students are called Promise Scholars.

Further, rising Promise seniors attend a College Track Summer Camp that is one week in length. Throughout the camp, seniors are extensively working on several processes of the college and scholarship application along with community building activities and a college course. Promise seniors are expected to visit the Academy four times a month (two for mentor meetings, two for CORE). Due to limited resources, Promise Scholars do not attend any Saturday Sessions, and grades 8 – 11 do not attend CORE. All other Promise Scholars are required to visit the Academy twice a month (one for academic mentor meetings and one for study hall).

Section I. Demographics, Retention, Graduation:

Attracting, Retaining and Graduating Academy Students

As stated, Willamette Academy is currently serving 225 students from the Salem area in grades 8 through 12. Of those, 75 students are enrolled in Project Promise, while the remaining 150 are enrolled in cohorts in the traditional five-year Willamette Academy. The last cohort to graduate in 2014 was comprised of 40 students. About 88% of the students served are from ethnic minority backgrounds and about 63% come from households that fall below the Federal Poverty Line. Only about five percent of the students’ parents attended college; therefore, many parents may not have the knowledge, skill, or experience to direct their own children to college not matter how important it might seem to them. For this reason, Willamette Academy makes a special effort to inform, include, and consistently reach out to parents and guardians of all the Willamette Academy students.

An Historic Examination of the Willamette Academy Student Profile

Since 2006, Willamette Academy has reached out to 443 students. According to the Willamette Academy Academic Support Coordinator, over 225 families are served annually. Willamette Academy students are recruited from 11 middle schools and, in the case of Project Promise, four high schools in the SKSD. The district, itself, serves a high-need demographic of students; 59% of those enrolled in its high schools are economically disadvantaged, and 49% of its ninth- through twelfth-grade students are racial/ethnic minorities (25% of these students are also English language learners). In academic year 2013-2014, SKSD graduated just 72% of its senior class cohort, and three of its eight high schools were designated Oregon “Priority Schools” due to students’ high poverty levels, low graduation rates, and low achievement in reading and mathematics.
Willamette Academy and Project Promise Enrollment, Graduation, and Retention

In Figure 1.1, Project Promise and the Academy are grouped to show enrollment comparisons since 2006. Of the 443 total enrolled, only 19% exited. Of those, 28% enrolled in the traditional Willamette Academy have graduated thus far; however if you consider that 123 of the 182 graduated, the average percentage rate for the traditional Willamette Academy rate of graduation since 2006 is much higher at 68%. For Project Promise, there is no graduation data due to the open enrollment nature of the program and the fact that it has been in existence only three years. Only four percent of these students exited the program, due to lack of participation.

Figure 1.1 All Willamette Academy students after 2006: Enrolled, graduated, or exited and did not complete.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Graduates of the Willamette Academy and Project Promise Since 2006</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>WILAMETTE ACADEMY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENROLLED</td>
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<tr>
<td>GRADUATED</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EXITED</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WILAMETTE ACADEMY Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PROJECT PROMISE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENROLLED</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EXITED</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PROJECT PROMISE Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grand Total</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Overall Retention Rate for Willamette Academy since 2006.

*Figure 1.2. Retention by Start Year*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Start Year</th>
<th>2006 and Earlier</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>2013</th>
<th>2014</th>
<th>Grand Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>WILLAMETTE ACADEMY</strong></td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENROLLED</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>182</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>17</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>69</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PROJECT PROMISE</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENROLLED</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>20</td>
<td>29</td>
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<td>7</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Figure 1.2 shows enrollments and graduation defining a retention rate of about 68% over the years for Willamette Academy. Sixty-nine students have exited the program due to a range of factors including behavior, non-participation, relocation, etc. The senior students currently enrolled in Willamette Academy are all on track for graduation according to program leadership. While retention rates remained constant between 2007-2010, persistence rates are on the rise by between 50 and 99 percent from 2010 forward.

**Persistence of Willamette Academy Students**

Figure 1.3 indicates that 26% more females than males exit Project Promise. There are no data available to suggest why these female students leave although a study of their student profiles located in the Academy’s database might reveal a pattern. Only 19% of the females exit Willamette Academy prior to graduation, only slightly more than the male students.
**Figure 1.3 Willamette Academy Persistence by Gender**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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</tr>
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<tr>
<td><strong>PROJECT PROMISE</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>67.50%</td>
<td>32.50%</td>
<td>100.00%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>93.10%</td>
<td>6.90%</td>
<td>100.00%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Project Promise Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>78.26%</strong></td>
<td><strong>21.74%</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>100.00%</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>WILLAMETTE ACADEMY</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>48.69%</td>
<td>31.94%</td>
<td>19.37%</td>
<td>100.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>48.63%</td>
<td>33.88%</td>
<td>17.49%</td>
<td>100.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Willamette Academy Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>48.66%</strong></td>
<td><strong>32.89%</strong></td>
<td><strong>18.45%</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.00%</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Grand Total</strong></td>
<td>53.27%</td>
<td>27.77%</td>
<td>18.96%</td>
<td>100.00%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Student Profile by Ethnicity since 2006**

Figure 1.4 shows that the majority of Project Promise Scholars and Willamette Academy students come from the Hispanic/Latino ethnic community. Other representations rank in similar percentages and significantly smaller numbers. When compared to the ethnic demographics of the SKSD district from which the Academy’s population is drawn, the range of representation is similar, although gaps remain in question. One interviewee from the WU community asked, “What does the Latino focus of Willamette Academy mean for the students who are not Latino?” This question was echoed as a concern by the 12 students interviewed, most of whom were not Latino/a.
**Figure 1.4.** Willamette Academy Student Demographic Profile by Ethnic Communities since 2006.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Racial Groups</th>
<th>Project Promise</th>
<th>Willamette Academy</th>
<th>All WA Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>American Indian or Alaska Native</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Black or African American</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic/Latino</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>287</td>
<td>340</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race and Ethnicity Unknown</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two or More Races</td>
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<td>24</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>69</strong></td>
<td><strong>374</strong></td>
<td><strong>443</strong></td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Racial Groups</th>
<th>Project Promise</th>
<th>Willamette Academy</th>
<th>All WA Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>American Indian or Alaska Native</td>
<td>2.90%</td>
<td>2.41%</td>
<td>2.48%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td></td>
<td>2.14%</td>
<td>1.81%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Black or African American</td>
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<td>5.88%</td>
<td>4.97%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hispanic/Latino</td>
<td>76.80%</td>
<td>76.74%</td>
<td>76.74%</td>
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<td>Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander</td>
<td>1.45%</td>
<td>3.74%</td>
<td>3.39%</td>
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<td>8.70%</td>
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<td>Two or More Races</td>
<td>4.35%</td>
<td>6.42%</td>
<td>6.09%</td>
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<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>5.80%</td>
<td>2.14%</td>
<td>2.71%</td>
</tr>
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**Serving Multilingual Households**

Since 2006 about 75% of the households in which Willamette Academy students live reported that more than one language is spoken in the home. Languages include: English, Spanish, Korean, native Pacific Islander dialects, Russian, and others.
Persistence by Race/Ethnicity

Figures 1.5 and 1.6 indicate two things: Enrollments of Hispanic/Latino students exceed those of other ethnic communities. The retention rate for the American Indian or Alaska Native population is 25% higher than for the Hispanic/Latino group; however the enrollment numbers in this group are significantly lower. The same logic applies to the other ethnicities represented. A total of 19% retention for the Willamette Academy cohort is higher than the 2.63% high school drop-out rate for SKSD Schools. The retention rate for Project Promise, at almost 22%, bears further investigation because it is a relatively new program.

Figure 1.5 Persistence by Race/Ethnicity since 2006 by Enrollment Numbers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>GRADUATED</th>
<th>EXITED</th>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Black or African American</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hispanic/Latino</td>
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<td><strong>Willamette Academy Total</strong></td>
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<td><strong>123</strong></td>
<td><strong>69</strong></td>
<td><strong>374</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Grand Total</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>236</strong></td>
<td><strong>123</strong></td>
<td><strong>84</strong></td>
<td><strong>443</strong></td>
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</table>
**Figure 1.6. Willamette Academy Persistence by Race/Ethnicity by Percentages**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>ENROLLED</th>
<th>GRADUATED</th>
<th>EXITED</th>
<th>Total</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>PROJECT PROMISE</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Black or African American</td>
<td>77.36%</td>
<td>22.64%</td>
<td></td>
<td>100.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic/Latino</td>
<td>100.00%</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>100.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific</td>
<td>83.33%</td>
<td>16.67%</td>
<td></td>
<td>100.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Islander</td>
<td>66.67%</td>
<td>33.33%</td>
<td></td>
<td>100.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race and Ethnicity Unknown</td>
<td>100.00%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td></td>
<td>100.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two or More Races</td>
<td>100.00%</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>100.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>22.22%</td>
<td>33.33%</td>
<td>44.44%</td>
<td>100.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Willamette Academy Total</strong></td>
<td>78.26%</td>
<td>21.74%</td>
<td></td>
<td>100.00%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

|                                      |          |           |        |        |
| **WILLAMETTE ACADEMY**               |          |           |        |        |
| American Indian or Alaska Native     | 22.22%   | 33.33%    | 44.44% | 100.00%|
| Asian                                | 37.50%   | 25.00%    | 37.50% | 100.00%|
| Black or African American            | 31.82%   | 45.45%    | 22.73% | 100.00%|
| Hispanic/Latino                      | 54.01%   | 31.01%    | 14.98% | 100.00%|
| Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific     | 35.71%   | 57.14%    | 7.14%  | 100.00%|
| Islander                             | 50.00%   | 50.00%    | 0.00%  | 100.00%|
| Race and Ethnicity Unknown           | 25.00%   | 37.50%    | 37.50% | 100.00%|
| Two or More Races                    | 37.50%   | 12.50%    | 50.00% | 100.00%|
| White                                | 48.66%   | 32.89%    | 18.45% | 100.00%|
| **Willamette Academy Total**         |          |           |        |        |
| **Grand Total**                      | 53.27%   | 27.77%    | 18.96% | 100.00%|
Factors Affecting Persistence

Based on available data, there are five predominate factors affecting the rate of exit from the Academy prior to graduation. These are: dismissal because students did not meet the participation requirements of the Academy; students move out of the SKSD; students experience academic challenges and cannot raise their GPA to required standards; or students initiate withdrawal. Data on Project Promise scholars indicate that the main reason for exit is not meeting the participation requirements. Students interviewed commented on the requirements, saying that sometimes, they were too rigid and unreasonable, hindering them from participating in valuable co-curricular or family activities.

Figure 1.7. Students Who Exit the Programs by Separation Category
Comparison of the Willamette Academy Student Profile with SKSD Schools

By Ethnicity

The demographic profile of SKSD shows a distinct representation of the Hispanic community over other ethnicities at 40%; however; even with the large Hispanic/Latino population in SKSD, the Academy’s Hispanic population remains disproportionate in its representation of other ethnic communities. The district profile shows a slightly higher percentage of African American, and Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander students over Asian students much like the Academy’s profile. Representatives from the SKSD schools report increasing growth of the Hispanic population at all levels, especially elementary and middle school as the demographics of the SKSD area continue to shift. Willamette Academy third, fourth, and fifth year students interviewed discussed the prevalence of the Hispanic population in the Academy. While the students were respectful and mindful of the demographics of the various high schools they attend, they said that sometimes the community of the Academy feels isolating to ethnicities other than Latino/a. One student remarked, “We can all relate to being of color, but all ethnic groups have their own culture.” They felt the Latino/a culture dominated the Academy’s programs. Some said their parents reiterated this concern, especially over the language and cultural barriers they perceived. The students realized the Academy doesn’t intentionally strike an imbalance, but they suggested a more mindful approach to the variety of ethnicities and cultures present, especially in the workshops conducted where they said there is an emphasis on the Latino culture and language. Parents were also interviewed but all interviewees in that group were Hispanic, mostly non-English speakers.
Parents’ and Guardians’ Education Levels

*Figure 1.8.* Educational background of parents and guardians in Willamette Academy since 2006.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of Education of Parents and Guardians</th>
<th>Number of Willamette Academy Parents and Guardians</th>
<th>Project Promise</th>
<th>Willamette Academy</th>
<th>All WA Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No Formal Ed./Elementary</td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JR High/GED</td>
<td></td>
<td>19</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School</td>
<td></td>
<td>40</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>185</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some College</td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>69</strong></td>
<td><strong>374</strong></td>
<td><strong>443</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of Education</th>
<th>Percentage of Willamette Academy Parents and Guardians</th>
<th>Project Promise</th>
<th>Willamette Academy</th>
<th>All WA Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No Formal Ed./Elementary</td>
<td></td>
<td>8.70%</td>
<td>30.75%</td>
<td>27.31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JR High/GED</td>
<td></td>
<td>27.54%</td>
<td>27.27%</td>
<td>27.31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School</td>
<td></td>
<td>57.97%</td>
<td>38.77%</td>
<td>41.76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some College</td>
<td></td>
<td>5.80%</td>
<td>3.21%</td>
<td>3.61%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 1.8 indicates that since 2006, just over 27% of the parents or guardians of Academy students have no formal education, or only some elementary education. The same is true for those with a junior high education and up to a General Education Degree. Almost 45% have a high school diploma or some college education. That percentage is consistent with the current group of active students in the Academy including Project Promise. The percentage of those with a high school diploma whose children are enrolled in Project Promise is almost 20% higher which might have been a contributing factor to whether the student was accepted into the traditional Academy program, or deferred to Project Promise. True to the nature of Academy admission criteria, since 2006, very few students whose parent or guardian had some college experience were not admitted.
The primary target population of the academy is first generation college students. About 58% of the Academy students are more educated than parents/guardians by the end of the 8th grade. Additionally, 99% of Academy graduates also graduate high school and 99% of Academy graduates enroll in post-secondary education. Over 55% of the students having more education than their parents do by the time they finish their 8th grade year.

**Poverty Indicators**

Figure 1.9 provides an average for nine years of data collection (since 2006) on household income levels for Willamette Academy students. Data indicate that over 90% of the Willamette Academy students qualified for free and reduced lunch, almost 60% were at or under the federal poverty level and 74% of the families earned less than $30K annually. Almost 43% of the students were without access to a home computer and internet.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>At or Under Federal Poverty Level</th>
<th>58.26%*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Qualify for Free or Reduced Lunches</td>
<td>91.10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students without a Computer with Internet Access</td>
<td>42.47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Families earning $30k or less annually</td>
<td>73.97%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To date

Current data on all active Willamette Academy students indicate that 63% are at or below the Federal Poverty Line while 89% qualify for free or reduced lunch costs. The average household is about 5 people. The number of those without a home computer and internet is just over 25%, up considerably from the nine-year average.

**Profile of Full-Time Willamette Academy Students Compared with those Enrolled in Project Promise.**

Willamette Academy and Project Promise draw from the same pool of nominations. The students’ first choice is Willamette Academy; their second choice is Project Promise. To date, there is no comparison data on college persistence between the groups because since Project Promise began in 2011, it will be 2016 before the staff can compare graduation rates. Even so, the comparisons may not be accurate because students may enter Project Promise at any year, thus receiving an inconsistent range of benefits and resources.
Demographics, Retention, Graduation, and Persistence in College Access Programs Comparable to Willamette Academy

Responding to this category requires data bases from peer institutions to which WU does not have access. Federally funded TRIO projects in Oregon, Kansas, and Missouri, for example serve similar target populations at similar grade levels as Willamette Academy but with a much higher, and consistent level of funding, staff, and program management. And, interestingly enough, some programs were not always willing to share information. This curiosity was noted in a recent national report on pre-college programs as well. ([A Blueprint for Success](https://www.edpolicyinstitute.org/publications/a-blueprint-for-success), Educational Policy Institute, 2012, retrieved January 30, 2015).

Of the nine programs contacted, only five responded. In speaking with these five directors, it was clear there are a variety of target populations and age groups served, as well as a range of program services. These directors were from George Fox, Western Oregon University, Whitman College, AVID at SKSD, the TRIO programs at Portland State University, A description of the TRIO grant programs is located in Appendix D. There are no truly “similar” programs in size, function, and funding in Oregon; however programs do frequently, share goals and student profile characteristics. Descriptions of some of these programs are found in Appendix C.

The program most closely resembling Willamette Academy is Advancement via Individual Determination (AVID). AVID is in place in all middle and high schools in the SKSD. A brief description of AVID as well as other regional college access or tutoring programs follows.

**AVID**

This review raised questions about perceived duplication of efforts between Willamette Academy and the SKSD AVID curriculum as well as the students both programs serve. Students interviewed, as well as staff, who are, or have been, enrolled in AVID in addition to Willamette Academy report that for some students there is curriculum overlap. They explain that the difference for them is that in AVID there are no college mentors for under-represented groups like themselves, and family involvement is minimal in their estimation, although AVID representatives believe families are quite involved in the college preparation process. Two of the instructors for Willamette Academy echoed these differences, as well as the fact that AVID is an in-school program within large high school communities, while the Academy serves an after school function with a much smaller, select population.

Academy family members interviewed were asked to comment on the difference between AVID in the schools and the Willamette Academy. One parent spoke and others agreed, “We understand this is a team effort. Willamette Academy does its job and the schools do theirs.” Another said, “At school the relationship is between the student and the teacher, and the teacher has many students. At Willamette Academy, there are mentors and tutors for each student so we feel more supported.”
Since there are competing factors between Willamette Academy programs and the SKSD AVID program, a description of the general characteristics of AVID follows.

**AVID** is a district-wide program from a national organization reaching out to all students in SKSD grades 8-12, either through across the curriculum strategies, or in elective high school college preparation and access courses. AVID curriculum aligns with the Common Core State Standards adopted by 44 states, of which Oregon is one. Teaching and learning strategies associated with AVID are considered high impact, cutting edge; therefore, many of the middle and high schools have adopted AVID school-wide. Some of these strategies include Cornell Note-taking, teaching and learning through inquiry, research and project-based learning, and reading, writing, and speaking as academic skills.

According to the Coordinator for AVID in SKSD, “There are no longer any resource issues for AVID.” (Personal Communication, February 4, 2015). The district is committed to funding this vast project, the focus of which is on academic success and college readiness, realizing that the two operate in tandem.

Persistence and graduation of AVID graduates compare favorably with Willamette Academy graduates; however, students may be enrolled in both programs so the comparison is not accurate. Demographics of the school district are also similar according to the [SKSD website](#) where the population is 50% white, 40% Hispanic, 5% Multi-Ethnic, 2% Asian, 2% Pacific Islander, 1% African American, and 1% American Indian. The percent of students considered living in poverty is 59%.

**AVID Curriculum Characteristics:**

- Teaches skills and behaviors for academic success
- Provides intensive support with tutorials and strong student/teacher relationships
- Creates a positive peer group for students
- Develops a sense of hope for personal achievement gained through hard work and determination

**Who AVID Serves**

Since AVID draws from the same population of students as the Academy and has program goals most similar to Willamette Academy than other college access programs studied: to provide college access to under-represented groups who exhibit determination and academic potential. While family support is important, unlike the Willamette Academy, it is not a compelling factor for enrollment in AVID since AVID is a public school initiative with equal access to all students.
The SKSD student demographic and parent education profile are contrasted below. The primary difference is there are more Hispanic/Latino students enrolled in the Willamette Academy program than in AVID and a larger African American population enrolled in AVID. This is a snapshot of a 2014 graduating class; therefore, the sample is smaller than the comprehensive data shown in the Academy figures.
Figure 1.9: SKSD Schools Student Profile AVID (graduates, April 2014)  N=78

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Racial Groups</th>
<th>Percentage of AVID</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>African American</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic/Latino</td>
<td>63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 1.10: AVID Parents’ and Guardians’ Education Levels

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of Education</th>
<th>Percentage of AVID Parents and Guardians</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Did not graduate High School</td>
<td>54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduated High School</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some College</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Retention and Persistence of AVID Students

According to the Assistant Superintendent of SKSD Schools, in 2014, 100% of the students enrolled in AVID graduated from high school as compared with the 70% graduation rate of the District. Of those only 43% planned to attend four-year institutions and 51% planned to attend two-year post-secondary colleges, primarily Chemeketa Community College. Chemeketa provides unique competition with the opportunity to earn a full tuition scholarship for up to two years in any field of study by completing requirements that are typically similar to those AVID and Willamette Academy students might easily meet.

Other college access programs supported by post-secondary institutions within the region are described in Appendix C.

In summary, depending on the size and mission of the organization or mission, Willamette Academy graduates similar percentages of student, and in some cases, accepts greater numbers than other college access programs, especially in the traditional five-year program. For example, there are only 105 high school students enrolled in the PSU Upward Bound program while their Talent Search program reaches out to over 700 middle school students. Others, especially under the umbrella of large universities and federal grants, might
have a larger student population with a wide variation of programs. For example, The University of Kansas maintains a Gear-up Project targeting elementary and secondary students from the inner city areas, hosts a summer bridge program for federal migrant-fund eligible seniors, and conducts traditional college access programs focused on math and science, as well as providing follow up support for students who enter college.

**Retention Incentives for Willamette Academy**

Based on interviews with students and staff there are three strong retention incentives: 1) Families who might not otherwise know how to maneuver the college preparation and access process are given hope, greater equity, and guidance; thus, they encourage their children to stay in the Academy; 2) Students appreciate and value having an academic college mentor, a University student, who often has come from a background of ethnic and socio-economic challenges similar to his or her own; and, 3) There is a strong sense of community, respect, and belonging among students, families, and staff associated with Willamette Academy.

Students commented on the value of having someone to talk with and trust. Through mentoring, they understand the importance of having their grades monitored with the monthly progress checks. They also report feeling that the Academy has instilled in them self-worth and value that they might not have received in the larger public school setting. They affirmed that at the Academy, they learn to advocate for themselves as learners and to believe in their dreams of going to college and becoming successful in the careers they will strive to attain. Students want to “give back” to their families and communities and hope by themselves becoming college graduates, they will know better than their parents do how to navigate the system, as well as how to prepare academically, socially, and culturally for the world of post-secondary education.

**College Achievement Program (CAP)**

To support Willamette Academy graduates on the main campus, the University offers the incentive of the College Achievement Program. The CAP guarantees admission and last dollar financial aid to any of the Academy students who meet three basic criteria: satisfactory completion of all college preparatory course requirements, a minimum number of extracurricular activities, and the maintenance of a 3.2 GPA. (Willamette Academy Academic Mentor Handbook) In the 2006 review, less than one-fourth of the Academy participants were reported on track to meet CAP requirements. Nine of 65 students reviewed had a GPA below 2.0. Since 2006, of the 123 Willamette Academy graduates, 71 were eligible for CAP and 52 were not. Currently about 52% of the Willamette Academy seniors are eligible for CAP, although it is difficult to predict until all financial aid packages are approved how many students will take advantage of this opportunity.
Since 2006, a total of 33 Willamette Academy students have taken advantage of the CAP. Eight have graduated; nine have withdrawn; and 16 are still enrolled.

**CAP Students Enrolled at WU**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ENROLLED</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GRADUATED</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WITHDRAW</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grand Total</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Staff reported that sometimes students choose WU over other post-secondary options because of financial resources, such as the CAP, which also allows them to live at home. More is explained about the CAP in Section III.

According to staff and students there is no pressure on students to attend WU or apply for the CAP. Beginning in their sophomore year, students and their families explore a variety of colleges and career opportunities. To learn about other institutions of higher education besides Willamette, students visit public and private institutions within the geographic region before applying to post-secondary institutions. These visits, as well as research on the institutions, assist students in finding a match for their career interests as well as their financial capacity.

**Willamette Academy Student Admission to Four Year Colleges or other Post-secondary Institutions**

While there are other institutions, the 24 colleges and Universities into which Willamette Academy students are most often accepted are those listed below. They represent a range of private and public institutions of varying sizes and focus.
Post-Secondary Institutions Enrolling Willamette Academy Students Include:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Oregon State University</th>
<th>Arizona State University</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Eugene Lang College (New York)</td>
<td>Seattle University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Oregon</td>
<td>Lewis &amp; Clark College</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Georgia State University</td>
<td>University of California Santa Barbara</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western Oregon University</td>
<td>University of California Berkeley</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linfield College</td>
<td>University of California Davis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pacific University</td>
<td>George Fox University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WU</td>
<td>Portland State</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of San Diego</td>
<td>Corban University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seattle University</td>
<td>Pomona College</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chemeketa Community College</td>
<td>Portland State University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Rochester</td>
<td>George Fox University</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**College Enrollment and Persistence of Willamette Academy Students**

Willamette Academy students *all* graduate with admission to a post-secondary institution in hand. Due to the nature of the Academy’s curriculum, this is a requirement met through participation in classes and workshops that teach and actively involve students in the application process. Not all enroll in the sense of showing up for college classes and actually attending. Of the last cohort of students to enroll in college 42% started and 36% either did not enroll or dropped out before graduating. Of that cohort, 27 of 123 (22%) graduated.

Data represented in Figures 1.11 and 1.12 show retention and persistence of Academy students enrolled in two-year or four-year post-secondary institutions. There are no data available to demonstrate how students persisted by institution except for WU.
**Figure 1.11 2007-2009 Cohort Graduates**

![Bar chart showing Willamette Academy graduates from 2007 to 2009, categorized by enrollment and graduation status. The chart shows the following numbers and percentages for each category: 44 graduates (52%) enrolled in 2007, 27 graduates (22%) enrolled in 2008, and 22 graduates (18%) enrolled in 2009. The chart also indicates the number of graduates who graduated in 2007 (21), 2008 (22), and 2009 (22), and those who left without graduating (8, 12, and 10 respectively).]
According to the Curriculum Coordinator who has been with the Willamette Academy for seven years, the work at the Academy meets the requirements of the mission to help students gain acceptance to four-year institutions, but she admits that enrolling at those schools doesn’t always happen for 100% of the Academy graduates. Some of the students decide that the two free years offered by the Chemeketa Scholars program at Chemeketa Community College (Salem, OR), or the reduced tuition of the community college in general, is “too good to pass up” in comparison to student loans and other expenses associated with starting at a four-year institution immediately following high school graduation.

She explains, “We strive to communicate with students and families that we believe – as research shows – that students have a higher chance of completing their BA (especially first-generation and historically under-represented student groups) when they enroll directly in a four-year institution after graduation, rather than first attending community college with the intention of transferring after two years” (Personal Communication, February 4, 2015).
Tracking Willamette Academy Students Enrolled at WU

There is currently no formal tracking system between Willamette Academy and the University for measuring persistence and retention of those Academy students who enroll at WU. There are informal conversations with alums, as well as information from the Director of the Learning Center about the general characteristics of the successes and challenges of those Academy students who come to Willamette; but there are no data sets to assess. As well, there is no process in place to gauge possible persistence and retention outcomes in other public or private post-secondary institutions enrolling Academy graduates.

There is no formal contact with Willamette Academy alums after they graduate; therefore, there is no way to determine if they carry out their plans associated with their acceptance to their post-secondary institution of choice. The WU Director of Multicultural Affairs suggested the need for a better way to bridge Willamette Academy graduates to college, thus encouraging persistence and retention. The Director of the Learning Center reflected that WU is not always the best fit for the Willamette Academy student.

SECTION ONE RECOMMENDATIONS

**Recommendation 1:** Find or develop a consortium of college access programs or an annual conference where comparative data from other institutions might be assessed and partnerships or alliances formed for the sake of professional development and shared information. Join the e-mail group for the TRIO programs to stay in touch with changing programs as well as for funding resources.

**Recommendation 2:** Study other college access models for curriculum enhancement and funding opportunities, in addition to lessons learned on how to partner with a school district to mine and share data. Determine how to compliment and support services, not duplicate them, as is currently the case with SKSD and AVID. Create an intentional system of data analysis and use that will make Willamette Academy more competitive for funding. Determine if the data currently being collected and analyzed meets upcoming grant application guidelines.

**Recommendation 3:** Strengthen the partnership between SKSD and Willamette Academy by developing stronger systems of shared data and resources. A letter from Assistant Superintendent, Kelly Carlisle reinforces the willingness and desire of the SKSD to work together to support and compliment the work carried out in the AVID college access programs and Willamette Academy (See Appendix G).
**Recommendation 4:** Develop a set of resources to guide the re-design of the Willamette Academy. Decide on a niche for Willamette Academy and explore a variety of federal and other funding options based on its strengths of mentoring for college, building centers of community, as well as providing a wealth of service learning opportunities for WU students.

One of the most valuable sources of information about successful college access programs is a recent collection of case studies about pre-college outreach programs, *A Blueprint for Success*. (Educational Policy Institute, 2012, retrieved January 30, 2015). Ten studies were conducted after screening over a thousand programs for consideration. The results include challenges discovered over longitudinal data examination, and recommendations that resulted. Each project, all of which are not federally funded, is designed and maintained by a systematic data collection and analysis system. Many of the targeted populations and demographics are similar to Willamette Academy. A close read of this document might give staff guidance in deciding what and how to provide a more defined college access experience if that becomes the direction they wish to proceed. For example, some programs shifted to fewer students or a focus on juniors and seniors. All of the programs tracked their students into college and provided some level of college mentorship and/or support by partnering with the institutions. (2012)

**Recommendation 5:** Gathering the data for the items under Section I tapped considerable resources and time. Collect and use this data annually and systematically. Record the data in annual reports that make sense to the Academy and that are shared with staff, the supervising department, and the Academy’s Advisory Board and school partners. Mid-year and end of year, analyze the data for patterns that will inform further decisions about how to guide and develop the two programs. Project Promise is relatively new. Gather evidence to demonstrate that the resources being used with Project Promise do not impede the outcomes of the traditional program. Examine the reasons students are dismissed or drop out in each program as well as points in time. Conduct exit interviews with students and the family, using that data to inform the programs.

**Recommendation 6:** Develop a more mindful approach to meeting the needs of the variety of ethnicities and cultures present in the Academy especially relative to the curriculum of the workshops and featured presenters. There is an undercurrent of confusion on the part of those students who are not Hispanic regarding the heavy emphasis on that culture, although the students recognize it is not intentional.

**Recommendation 7:** The Academy and the University would be well served to find ways to acquire this data. For example, consulting with the institutions that enroll Academy graduates to share retention and persistence information is one example of how many other college access programs are attempting to retrieve these important data. Consulting with WU’s academic alert
system representative to compare lists of enrolled Academy alums with those on academic alert lists and why present close opportunities to acquire such vital information.

**Section II. Structure: Curricula and Programs that Define the Willamette Academy Programs**

The expressed goal of the Willamette Academy is to provide students from SKSD schools in Salem, Oregon who might not otherwise become enrolled in a four-year college experience the opportunity to get a college education. These students must exhibit academic potential as well as determination and purpose. In addition to providing participants with a series of social and academic supports, including a summer academy, a once monthly Saturday instructional program, a study hall with tutors offered four times a week, and a parent involvement program.

To address the Academy’s expressed goal, there are Four Program Components of Willamette Academy: the Student Support Program, Monthly Enrichment Program (Saturday Sessions), Parents and Guardians Using Education & Networking to Empower Students. PUENTES, and Summer Programs. These programs represent various curriculum delivery methods and options. While each program appears robust and intentional, there is no overarching, strategic plan for coordinating the efforts of the collective.

**Student Support Program**

The first component is the Student Support Program, which is comprised of Academic Mentor meetings, Communities of Respect for Everyone (CORE) Groups, workshops, tutoring, and access to technology resources. Academic Mentor meetings provide individual goal planning and other academic support. Academy students meet with individual mentors at least twice a week. The Academy also facilitates CORE Groups and workshops to supplement other skills training that students receive. Finally, students are required to complete several tasks designed to allow Academy staff to touch base with students and help them succeed at school.

**Monthly Enrichment Program (Saturday Sessions)**

During the academic year, students are expected to come to the Academy one Saturday a month for enrichment workshops. These enrichment workshops are known as Saturday Sessions and take place at WU. They are taught by a combination of licensed teachers and community members with expertise in the topic. Student leaders assist with the sessions. During these sessions, students work on projects that help them to develop their math, science, and writing skills. Additionally, students attend workshops specifically designed
for their position on the path to college. The foci of these workshops include course advising, college entrance exam preparation, and completing a college application. Students also have the opportunity to meet and learn from University professors and college students. A secondary focus of these sessions is developing students’ “Creative Minds” through co-curricular endeavors.

Family Involvement

The final component of Willamette Academy is the Family Program called PUENTES: Parents and Guardians Using Education & Networking to Empower Students. Paid student staff organizes and maintains this portion of the Academy’s program. PUENTES promotes community and a supportive network among families and serves as a bridge between the students, their families and the Academy in the students’ pursuit of higher education.

Summer Program (Residential and day)

Each summer Willamette Academy hosts a summer academic camp on the WU campus. The camp is intended to reflect college life by allowing students to experience campus life and academic preparation for college. The Academy works to clarify families’ misconceptions about college and help students start to envision themselves in a college environment. Students participate in a non-residential day camp their first two summers and stay overnight on campus their remaining three summers.

Specific requirements for these program components are found in Appendix E.

The Willamette Academy Curriculum

Overview

The Academy curriculum is geared toward the grade levels of the students in relationship to what they should be considering and preparing for as they plan for college. There appears to be no curriculum map or over-arching guide for curriculum content for the entire Academy over the five years students are enrolled, except the planning for college preparation by grade level. This includes the time frame for looking for scholarships, making application to post-secondary institutions, financial aid packages, taking pre-college exams, and other related activities which are strengths of the Academy. However, while this process is extremely valuable, the lack of academic program planning and alignment with SKSD curriculum is clearly lacking.
Content

Academic content is generally replicated according to the Saturday Sessions curriculum map but Summer Camp does not yet have a similar overview. That overview if listed below; a typical Saturday schedule is located in Appendix F. Content for Summer Camp is taught based on the schedule from previous summers and perceived student need determined by staff discussion of student profile information located in the student information data base. Students comment that the vast majority of summer camp focuses on bonding and building individual confidence, respect, and community. A curriculum overview for the Saturday Sessions is located in Appendix H.

Academic Reading, Writing, Math and Science in the Curriculum

There is no intentional focus on aligning academic curriculum of the Academy to Salem Keizer standards. (Common Core/Avid); nor is there a direct connection to district learning outcomes largely due to a lack of resources and staff experience. There is a definite need for building stronger partnerships with SKSD to avoid duplication of services for college access preparation, although there is the feeling among some staff and student workers that this is not a concern.

The mission and goals of the Academy speak strongly to academic success; indeed, according to the Interim Director during an information session to potential applicants, “the ticket to being nominated is academic potential.” However, as implied earlier, there is little evidence of systematic attention to student learning outcomes in the areas of academic potential relevant to college success: reading, writing, Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM). These are subject areas that other successful college access programs either focus on overall, or find a particular niche.

Academy student admission criteria include Oregon Assessment of Skills and Knowledge (OAKS) test scores in these core subjects, but there is no plan of further systematic student development. For example, how do the data of increased or decreased annual test scores in reading relate to curricular planning for Saturday Sessions? According to the academic mentors interviewed, these results are not consciously woven into the curriculum. Additionally, there is little evidence in the program descriptions and documents available, that systems are in place for supporting academic learning and the development of academic discourse skills with intention and purpose.

Little data in this area were available. Tutoring in these subjects is “just in time,” and according to academic mentors and students is not necessarily effective or well developed. Students complained of tutors who gave them incorrect information or who had not planned well for the tutoring session. Five examples were cited by students.
Student Perceptions

Twelve Willamette Academy students ranging in age from sophomores to seniors were interviewed about their perceptions of the curriculum and asked how to improve the Academy overall. Students all agreed that Summer Camp was the most valuable experience although they did mention that some of the demands and restrictions seemed developmentally inappropriate at times. They also reported some perceived privacy issues such as incidents of staff entering their rooms at night, unannounced, while they slept, to conduct room and personal item checks. Issues of privacy as well as lack of fans or air-conditioning were cited as areas for improvement by all the students.

Nevertheless, during Summer Camp, the students “make close friends” and consider this to be the most valuable experience they associate with Willamette Academy. It’s the most “like college,” in their perception. One student explained and others agreed that while they appreciate the care given to them as they progress toward college admission during their stay at the Academy, sometimes they don’t “feel it’s a real college experience,” which was their expectation upon application, largely because the Academy is located on the WU campus. Some of the curriculum, such as Arts and Crafts at Mission Mill, did not match their expectations of college experiences. On the other hand, they were highly complimentary of the chance to meet with WU students, members of a variety of extra-curricular clubs and organizations, and how these college students explained to them all the opportunities open to them. They wanted to hear more about these sorts of experiences as well as participate in, or observe the various activities.

In regard to Saturday Sessions, students found them “repetitive,” although they agreed that sometimes they need the repetition, especially in preparation for college entry exams. “It feels too much like school,” one student remarked regarding the rigor of the Saturday schedule. When asked about the effectiveness of the guest speakers for the Saturday Sessions, the students found them, again, repetitive. One remarked, “There’s not much diversity in topics. We run out of questions because we know the answers.” They explained this statement stating that early in the Academy they are instilled with the need to work hard for good grades, strive for success, be respectful, look for ways to fit into the community in responsible ways, and that seemed to them to be the repetitive nature of the speakers. They did appreciate the variety of creative topics taught such as martial arts, poetry, the arts, as well as courses taught by WU professors offered during Saturday Sessions.
Instructors

Curriculum is delivered by trained staff, select instructors, as well as Student Academic Leaders (SALs) during workshops, Saturday Sessions and Summer Camp. During the week, students must sign up for a required number of workshops or presentations that are offered by student leaders or guest lecturers. They may also attend the Academy to study, socialize, and meet with their mentors.

Summer Camp and Saturday Session leadership staff invite licensed teachers from the SKSD Schools to participate in one or both of these events, which should provide some connection to district school curricula expectations. The rate of pay for instructors, however, is not competitive, according to the Interim Director, so assuring this connection is not currently, viable. Also, the Academy does not partner with SKSD to utilize teaching in Saturday or Summer Sessions as professional development opportunities for teachers, although the Academy has attempted to do so in the past.

Sometimes, instructors for Summer Camp or Saturday Sessions are not licensed teachers but professionals with particular expertise. They might be WU faculty or professional staff, for example. These speakers provide valuable connections to the community, but would not necessarily be familiar with how to supplement the curriculum students are exposed to in their SKSD classrooms. Others are more need specific. For example, if there is a need for reaching out to second language learners, a WU instructor who works with the English as a Second Language program might be asked to teach. These scenarios forge valuable relationships as well; however, the lack of consistency in curriculum planning remains in question. What worked one year and why? And, how do we know students gained the skills and knowledge they were taught? Asking students to evaluate their learning experience is valuable information; however, some standard of measuring actual student learning outcomes needs to be in place.

If the schools are successfully meeting students’ academic learning needs through AVID, for example, perhaps the focus of the Academy might be on college preparatory mentoring, cultural competency, and community building. These questions are important to maintaining the overall health and maintenance of the Academy curriculum and professional development needs.

The Academy teachers interviewed are experienced and highly qualified. They have all taught in Summer Camp or during Saturday Sessions. All are well-respected in their own schools for various projects and initiatives. When asked how content of the courses was determined, they reported that the content, especially Summer Camp, was often based on availability of instructors—who the Academy could hire.
They also expressed an interest in setting goals and benchmarks for the course work so that they could see what worked well from one
time to the next and why. They explained that it was sometimes difficult to plan courses because they didn’t know the backgrounds of
the students, particularly, academic. They wondered if students could keep student learning portfolios from semester to semester that
instructors could examine to help them plan appropriate curriculum.

Additionally, the teachers expressed the desire to have constructive feedback on their teaching, not just the student perceptions survey,
and the Curriculum Coordinator would like to have the time and resources to implement a systematic evaluation process that would
strengthen the program and better identify areas of greater curriculum need as well as overlap.

Naturally, and conversely, there are arguments for the sort of organic approach to academic curriculum development evidenced in the
Academy programs. One teacher described Summer Camp as “a dream teaching job” because she was able to teach the content without
constraints of student learning outcomes or standardized curriculum, thus possibly making learning more enjoyable for students. In any
case, it would be helpful to know how much the current approach increases student learning, motivation, and even potential, especially
as the Academy continues to pursue external funding as its locus of support.

Saturday Sessions and Summer Camp Curriculum

While there is a general curriculum overview for Saturday Sessions, according to the Curriculum Coordinator, there is not a separate
map for summer programming, and more importantly, there is not an overall curriculum map.

The Coordinator said, “Our goals and overview for the camps are discussed in the program handbooks for student volunteer leaders and
teaching assistants, and we’ve put the wheels in motion to create a separate curriculum handbook, but that hasn’t been created yet.”
(Personal communication, March 20, 2015). There is no overall curriculum map and objectives, with designated student learning
outcomes linking the curricula of Summer Camp, Saturday Sessions, workshops, and academic tutoring together, or to the SKSD
curriculum.

Following is a curriculum overview of Saturday Sessions by year and topic:

Year One. Grade 8: In the students’ first year, Saturday Sessions are geared toward introducing all aspects of the Academy, along with
the development of personal skills. Areas of focus include:
  • Introduction to the Academy
• Communication and time management skill building
• Self-esteem, identity and confidence development.

Year Two. Grade 9: During the second year, Saturday Sessions are designed to help with the transition to high school and the exploration of community resources. Areas of focus include:
• Assistance with high school transition
• Public speaking and telephone etiquette
• Exploring community resources.

Year Three. Grade 10. In the third year, Saturday Sessions seek to introduce students to college entrance exams along with development of life skills. Areas of focus include:
• SAT/ACT preparation
• Scholarship research
• Job and life skills

Year Four. Grade 11. In the fourth year, Saturday Sessions further emphasize college entrance exams as well as other college admission requirements. Areas of focus include:
• College resume
• Career exploration
• SAT/ACT practice

Year Five. Grade 12. During the fifth and final year, Saturday Sessions aim to facilitate the successful completion of high school and transition to college, including assistance with college and scholarship applications. Areas of focus include:
• College and scholarship applications
• Financial Aid and FAFSA guidance
• Transition

A sample Saturday Session schedule is located in Appendix E. Student academic leaders (SALS), who are 11th graders trained in leadership skills as part of the curriculum, serve as teaching assistants for Saturday Sessions. The session participants may choose from various sessions, all of which are designated by grade level appropriateness. Students complete an evaluation for each session which the
instructors may review but those data are not aggregated regularly. Classes and instructors are evaluated based on student perceptions of learning; student work is not scored or graded. Activities such as discussions or group projects are not graded or formally assessed by teachers; however, feedback is usually given, according to instructors. There are routinely about two teachers working in the Saturday Sessions along with Academy staff, including the Curriculum Coordinator.

As mentioned previously, when speaking with some of the instructors, it became clear that there are no standard learning outcomes for the courses. The courses, about half of which are academic in nature, do not intentionally support the curriculum of the SKSD classrooms from which the students come. They are, typically, courses that might be of interest or that broaden critical thinking or creativity. At Saturday Sessions and Summer Camp teachers don’t try to replicate or connect to objectives and standards of the district curriculum; there is not enough time or resources, according to staff. An analysis of the annual budget supports this disclaimer.

The Curriculum Coordinator, an experienced, highly qualified SKSD high school math teacher plans for concepts and areas of subject matter that might not get the same attention in Salem Keizer classroom but might show up on college entrance exams. The Saturday Sessions and Camp are an attempt to enrich, not necessarily complement daily classroom learning. She explains, “We cannot teach all [district] standards for all subjects; rather, we supplement that curriculum with topics that are not usually covered in the traditional classroom setting.” These topics include SAT/ACT preparation in areas like statistics and probability that often are not included in math classes, public speaking and debate, as well as extracurricular “elective” topics. (Personal communication, February 4, 2015). Other topics have included poetry, social studies, martial arts, creative writing, and reading.

The Academy curriculum places emphasis during the junior and senior years on preparing students to take college entry exams. During their fourth year as high school juniors, students practice taking SAT tests. Scores between 2013 and 2014 showed consistent improvements. No other data are yet available.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>SAT Practice Test Averages 2013</th>
<th>SAT Practice Test Averages 2014</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>424</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing</td>
<td>464</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Math</td>
<td>430</td>
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</tbody>
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The Academy expects that students earn As and B’s in all their SKSD classes and that they enroll heavily in college prep courses. No training for the academic tutors in SKSD curriculum is provided. They do connect to SKSD curriculum in the sense that students who need additional support in particular classes request tutoring assistance and they bring their school-issued textbooks and assignments. Or, some of the tutors might be recent SKSD graduates.

**Methods of Curriculum Delivery**

There are various methods of delivery one would expect to find in an after school and week-end tutoring program. These delivery options are intended to provide enough choices and options for students to meet participation requirements and to cover topics that are representative of the expressed goals of the Academy: to move students toward enrollment in post-secondary institutions, preferably four-year colleges. Current Willamette Academy curriculum delivery methods are described below in brief.

**Community of Respect for Everyone (CORE)**

CORE meetings, facilitated by 11th grade student leaders (SALs) are intended to provide structured opportunities for all Academy students to build relationships and community, develop social accountability for attendance and participation at the Academy and beyond, cultivate relationships and facilitate peer-mentoring between 8th and 9th graders along with Student Academic Leaders (SALs). Cultural competency and how to advocate as a member of under-represented community take shape in CORE, as well as other areas of the curriculum.

**Workshops**

The Academy offers workshops that are held on weeknights at the Academic Center (Executive Building). These workshops are intended to enhance student academic skills, expose them to new areas of study and career interests, and develop their ability to critically analyze the world around them. Planned and implemented by various staff members, each workshop has its own focus or theme according to the interest of the person proposing it. While all Academy students and Project Promise scholars are welcome to attend, students in their third and fourth year are required to participate in at least five (5) workshops per academic semester. Students also are encouraged to attend University lectures and workshops appropriate to their interest and grade level. Topics range broadly but are designed to reflect interests of the college students. Academy students said they enjoy attending these because they show a “real” aspect of college life.
Workshops appear to play a large role in the curriculum of the Academy but there does not appear to be a systematic approach to planning these, which may create issues such as those raised by the 12 students interviewed. They said that often they are not clear about the content of the workshop they sign up for, and are sometimes not satisfied with their choice, or feel that it might not be appropriate to their needs.

Several examples were cited. They said the workshop presentations were too focused on specific areas such as Law or were geared more toward the Hispanic community, such as one that was delivered in Spanish and not all the students who signed up spoke Spanish. They want to hear more about the variety of career paths that one can take within Law or Health Sciences, not how to become a doctor or lawyer.

Workshops may also be in the form of lectures provided by speakers who share their experiences as underrepresented minorities in their professional fields. Popular speakers from academic year 2013-14 included former Oregon Chief Justice Paul De Muniz, Native American author Sherman Alexie, and Mexican-American activists Glenn Anthony May and Sonny Montes.

Summer Day Camp and Residency

The Academy Summer Program on the WU campus is considered a “cornerstone” of the Willamette Academy. Mentors and students spoke with high regard of their experiences at residential camp especially around community and relationship building. During a 7-10 day Summer Camp, students engage in an in-depth exploration of writing, technology, science, art, reading and development of leadership and communication skills (Membership Handbook, 2011). A look at a typical schedule for the summer program reflects some courses in reading, writing, math, language arts, and social studies; however, a closer look reveals the focus of the camp is on CORE activities, leadership, communication, and community building.

Academy students are encouraged to forge meaningful connections with current college students who serve as Residential Assistants and Teaching Assistants (RATAs). Senior (5th year) Academy Leaders (SALs) assist with teaching and mentoring of the Willamette Academy students during Summer Camp.

Summer day camp is mandatory for incoming 8th graders and 9th graders. Students in grades 10-12 attend a summer residency camp including week-ends. Students describe the camp as an opportunity to find out what living on a college campus might be like and emphasize they learn to depend on one another as well as develop new skills toward becoming responsibly independent. Willamette Academy covers all food and dorm fees. Promise Scholars do not attend Summer Camp.
College Visitations

With regard to college visits, every year the Academy coordinates a number of college and university visits in Oregon and Washington. This year, they were fortunate to coordinate a total of 10 visits (three more than the previous year) to the following sites:

1. Linfield College
2. Lewis & Clark College
3. Western Oregon University
4. University of Washington
5. Seattle University
6. Reed College
7. University of Portland
8. Concordia University
9. WU
10. Pacific University

During college visits, the staff, coordinating with the college campus hosts, strive to expose the students to a number of opportunities and concentrations their post-secondary institution offers. A typical college visit for Academy students include an admissions presentation (e.g. highlighting academics, financial aid, student support programs, Q & A) with an admissions counselor, campus tour and debrief. A number of schools this year 2014-2015 provided students the opportunity to eat in their dining hall as well as visit various residential halls.

Other visits may consistent target grade levels because of conferences the host institution organized. For example, this year the Academy took seniors to Western Oregon University for their Making College Happen conference while juniors visited Reed College for their Junior Visit Day. These visits tend to be all day visits as the school provides students with a number of sessions, keynote speakers, and tours. On average, approximately 14 students and a chaperone (the Academic Programs Coordinator) attend the visits.

In summary, while the Academy seeks to work toward building academic success, it would be helpful to connect these various delivery methods with an overall curriculum map or plan so there is continuity and consistency in curriculum management. Assessing learning outcomes more formally, would also provide other data to show the positive effect of the Academy experience on students. While student GPA and classroom progress is regularly checked, there is no way of formalizing the connection of the students’ participation in
the Academy to GPA, or to subject area learning measured in the regular classroom since there is no intentional coordination between the SKSD and the Academy.

And finally, although the anecdotal evidence is clearly positive, having quantifiable, structured data to support the Willamette Academy story might possibly open more doors for external gifts and funding.

**Assessment of Student Learning and Progress Reporting**

When a student’s learning, behavior, or social behaviors, including participation in Academy requirements fall below expectations, they are referred by their academic mentor to the Academic Program Coordinator. The Coordinator places the student on a Plan of Action which includes an explanation of the issues, goals and timelines to remedy the problem. These are shared with parents and students. One of the parent groups interviewed expressed much gratitude for this process, stating that it “really helped our son over a rough patch in his life.” (Personal communication with parents, February 27, 2015).

Progress is documented for all students regardless of whether they are on a Plan of Action. In fact, it’s that progress documentation that often lets staff know that a student needs the additional support to get back on track and is consequently placed on a Plan of Action. All students are required to complete a monthly progress report, where they have their grades recorded and signed off by each one of their SKSD classroom teachers. Additionally, progress report grades (at the six and 12 week marks) as well as semester grades are entered into the database to keep with student records so GPA can be calculated and monitored. The meetings students hold with their Academic Mentor is another avenue to document progress, as students discuss how they’re doing in their classes and whether tutoring assistance may be needed. Mentors submit electronic forms outlining the details of their conversation with students (through the database) that can be seen by leadership staff. Beyond just the automated email communication from the database with these record entries, staff personnel are trained to inform the Director or Academic Program Coordinator when a student’s situation suggests additional insight or support for whatever reason, is needed.

Systematic assessment of the curriculum, instruction, and courses, especially within the academic curriculum, is needed to guide instructional decision making. This would be prefaced by a larger effort to develop consistent curricular and programing goals with measureable, clearly defined learning outcomes.

Students complete evaluations after class or workshop participation, but instructors receive little feedback or professional development. Additionally, these are paper and pencil evaluation when they might more effectively be completed on line using existing University resources. The evaluations might also be linked to grade level appropriate student learning outcomes. There is no framework of
assessment. Student profiles are created electronically, noting their mentoring and participation record, their GPA, and other concerns but there is no systematic approach to assessing student learning over five years.

The electronic database for the Academy is monitored by the Academic Program Coordinator. The database contains factors related to student nomination and admission, student transcripts, progress reports and Plans of Action. State test scores are not entered or tracked but are collected via students transcripts. No analysis of progress regarding state test scores is made at present.

**Project Promise Curriculum**

Project Promise is a shortened, open enrollment version of the Willamette Academy’s five-year program. Promise scholars in grades 8-11 meet with mentors at least once a month. Seniors are required to meet with their mentor at least twice a month. Students in grades 8-11, attend the Academic Resource Center at least four (4) times a month, and must attend required CORE meetings depending on grade level. They attend five (5) family workshops annually. Twelfth grade students must also attend at least two college visitations. Assessment and curriculum issues stated previously are mirrored in the Project Promise program. Thus far, there is limited data on student success as the program only began in 2012. The expectations and goals for Project Promise area as follows:

- Maintain a minimum grade point average of 3.4 each term
- Maintain C’s or above in all classes
- Be known as hard workers who turn in all assignments
- In consult with Academy staff, enroll in college preparatory coursework when possible
- Seek out co-curricular activities that enhance college resumes

Project Promise shares the same lack of curriculum overview as the traditional Academy and the same assessment issues are raised.

**Mentoring and the Academy**

The Willamette Academy functions around teamwork, leadership, and mentoring. These are at the heart of their work.

**Mentoring**
Students enter the traditional Academy during the summer of their 8th grade year. Academic mentors (WU students) are assigned to students by grade levels. Mentor assignments fluctuate according to need and availability; they work about 10-15 hours per week. During the academic year, the student meets with the assigned mentor at least twice a week for about 15 minutes to discuss progress in academics in their daily classroom, as well as other social and personal issues, or barriers to success. The mentor completes a progress report check on their mentees once a month, passing that information along to the student profiles located on an electronic data base. The data base is maintained by the Academic Support Coordinator.

The student may request tutoring for homework in specific subjects. The mentor consults the tutor availability and areas of expertise schedule and sets up a meeting within a few days for academic tutoring. The student evaluates the tutoring session, returning the survey to his or her mentor. The mentor checks with the student during the next meeting to determine if more tutoring is needed, as well as how effective the student perceived the tutoring to be. Depending on grade level, the mentor is assigned 16-26 students. Weekly meetings with mentors also take into consideration the students’ grade level and what they should be learning during the Saturday Sessions, although there is no actual assessment of student learning.

**Training for Mentors and Tutors**

Mentoring and tutoring pre-college adolescents require careful preparation, evaluation, and plans for continuous improvement. They also must have clearly defined roles and resources, and to at least minimal extent, pedagogical knowledge, particularly important for tutors.

**Mentors**

Mentors are provided an overview of the program and briefed on their responsibilities. Training for mentors is a series of sessions. In the past, mentors have shadowed current mentors to get a sense of the culture, expectations, and format of these meetings. The main training session happens early in the fall before students arrive and the Academy opens.

For training, the Academic Mentor Manual is used as a base. This document includes an overview of the student support program, program components, academic mentor responsibilities, ethics statement, principles to enhance ones effectiveness, Willamette Academy policy on student participation, and the CAP opportunity. Discussion around the difference in being a mentor and an authority figure takes place. Strategies for encouraging the community of respect to grow are provided as well as an overview of how to utilize the internal web to enter student information. Throughout a two-day training, the Coordinator for Academic Programs covers a plethora of topics.
After the initial training, mentors and ASPAs have time to begin experimenting with the internal web to familiarize themselves with the academic mentor reports, student profiles, any Plans of Action pending, tutor scheduling, and subjects for whom there are tutors. Further, they conduct role playing and scenarios to practice how one might respond or pursue situations of personal or interpersonal conflict, stress, or uncertainty.

Additionally, mentors attend a training facilitated by a representative from WU’s Human Resources Department where they are introduced to mandatory reporting and required reporting. Mentors engage in required Title IX, Sexual Harassment, Mandatory Reporter and general mentor training, but not necessarily according to their responsibilities, such as College Track mentors.

Mentors must sign and adhere to an Ethics Statement adapted from the National Tutoring Association Tutor Code of Ethics and the Association of the Tutoring Profession Code of Ethics. The statement is found in their application materials and on the webpage. Overall, the Academic Mentor Manual provides the foundation for the mentor’s work, while all other aspects of the training components enhance the conversations and knowledge gained.

According to mentors working with juniors and seniors on college track curriculum, they are not provided enough training in how to teach Academy students to navigate the college application process. For example, some mentors might not have applied to more than one university themselves, so they are learning along with the Academy students. They also expressed concern over how to assist students in preparing for college exams. They mentioned cases of students with high GPAs who did not perform favorably on college entry exams, or the practice exams. They do not feel confident in addressing these concerns as well as the resultant stress that students evidence due to these issues.

Mentors do not have formal on-going professional development, but they do meet as a group regularly to discuss issues, challenges, as well as successes; thus forming their own learning community. Mentors meet one-on-one regularly with students in their assigned grade level group to discuss six week progress reports and “life” in general. They offer support and advice based on their experiences in school and as a successful college student. They are not trained counselors or professionals; however, so if a circumstance arises that they are not comfortable in addressing, they seek the advice and help of the Academy Director or the Academic Program Coordinator.

Another concern expressed by the mentors interviewed is that all the current mentors are female. They believe there should be greater gender parity to better address the needs of the students.
One of the strengths of the mentor cadre is that about 36% of them are returning Academy alums who understand the program well as well the expectations of the participants. And, they understand the challenges and rewards of being an under-served group in a close-knit, pre-college program such as the Academy. Only 29% are Caucasian and the majority [of the Caucasians or of the total group?] come from middle- to low-income families.

**Tutors**

Tutors receive basic tutor training that consists of simple strategies and approaches to tutoring. They come from a pool of WU students who have enrolled in IDS 251. The course introduces WU students to issues of educational access and equity in the SKSD community. It is not intended to prepare students as academic tutors, in general, or for tutoring in specific subjects.

WASL students who demonstrate an interest in tutoring are intended to provide the academic tutoring support for the Academy; however, not all WASL students tutor. Their course requirement revolves around hours spent in a service learning environment so only about 20% of them may choose to tutor, depending on the composition of the course. According to the Academic Program Coordinator as well as ASPA staff mentors, the WASL students self-identify an area of tutoring expertise that is entered into a data base maintained by the Coordinator and accessible to mentors. When an Academy student from either Project Promise or the traditional, longer Academy program asks for academic support for their work in the classroom, the mentors draw from that database and scheduling tutoring sessions.

The tutors’ academic expertise is not vetted with faculty members, nor are they required to undergo a University conduct check. It is not surprising that the Academy mentors interviewed, stated that the tutor’s knowledge of subject matter expertise is not always consistent with the data base. Occasionally, if a student needs tutoring in a very specific subject, such as Advanced Calculus, the mentor uses his or her knowledge of the Willamette faculty expertise to ask for recommendations. Additionally, the pedagogy of how to tutor may not be strong evidenced by some of the student evaluations according to some of the mentors.

According to staff interviewed and materials provided, volunteers who choose to tutor as part of fulfilling their service learning requirement for IDS 215 must attend an orientation to tutoring in the Academy in which they are exposed to tutoring strategies, protocol, and challenges. They are not exposed to SKSD curricular expectations in the primary subject areas of reading, writing, math, and science. When asked if WASL students were familiar with the academic curriculum of the SKSD schools, the response was negative, although some of the WASLs were SKSD graduates.
This procedure was compared with procedure followed by the University’s Academic Support Services when hiring tutors. Students who apply to tutor WU tutors must submit faculty recommendations and proof of subject matter proficiency.

**Current Structure of the Academy in Relationship to Program Goals**

To carry out the mission and accomplish its goals, the Academy’s supports three interrelated frameworks, considered to be its backbone or pillars. These are:

1. Ongoing academic support and tracking, with particular attention paid to college-preparatory skills including those pertaining to writing, reading, math, science, and technology;
2. Family and school supports that promote the participation of parents, teachers, and counselors in students’ academic lives;
3. Support and assistance in the college application process and obtaining financial aid.

Based on a substantial number of interviews, there is confusion among staff, students, families, and the WU community over the true mission of Willamette Academy. For example, every group who participated in interviews strongly supported the community and relationship building that the Academy offers as well as the worthy goal of every participant being able to enroll in a four-year institution. However, little mention was made of academic programs or emphasis which is stated as a high priority in the Academy’s marketing materials and mission statement.

Presumably, while high academic expectations exist, there is no expectation that academic subject development is the Academy’s niche. There was expressed need for academic tutoring but such tutoring, in order to be effective, could more closely align with the curriculum and learning outcomes of the student’s daily classroom setting. The students’ outside curricula and co-curricular activities are important to understanding the whole student.

Another example of lack of program alignment is offered: Mentors and other paid student staff applauded the leadership opportunities and professional development opportunities they had received through the Academy; but they were not able to do so on any sort of continuum. A more comprehensive professional development plan for these student workers might be in order.

Again, absent a clear overall plan for curriculum and assessment, it is difficult to connect the dots across the Academy’s various programs and delivery models; thus providing a clear picture of how the five-year experience of the traditional Academy or that of Project Promise is defined. Scope and sequence of program delivery as well as student learning outcomes would yield a valuable resource for the Academy that would lead to patterns of needed professional development for student workers and staff.
The Academy provides a “safe” place where the students can study, socialize, and receive counseling from their mentors. These mentors provide support to the various age groups encounter as they transition from middle school to high school and into college. If this is the strength of the Academy, then perhaps developing greater training for mentors and finding funding to provide greater access to more qualified college guidance counselors is a consideration for the future. Successful programs found this to be a critical component (Educational Policy Institute, 2012).

**Developing Leadership in Willamette Academy Students**

One of the Academy’s goals is creating students who are leaders; therefore, they begin preparing their skills in public speaking, self-confidence, advocacy, respect, and collaboration early in the program. There is a conscience effort to develop student leaders who are committed to helping younger participants from backgrounds similar to their own to be successful at the Academy and in enrolling in college.

By the time they are juniors in high school (fourth year Academy participants) they have been trained to assist in teaching the core concepts they have been honing since 8th grade. Student academic leaders (SALS), who are 11th graders trained in leadership skills as part of the curriculum, serve as teaching assistants for Saturday Sessions and Summer Camp.

**Supporting Students when Learning, Behavior, or Social Success is in Jeopardy**

As stated previously, when a student’s learning, behavior, or social behaviors, including participation in Academy requirements falter, they are referred by their mentor to the Academic Program Coordinator. The Coordinator places the student on a Plan of Action (POA) to remedy the problem.

**Plans of Action**

Currently, Willamette Academy students are placed on a formal POA by the Academic Support Coordinator if they have any of the following:

- GPA lower than a 3.0
- Inconsistency in expectations as outlined in the Policy on Student Participation
- Failure to meet previous plan of action
• Parent and student initiated plan of action based on concerns they have

Comparing Project Promise and the traditional Academy program, the Academy students receive the majority of plans of actions compared to a handful of Project Promise Scholars. According to the Academic Program Coordinator, “We had a total of 53 Academy students on plans of action between fall and spring semester and 10 seniors on a college track plan of action. Project Promise had 11 seniors on a college track plan of action and one 10th grade Promise Scholar for a regular plan of action.” All but one was successful in completing the plan.

Those students of concern who do not meet the previous plan of action are recommended for a final probationary contract. These students meet with both the Academic Support Coordinator and the Executive Director. Current Academy leadership reports they are in conversation about how to best conduct progress reviews on Project Promise Scholars as they have significantly different expectations than Academy students.

**Developing Cultural Competency**

There is a theme of “community” throughout the Academy most visible perhaps in Community of Respect for Everyone (CORE), a program which consistently teaches and integrates cultural respect and competency across the curriculum, especially in the Academy’s five-year program. Eleventh graders facilitate workshop activities during Saturday Sessions and Summer Camps to grow this attitude of respect and tolerance for other cultures and communities. Community building fits into this theme within all of the Academy activities and curriculum. Families are initiated into this important part of the curriculum during information sessions and invited activities.

In regard to cultural competency within the curriculum, the Curriculum Coordinator reports, “We strive to connect Willamette Academy seniors with college students who identify as first-generation and/or students of color to share their experiences with our students. This also often ties into some of the social justice themed curriculum that we do in our summer program.” She further explained. “We connect cultural competency to our social justice and current event lessons that are a major part of the summer program. These may also find their way into Saturday Sessions, often through racially-themed current event discussions.

One of the areas of strength that WU professional staff reported was the cultural competence of Academy students. Mentors and students reiterated the consistent preparation and discussion related to cultural tolerance and respect found in all of the Academy literature as well as course schedules and activities. Academy students reinforced this statement.
One area of concern addressed by the mentors interviewed was lack of training in cultural competency. They are not particularly confident in this area when mentoring except for giving common sense advice and sharing their own histories and experiences as students of color in high school or on the predominantly white WU campus. While most of the mentors are students of color, they pointed out that the assumption should not be made that they are culturally competent or able to teach cultural competency to others based on their ethnic origin/s.

**Section II: Recommendations**

**Recommendation 1:** AVID representatives from SKSD have offered to train the Academy tutors at no cost in AVID tutoring strategies and the SKSD AVID curriculum which includes subject-specific tutor training. Utilize this opportunity to familiarize tutors with the students’ daily curriculum. Partner with SKSD AVID program and staff to train Academy tutors.

**Recommendation 2:** Begin to familiarize students with typical college rubrics and grading systems. Graded work can be shared individually or in aggregate to inform either individual success or program improvements. An important part of college preparation is how to interpret grading expectations; therefore, it is recommended that this approach be folded into the existing academic portion of the curriculum.

**Recommendation 3:** Conduct checks must be completed on any students, volunteers, or otherwise, working with minors. These volunteers should also be trained in various WU Human Resource policies such as Sexual Harassment and Title IX. They should also be trained in Mandatory Reporting statutes as they deal with minors who might be in vulnerable situations.

**Recommendation 4:** Provide continued professional development training for tutors in pedagogy, and integrate a system of evaluation of their work other than student response. Reporting dissatisfaction with a college tutor can be intimidating for this age group.

**Recommendation 5:** Follow the same process for vetting the subject level proficiency of tutors as the University’s Academic Support Services which includes faculty recommendations and proof of subject matter proficiency.

**Recommendation 6:** Track the data from Willamette Academy students’ Plans of Action. Ask why the plan was implemented and examine the results. Use that information to inform the program. Collect and analyze state test scores data and transcripts for progress. While a great deal of data both anecdotal and formal is collected, there is no systematic analysis of results.
Recommendation 7: The colloquium has an assessment rubric for discussion that Academy students would benefit from seeing ahead of time and those rubric criteria could become a part of the Academy’s academic curriculum. Easy bridges like this would benefit students enrolling in any institution, but particularly those with a strong liberal arts focus. Discuss these possibilities with the WU Director of the Learning Center.

Recommendation 8: Review the curriculum of the CORE program. Train all mentors and tutors in those aspects that overlap with teaching cultural competency so that they align with Willamette Academy expectations that staff and students become culturally competent. There are aspects of the WASL course that speak directly to cultural competency so use the volunteers from the course as well as the instructor, to more intentionally train and diffuse cultural competency across the Willamette Academy.

Recommendation 9: Review the Summer Camp schedule and expectations. Be cognizant of privacy issues relative to minors and those in vulnerable stages of emotional development. Make sure living/sleeping conditions are reasonable and that all students have adequate access to showers and other personal hygiene needs.

Recommendation 10: Develop consistent curricular and programing goals with measureable, clearly defined learning outcomes while also developing a parallel system for assessing curriculum and courses to guide instructional planning and decision making. Consider creating student learning portfolios as a way of tracking progress, interests, and goals in a manner more meaningful to students and to teachers.

Recommendation 11: The students’ outside curriculum, and co-curriculum, is important to understanding student needs. Perhaps mentors might more confidently address these areas of student need and leave personal and social issues to a trained counselor.

Recommendation 12: Mentors and other paid student staff applauded the leadership opportunities and professional development opportunities they had received through the Academy; but they were not able to provide examples other than having improved their written and verbal communication skills. This suggests a more comprehensive professional development plan for these student workers is needed. For mentors, that might be more robust training in how to carry out the role of mentor according to the grade level and content assigned to them.
Section III: Administrative Components and Program Oversight

There must be a conscious effort, a plan, for maximizing results with limited resources or budget. The common theme of conversations held with each group or person during this study is there is no strategic plan or clear direction for the program, although there are excellent staff who address the day to day needs of the students.

The sections that follow address the questions of the Steering Committee in regard to program planning and oversight; however, the larger implication of findings clearly points to the need to construct, put into place, and continuously evaluate, a strategic, comprehensive plan to guide the Academy’s future.

Current Position Descriptions

Current position descriptions for full-time and part-time paid staff are available upon request.

The position description for the Executive Director is under revision. In the past, the position requirements for the Executive Director emphasized program management and fund-raising. The new description will include program management and curriculum development in addition to collaboration with WU staff for fund-raising and development.

The position description for the Academic Support Coordinator appears to accurately describe the expectations of the position; however, a consistent theme among mentors and ASPA students was that their roles were not always clearly defined with this position to which they report.

Staff and student workers for 2014-2015 include:

- Three (3) full-time staff (director, academic support coordinator, administrative support coordinator)
- (One) 1 part-time staff (curriculum coordinator)
- Five (5) instructors working as needed during Saturdays and Summer Camp
- Seven (7) paid mentors (WU students)
- Five (5) paid program assistants (WU students called ASPAs)
- Seventeen (17) WASL students (WU students) in various service learning roles
- Thirty-one (31) volunteers (WU students and a few community members)
Position expectations and required orientation tasks for volunteers, mentors, service learning interns and others can be found in the Academy handbooks (revised April 2014) written for specific groups.

**ASPA:** Academic Support Program Assistant for Willamette Academy: The focus of the ASPA’s work is to provide leadership, administrative support and outreach in furthering the Academy’s academic support program. This position works to increase the visibility of Willamette Academy on the WU campus by partnering with and recruiting academic support staff and volunteers from student organizations and the general student body.

ASPA staff coordinates events, translating, seminars and more for parents. The ASPA is also charged with coordinating training for volunteers and staff that will introduce WU students to Willamette Academy and prepare them for their duties and job responsibilities. Under the supervision of the Executive Director, the ASPA facilitates the scheduling of all student workers throughout the school year, ensuring that student needs are met in an efficient and sustainable manner.

**WASL:** Willamette Academy Service Learning volunteers. Beginning in the fall 2013, WU partnered with Willamette Academy to offer Willamette Academy Service Learning (WASL), an interdisciplinary service learning course introducing students to the issues of educational access in the SKSD community. In this course, Willamette students provide tutoring for Willamette Academy students as well as develop professional skills such as marketing, grant writing, and communication. The requirements for the course include attending one 90 minute class and volunteering at Willamette Academy for at least four hours a week while keeping a journal of their experiences in tutoring, research, administrative support, marketing, and more.

**Staff Qualifications**

While current full-time staff are well qualified in college admission processes, curricula and practice in four-year colleges, as well as college access programs, their resumes reveal they typically do not have a great deal of expertise in three areas: 1) budget management, 2) academic curriculum development grades 8-12, and 3) strategic program building and development which includes intentional, data-driven curriculum and systematic assessment components. With the upcoming transition from a new Interim Director to an Executive Director, these qualification preferences will be addressed according to the AVPAA who has oversight of the Academy.

The licensed teachers interviewed, as well as the part-time Curriculum Coordinator, have excellent credentials and teaching histories; however, resumes for other teachers or workshop presenters were not available.
Paid Student Workers

Paid student workers include a variety of WU student workers. Position descriptions for these jobs are found in the Academic Mentors Handbook. The positions are clearly described, each focusing on a specific aspect of program support. As with all organizations, there is overlap in job responsibilities, especially those who function as a team as does the Academy. There are some areas of development to consider, especially with Academic Mentors and College Track Mentors.

The term “academic mentor” functioning as a general name for all mentors is somewhat misleading. Academic mentors are university students who have a set number of mentees (grades 8-11) for each academic year. The role of an academic mentor is to provide mentorship and be a resource to students. They connect on academics, personal life, extracurricular involvement, Willamette Academy expectations, etc. Mentors foster a safe-space for students but their interactions with students are not confidential due to Mandatory Reporting policy. The Senior Academic Mentor or the College Track Mentor works with all Academy seniors. They do everything academic mentors do with particular focus on the college and scholarship application process.

Currently, there are also, two Project Promise mentors: one for all 8th-11th grade students and one who works with Promise seniors.

The students interviewed acknowledged that these mentors were ever ready and available to help them with tutoring requests as well as discussing personal and social challenges. While all student workers are trained in federal guidelines about dealing with privacy issues, risks, and discrimination, these college-age sophomores through seniors may not have the expertise to deal with the often complex personal and social challenges of adolescents. When mentors sense they are in over their head, they are supposed to seek help from the Academic Programs Coordinator or the Interim Director, which happens according to students and staff, but the college-age workers did reveal that sometimes their own lack of experience and knowledge created some tension for them.

Additionally, in speaking with the college track mentors whose focus is on working with older Academy students as they apply for scholarships and to various post-secondary institutions, they expressed a need for greater training in the areas in which they were advising. One said she had only applied to one University so had to learn the process with her tutee. Students interviewed agreed that not always did they feel like their mentors had enough training and expertise to advise them on college track matters as well as on social and personal challenges, although they appreciate the ready help and support. The mentors who are Academy alums were cited as being the most effective.
Evaluating Paid Staff

Student workers who are paid staff (Mentors and ASPAs) are evaluated by the Academic Program Coordinator. They meet with the Coordinator individually, set goals for professional improvement and then the students evaluate them according to their perceptions of the mentor’s strengths or weaknesses. The Coordinator interprets the student survey results and shares them with the student workers. Some of the students interviewed viewed this process as helpful but said it would be more effective if the process was more structured so they could better tie their goals for development to the student evaluations.

The Academic Program Coordinator is evaluated every six months by the Executive Director. The same is true for the Administrative Assistant. University guidelines for evaluating staff are followed. The Executive Director is supposed to be evaluated annually by his or her supervisor in the same fashion, although in the past, this had not always been the case.

Paid Staff Assignments and Workload

Teachers

Student: Teacher Ratio for Saturday Sessions and Summer Camp

The student/teacher ratio is consistently between 15 and 20 students to one instructor for the 10th/11th grade group during Saturday Sessions. During the two Saturday Sessions, there are usually four instructors and a Curriculum Coordinator. The instructors teach on a rotating basis (not all four are present at both sessions—depending on the schedule, they alternate). For Summer Camp there are about three instructors for this group; therefore the ratio is between 20 and 25 students to one instructor for the 8th/9th/12th grade group.

Depending on the time of year and attendance, there are around 50 to 60 students in the 10th/11th-grade group and around 100 students in the 8th/9th/12th grade group, so it’s possible that for activities that are not small classroom settings, there is a ratio of about 25 or 30 students to one instructor for the 10th/11th grade group and 50 to one for the 8th/9th/12th grade group. Of course the type of instruction or activities attempted when in whole-group settings is vastly different than the small-group instruction time. Also, these ratio estimates are only including instructors, not student workers who serve as TAs during the sessions.

Wages for teachers are $20 an hour (which is only figured for hours during the session, not for any prep time) or $100 for the entire day (typically 8:30 AM to 3:30 PM) if their assistance is needed for the entire day. Usually there is one instructor for the entire day along with the Curriculum Coordinator and ASPAs. Other instructors rotate in and out of the schedule.
Teachers are hired according to who is available and willing to participate so there is not necessarily consistency in programming or teachers. Developing long-term relationships with teachers, like those students would do over the course of a semester, academic year, or longer, is not likely at the Academy.

**ASPA**s (Academic Support Program Assistants for Willamette Academy)

As stated, the focus of the ASPA’s work is to provide leadership, administrative support and outreach in furthering the Academy’s academic support program. They are expected to work 10-12 hours a week.

This position endeavors to increase the visibility of Willamette Academy on the WU campus by partnering with and recruiting academic support staff and volunteers from student organizations and the general student body. ASPA staff coordinates events, translating, seminars and more for parents. The ASPA is also charged with coordinating training for volunteers and staff that will introduce WU students to Willamette Academy and prepare them for their duties and job responsibilities. Under the supervision of the Program Director, the ASPA facilitates the scheduling of all student workers throughout the school year, ensuring that student needs are met in an efficient and sustainable manner.

In speaking with several ASPAs, they reported that lines of responsibility often blurred, especially in regard to counseling students. They did not think they had the proper training in some cases, and in others were at a loss for what to do. For example, they questioned their role in helping mentees handle the stress and disappointment of rejection letters or the stress of home responsibility conflicting with classwork and the beginning realization of students that being successful in college would be a challenging task. During the leadership transition, mentors did not always know who to ask for guidance, although that seems to be lessening.

There seems to be consensus that the workload is high, not always is it clear who does what, and staff assignments are made based on student requests for tutoring, or additional mentoring sessions beyond the usual required meetings. The recent transition in leadership at the Executive Director’s level has caused some concern, especially about who will follow the current Interim Director.
Admission Criteria and Process

The Willamette Academy serves a smaller, higher-need segment of students from SKSD. Among those enrolled at the Academy, 48% come from households in which neither parent earned a high school degree, and 92% are potential first-generation college students (as defined by parents' baccalaureate attainment). Nearly all (92%) of its students are racial/ethnic minorities, and 83% of families served by the Academy are economically disadvantaged. Willamette Academy students who are nominated for admission to the Academy must meet at least one of these high need criteria.

Additionally, applicants must show academic potential as defined by recommending teachers, demonstrate family support, and pass a comprehensive interview. The scoring rubric for admission consists of seven parts which are rated by response and then ranked. They are: academic information (OAKS test scores and attendance records), academic abilities (which include communication and leadership among other items), scholastic motivation (such as the ability to work independently and in groups); attention span; confidence, and others), social skills, and an overall recommendation.

Over 400 students apply each year and roughly, 18% are accepted. According to Interim Director, Joshua Bilbrew, there’s no precise way to calculate how students are nominated given the Academy’s admissions process. The eleven SKSD middle schools, from which nominations originate, narrow the pool to their strongest candidates then forward their recommendations to the Academy staff, meaning that the Academy staff does not screen all applications.

Project Promise acceptance rate is complicated by the fact that since the project began in 2012, the Academy has considered every 7th grade applicant for both Project Promise and Willamette Academy. Bilbrew explains, “Each year, we see about 400 seventh-grade families/nominees at the Family Information Meetings held at the Salem Keizer middle schools. Of those, we ultimately admit about 35 (8.8%) into Willamette Academy and 25 (6.3%) into Project Promise. Last year, the schools forwarded 161 nominations. We interviewed 63 (39%) of those. We admitted 40 (24.8%) into the Academy, and 28 (17.4%) into Project Promise while an additional 92 (57%) were placed on a waitlist for Project Promise.”

Meal Programs

Sack lunches on Saturday Sessions come from the SKSD after school food program. Last year, the summer iteration of this same program provided sack lunches for 10th and 11th grade participants. The definition of "healthy" is determined by federal guidelines (that SKSD complies with to receive funding for their program). The Academy provides after school snacks for students, as well, from their operating budget.
Budget and Funding

Budget Components

The University provides no direct operating support to Willamette Academy so the budget is funded from private gifts, grants, and endowments. Approximately $120,000 of indirect cost is provided through WU to the Academy. There are three endowed funds earning a total about $70,000 annually. Other gifts total $198,419. Together they fund 89% of the total operating budget of $270,000.

According to the AVPAA to whom the Academy reports, the goal is to maintain an annual budget expense of about $240,000 with a surplus of $30,000 available as carry-forward funds. This could be attained if endowments and gifts are maintained at the current rate and expenses are cut accordingly. Budget expenses this 2014-2015 year are high ($300, 639 to date with three months left to closing), but it is also an anomalous year. Leadership transition and Interim replacement salaries and benefits, as well as unprecedented travel by the former director have created a strain on the current budget and resources.

The Assistant Vice President for Financial Affairs confirmed that the Academy has never been overdrawn. Permanent salaries for administrative personnel and curriculum personnel comprise about 85% of the budget. Other items such as travel and supplies normally comprise about 20%. One of the most expensive components of the program, as reported in the 2006 study as well as by staff, is the summer residential program. Summer Camp meals, instruction, and lodging expense are paid by Willamette Academy; while the University provides additional classroom space and facility use. The cost to the Academy is about $59,000 annually (22% of the budget). Summer camp is the most expensive item in the budget other than personnel salaries and benefits; however, it remains the program most coveted by students, staff, and faculty because of the authentic college experience it provides as well as the student bonding opportunities.

Cost per Academy Student

For a Willamette Academy student, that is, the full-time cohort, $1440 per year is spent per student and $7200 over the course of 5 years for each student. For Project Promise Scholars, $771 is spent per year per student and $3,855 over the course of five years per student; however, that figure might fluctuate since Promise Scholars can step in and out of the program.
Explanation of calculation:

- Annual budget expenditure is about $270,000
- Four/fifths is spent on Willamette Academy students (time spent at the Academy)
- One/fifth on Project Promise Scholars (time spent at the Academy)

Suitability of Space

Space is inadequate and should be assessed according to Fire Code. As many as 70 students can be signed into the Center although the space is suitable to no more than 40 according to one group of mentors. More on this issue is discussed in a later section called Clear Policies and Guidelines Regarding Legislative Directives, Safety, and Security because some concerns relate to health and well-being as well as meeting ADA guidelines. Perhaps most noticeable is the equity issue posed by the lack of accessibility for persons with physical disabilities. There is no elevator or lift to the Academic Center, located in the basement of the Executive Center, where students spend at least half of their time, if not more.

Adequate Support Staff

Two recent hires, an Academic Programs Coordinator and an Administrative Assistant, have created some relief for the previously understaffed Academy.

Adequate Technology

Inequities of school access to computers by the socioeconomic status or demographic characteristics of the school are on the decline. Schools enrolling 75% or more students eligible for free or reduced lunch have a 3.2 student to computer ratio. In schools with less than 35% students eligible, the ratio is 3.1, nearly identical. The difference by enrollment of non-white students is slightly larger; however, schools with the highest number of ethnic minority students also have a 3.2 student to computer ratio, just slightly higher than the national average. (Papyrus News, October 26, 2010, retrieved March 22, 2014)

In the Willamette Academy there are about 40 computers and 225 students. The student: computer ratio follows:

- 225:40 overall --> 5.625
- 150:40 in Willamette Academy --> 3.75
- 75:40 in Project Promise --> 1.875
While the student: computer ratio is not adequate for those enrolled in the traditional Academy according to national average, funding for increased numbers of computers as well as upgrades creates a challenge. In 2014, with the closing of the Graduate School of Education at Willamette, 25 Apple computers from the School’s modern technology lab were transferred to Willamette Academy, thus upgrading their technology resources considerably.

The mentors interviewed also mentioned that there is only one printer for the students using the Academic Center and one in the Annex. This can create frustration and discourage motivation if students are working on a class assignment or homework that has to be printed.

With the changing tide of technology, particularly as Academy participants must research college information and forms, and mentors must be able to access a plethora of information to guide their mentees, it is important to be mindful of necessary upgrades.

**Fund-raising Responsibilities**

The recent shift in fund-raising responsibilities from the Executive Director of the Academy to the University Office of Advancement has created opportunities for the Willamette Academy staff to work closely with Advancement staff to raise funds to support the Willamette Academy’s budget. Funds continue to emerge primarily from small grants and individual donors, organizations, and businesses to maintain the Academy’s budget. Three endowments yielding about $60,000 annually are also available. The Academy receives a total of 1,336 gifts annually ranging from $4.00 to $45,000. About one-half of the gifts are $20.00 or less, suggesting the grass-roots, community focused nature of approximately half the Academy supporters.

Another way that individual donors support the Academy is through in-kind donations including the form of gift certificates from local businesses, school and art supplies, and technology. There was no dollar amount available for these gifts at the time of this writing; however it would be useful to document this information for grants writing and other fund-raising efforts of the future.

**Funding and Resources**

The Academy exists through a partnership between WU, the SKSD, and community constituents. WU supports the Academy by providing space and infrastructure such as custodial and facility services, internet services, technology and telephones. Like many local nonprofits, the Willamette Academy secures its operating funding through grants and donations from foundations, private donors, and businesses. Up to Fall 2014, the Academy was responsible for planning fund raising events and opportunities with support and advice
from the WU Office of Advancement. As of 2014, the University has assumed fund-raising and development responsibilities in collaboration with the Academy leadership.

Scholarship funding for academy students is roughly $12 million annually. The scholarship figure was computed a few years ago, and uses some accounting which captures "renewable" scholarships, multiplying the annual award by the four years that students would (presumably) receive the award. So the figure for a student who gets a full-ride scholarship at $50,000 per year would come out to $200,000 when figuring this "total" amount.

**Recruitment Strategies and Selection Process**

Students are admitted at the end of their seventh-grade year based on a family application, recommendations from both teachers and their schools, and an Academy interview. The students who are admitted are academically and socially supported through their high school graduation.

The process for becoming a Willamette Academy student begins each Spring in each of the eleven SKSD middle schools. In each school, a Nominations Coordinator works with the faculty to identify students in the 7th grade who meet the Academy's Selection Criteria. Those criteria include academic potential and abilities in addition to the district's standardized test scores (OAKS), scholastic motivation, social skills, ethnicity, household income, first generation college student, level of parents’ education, whether students have access to internet and a computer in the home, and the level of family commitment to supporting their student and the Academy.

Within each of the middle schools, such students and their families are invited attend a Family Information Meeting at their school and to fill out application materials, write an essay, and submit academic information for consideration. Additionally, each student must have two teachers complete a recommendation on their behalf. From there, a team of staff at the school must narrow down their pool of candidates to their top choices to forward on to Willamette Academy as nominations for admission. Willamette Academy then reviews nominations, selecting students and families who will be invited to come to the Academy for an interview. In May of each year, Willamette Academy admits approximately 34 seventh graders.

The admission process uses a sorting rubric with assigned response values to each field. Nominations Coordinators from each of the 11 middle schools complete school related information while recommending teachers submit information that captures their perspectives on students’ academic performance and potential. The sorting rubric is an automated process; the computer program interprets and assigns values to responses entered. An evaluation of the family’s perceived interest in committing to the Academy comes from the interview with staff and the student after the recommendations are received.
Once a pool of nominees has been selected, the Academy staff meet with the students and parents conducting a structured group interview. That interview protocol is located in Appendix I. There is no rating or weighted scale associated with this interview.

In meeting with students, they expressed deep appreciation to have been selected for the Academy; however, they mentioned that evaluating the family investment in the project might not always be accurate from a single interview. They noted that a number of families dropped out of participating in events that would help support their student.

**Relationship/Partnership between WU and SKSD**

This is an area for further research and consideration. While there is a Memorandum of Understanding with SKSD, the document indicates that a representative from SKSD will serve as a liaison between the Academy and the District. To date, that person remains unnamed which creates some communication challenges. One of the most recent challenges is the question of duplication of services with the District-wide adoption of AVID strategies, practices, and curriculum which mirrors some of the Academy’s same areas. Finding ways of complementing one another and being thoughtful partners is currently under discussion by the Willamette Academy Steering Committee.

There are liaisons with the Academy such as school counselors, administrators, and teachers who nominate students for the Academy; however, as the Academy transitions to new leadership a specific point of contact through which information can flow smoothly is necessary.

In speaking with SKSD school representatives from leadership, AVID, and college preparation responsibilities, it is clear that the school district is poised to partner more effectively with Willamette Academy. Both institutions are seeking to find common ground to complement programs and to provide unique supports, such as college mentoring, close community building, and a variety of activities for parents that might not be possible in a day to day high school classroom setting. A letter from the Assistant Superintendent of the SKSD attesting to the District’s intent to assist in strengthening the partnership is located in Attachment G.

When mentors were interviewed about their perceptions of how to enrich the partnership, they suggested that Willamette Academy “learn more about what Salem-Keizer is doing so we can coordinate efforts.” They also said that there is not the level of academic discourse in the Academy’s curriculum as there is in SKSD courses, including AVID.
Relationship/Partnership between WU and Willamette Academy

There are various aspects of relationship building between WU and Willamette Academy where there does not appear to be any systematic approach to strengthening the partnership. One constant is that the Willamette Academy space, utilities, custodial service and other essential functions are provided at no cost to the Academy by the University. Another encouraging gesture from WU is that the University now has oversight for fund-raising and grants writing for the Academy.

Other partnership examples are the use of the Academy by professors for research or professors may volunteer to be guest speakers for a workshop, or participate in special projects during Saturday Sessions and/or Summer Camp. Students say they enjoy being on a University campus and are beginning to learn what it might “feel like” to be away from home and attending college. Mentors and staff mention, however, that sometimes it seems as though Willamette Academy is alienated from the main campus. Classes and events of the Academy are always held in the evenings or on week-ends when there is little campus presence. Also, in speaking at random with WU upper classmen who don’t work at the Academy, very few know much about its purpose or goals.

Staff of the Academy report having very little contact with university administration or the life of the university because they come and go at times when normal operations have ceased –evenings, weekends, and summers. Many staff report feeling marginal to the university community, uncertain if their program was designed to serve the university or not, and a new move to the lower level of the Education building has heightened these feelings.

The third, perhaps most visible partnership is that of the WU students and Willamette Academy. Students of under-represented groups are mentored and led by college students who often share similar cultures and backgrounds. Some are Willamette Academy alums. Another important aspect of program design is to demonstrate leadership growth and development of the paid student workers as well as the volunteers. Clearly, this is important to about 50 WU students. The same could be said for the WASL volunteers.

Insuring that Academy Students Chose Post-Secondary Institutions that are a “Good Fit”

Students and mentors interviewed agreed that there is no pressure for Academy participants to attend WU or any other post-secondary institution. Students are required to research, visit, and apply to both state and private post-secondary institutions based on their interests and financial resources.

That said, the mentors working closely with the juniors and seniors said that the College Achievement Program (CAP) offered through WU can be “too good to pass up.” However, mentors also remarked that the Chemeketa Scholars program is having a similar effect,
particularly those students who struggle with leaving their families because of commitment and responsibility to home, siblings, and work.

As stated earlier in this report, professional staff members from WU who often have close interactions with Academy alums on campus stated that not always was WU an appropriate choice for Academy students. The rigor of a four year liberal arts institution is often too demanding for this group who may not have the academic discourse skills, and/or the family support system to be successful. Families of Academy graduates are coached about helping their child get into college, but not necessarily how to support the college experience by limiting family demands, having sufficient time and a quiet space for study, and understanding that navigating the culture and experience of a post-secondary institution is much different than being in high school. Parents who have not experienced post-secondary education will have little context for what their child may be encountering.

The Director of the Learning Center at WU reports that Willamette Academy graduates are not well prepared for academic reading, writing speaking or math. While they tend to persist, the path is a “stone by stone” bridge to an end result (Personal Communication, February 27, 2015). Some do not understand the nature of the WU curriculum until they experience failure.

The Academy students appear to be well prepared to integrate culturally into the University but their academic skills are underdeveloped, particularly in the areas of quantitative reasoning, discussion, writing, and reading. Students are expected to be able to communicate at an academic level the first semester of their freshman year at WU during College Colloquium (CC). Every student enrolls in a CC course taught by their first year advisor. Students choose the CC topic of interest and are placed in that class with the expectation that they are able to engage in academic reading, writing, and verbal communication.

The Director also expressed concern that Academy alums, like many college students, do not know how to seek college advising. Greater focus on how to advocate for oneself as a student with an advisor was a suggestion. Currently, she sees the vast majority of the students find it difficult to approach their assigned advisor; Willamette Academy graduates are quite visible among that group.

**Relationships/Partnerships between Willamette Academy and the Community**

Up to 2014, the responsibility of fund-raising fell solely on the shoulders of the Academy's Executive Director resulting in a great deal of visiting and presenting to local clubs and organizations. These included: Downtown and West Salem Rotaries, the Salem Chamber of Commerce, and the Elks Lodge as well as other non-profit organizations (Family Building Blocks, YWCA, Salem Keizer Education Foundation, etc.). These visits raised awareness of the Academy’s work in the community. Willamette Academy occasionally has been
featured in local media and newspapers, thus creating more positive visibility for its accomplishments and programs. Additionally, the Academy is well-respected in the 11 middle schools with whom they partner for a target population.

While Atkinson Graduate School of Management and the Willamette School of Law are under the umbrella of WU, they reach a much different population and community beyond the University campus. Alliance with these professional schools has yielded guest speakers for the Academy, providing students with the opportunity to learn about the myriad opportunities associated with degrees in business or law. The students interviewed applauded these speakers and asked to know more about the various career paths connected to the law and business world.

Speakers from other industries such as Communications and Media, the Arts, Health Services, Politics, to name but a few are, also, invited to speak to Academy students regularly thus strengthening the relationship of the general locale with Willamette Academy.

The Writers Bureau provides yet another excellent example of how Willamette Academy can expand partnerships creatively while sparking greater student and community interest. The Bureau is a virtual collective of volunteers including community members, Academy alumni, former Academy staff, and former WU staff who have gone on to work at colleges across the country. It is open to all Willamette Academy students, but primarily used by seniors to submit college scholarship applications, admissions essays, etc. to the Bureau (using Google Docs). Within 48 hours a Bureau member will respond providing suggestions, comments, and edits.

**Clear Policies and Guidelines Regarding Legislative Directives, Safety, and Security**

**Safety and security:** The lower level of the Executive Building called the Academic Center on the Willamette campus is occupied by the majority of the Academy students. The space does not meet ADA requirements thus limiting students with physical disabilities to participate fully in Willamette Academy, if at all. There is no elevator or lift into this basement area. Thus far, the Academy has compensated by scheduling spaces in the University for family meetings or other activities that better meet their needs. (Privacy for family meetings was cited as an issue by several of the mentors interviewed.)

The lighting on the lower level is functional, but students with visual disabilities might find the facility less than adequate. There are no windows in the Academic Center and students said this contributed to disorientation and feelings of being closed in. Mentors report that there may be as many as 70 people signed in to work in this study space, sometimes creating unpleasant work conditions.

There are no restrooms or water supply in the lower level classrooms. Students must walk upstairs to use the restrooms shared with the University’s Human Resources and Accounting Offices. This presents some concerns about safety as well since there are visitors, potential employees, etc. who might be in this shared area who are not yet vetted with background checks or University supervision.
Academy students may not always be supervised at night while waiting for a parent or guardian to take them home. This puts them in a vulnerable situation since this side of the campus is poorly lighted and backs up to the downtown area of Salem. Foot traffic along Cottage Street at the edge of lower downtown Salem is often sketchy, presenting potential safety issues for minors.

The Willamette Academy Annex was built in 2011 and designed to manage some of these issues and concerns; however, the capacity of that space which doubles as a study and tutoring area as well as a social meeting space for Project Promise and the traditional Academy appears limited to about 25 seats or occupancy capacity. It does have restrooms and running water. The lower floor of the executive building might hold 40 students comfortably. Project Promise Scholars only come to campus on Fridays so the two spaces are adequate to serve their needs. Academy students participate on campus twice a week Monday-Thursday. Scheduling students into these spaces to prevent overcrowding is a constant challenge. Use of University classrooms is usually an option, but access to materials and age and activity appropriate classroom design makes this option less inviting.

**Summary of Building Use**

- The Annex is used as an extension of the Academic Resource Center in the Executive Building.
- Project Promise mentors are stationed at the Annex throughout the week, and the space is open especially for Project Promise on Fridays (and Monday-Thursday for Willamette Academy).
- There are also three student-worker stations at the Annex, and a work room with a phone for staff phone calls home to students/families.
- The Academic Center is open Monday-Thursday for Willamette Academy, and closed to students on Fridays.
- Willamette Academy mentors are stationed at the Center throughout the week, and there are three student-worker stations.
- There is computer lab space at both the Center and Annex, with Windows computers at the Center and Apple computers at the Annex.
- There is one supply/storage space at the Center.
- There are three supply/storage spaces at the Annex.
- All tutoring sessions take place at the Annex.
- The Annex accommodates a louder volume than the Center.
- After school snacks are provided at the Annex, Monday-Friday.
- Utilizing the built-in projector, the Annex is used for meetings and trainings as well as tutoring.
Family and Sibling Attendance at the Academy

Students who are not members of the Academy are allowed to attend the Academy during study hall and other activities. The Academic Mentor Handbook states that “Friends are allowed to attend the Center with Willamette Academy students, but only insofar as they also participate in academic activities and are not a distraction (p. 20). Additionally, and possibly of greater concern is allowing family members, siblings, to accompany an Academy student to activities. “More flexibility is allowed for family members than friends. It is sometimes necessary for our student to provide care for their siblings, but we do not want these responsibilities to interfere with our students’ continued academic success. Because our students’ siblings can vary widely in age, it is appropriate to allow family members to engage in activities not school related. At no time is it permissible for family members to become a distraction at Willamette Academy” (p. 20).Having younger siblings and non-academy members without sufficient guidelines presents a safety and security issue. Additionally, the staffers, mentors especially, report having heavy work-loads. Having siblings or friends in attendance could complicate this equation.

When students were asked if they brought friends or siblings to Academy study hall or other activities, they said that siblings had not accompanied them, except for family social events, but one of the students admitted that in the past, she had invited friends often. The friends had been distracting to her studies.

Some Statistics Regarding Friend and Family Visits to Willamette Academy during 2014-2015 to date:

- 71 visits to Willamette Academy by friends and 113 visits by family of Academy participants
- 77 students have hosted a friend and/or family member
  - 28 students have hosted a friend
  - 57 students have hosted a family member
- Five (5) students have hosted a family member on more than five (5) occasions
- Four (4) students have hosted a friend on more than five (5) occasions.

The Willamette Academy policies guidelines do not allow siblings of Academy members to enroll in the Academy. The logic is that the sibling who does earn a spot in the Academy will share what they have learned with their siblings. The parents, ideally, will also have participated and will know better how to guide other children toward post-secondary pursuits. One of the students interviewed spoke to
this policy saying that “she felt bad” that her sibling could not attend the Academy, although she was as qualified as her sister. They may, however, attend Project Promise.

**Adherence to Federal Policy Guidelines and Implementation within the Willamette Academy Programs**

The WU recognizes the importance of employees being appropriately trained and informed with federal policies involving human rights and responsibilities. The Willamette Academy staff undergoes training in most of the areas that may impact student rights and the Academy responsibilities.

**FERPA** (Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act): Training is not provided for Pathways workers and volunteers on students’ right to privacy and parental right to inspect students’ educational progress as described in FERPA Law. Within training, Academy staff touch bases on Mandatory Reporting and Required Reporting. This is something that all staffers learn. Paid staff attend the HR training that provides in-depth information to this regard, but FERPA is not a strong item on the list. Currently, WA has not included FERPA for Pathways orientation.

**Mandatory Reporters**: As a part of orientation, paid staff and all student workers are trained in their reporting responsibilities in terms of child abuse or neglect. Student mentors and staff felt well informed around this information and were confident in addressing any issues of non-compliance with their supervisor. *(Child Welfare Information Gateway, 2014)*

**Title IX**: According to the Academic Support Coordinator, paid support staff receives Title IX training as well as sexual harassment training modules from a University representative from Human Resources. The training was specifically geared toward Willamette Academy students. The leadership team is exploring expanded training opportunities. Student mentors and staff felt well informed around this information and were confident in addressing any issues of non-compliance with their supervisor.

**Student records management**: The Academy has a massive amount of student records in print form stored in the Director’s office. Discussion is underway as to how to legally and productively convert these records to electronic copy, noting that records management for grades 7-12 carries different restrictions than it might for University students age 18 and older. Records management guidelines for public and private schools are found in the [Oregon Revised Statutes](https://leg.state.or.us). Records must be kept in a secure place for seven years after a student exits the program.

**Background Checks**
Conduct Records Check: Paid student workers are compensated and processed via WU (student) payroll, the same as any other department assistants. Background or conduct checks are required. Paid student staff undergoes a conduct records check with the WU Residence Life Office of Rights and Responsibilities. Additionally, all staff personnel who will reside in the dorms with students during the summer program undergo a background check (conducted via Human Resources). The same is true for all faculty and staff who apply for employed at WU.

However, background checks are not required of volunteer workers such as community members or Willamette Academy Service Learning (WASL) students who may work as tutors or interns in some other area of the Academy such as administration and marketing. This is a concern as there are currently 17 WASL students (WU students) and 31 volunteers (WU students and a few community members, although about 99% of all tutors are WU students). These individuals are regularly in contact with the Academy’s population of grades 8-12. Ensuring that background checks are conducted is consistent with the SKSD policy of not allowing volunteers, teachers, or staff to have contact with students without having successfully passed a state or federal background check.

Section III: Recommendations

Recommendation 1: Debunk some of the myths associated with the Academy. For example, there is a lot of misconception about costs associated with the Academy that need to be clarified within the WU community. Also very few people external to the Academy seem to understand the functions of the programs and the far-reaching implications they have to the community.

Recommendation 2: Find out if there other service models that might partner with WA such as NSF, STEM, teacher education programs, Salem/Keizer Professional Development Units, or local groups such as the Chamber of Commerce, Rotary, etc. and in what capacity?

Recommendation 3: Develop an Advisory Board or Team that consists of representation of all partners and stake holders, including parents, students, staff and schools. That team might be seeded by the current Willamette Academy Steering Committee that was formed to guide this review.

Recommendation 4: Hire another staff person who acts as a counselor to the Academy students. Revise the college mentor role to one of advising about academics, co-curricular activities, or even coping with life on a college campus as an under-represented ethnic group. Realizing funding is an issue, look into federal grants that address this sort of staffing need. This comes under the aegis of best practice for pre-college programs.
Recommendation 5: Volunteers and WASL students should undergo some sort of conduct check vis a vis University policy since they are working with minors. SKSD requires background checks of all employees and volunteers; therefore, mirroring this requirement seems a good faith measure of consistency of policy and partnership.

Recommendation 6: Consider centralizing the Academy space. Since the Academy meets after 4:30 pm and week-ends, is there a space on the main campus that would accommodate three offices and have classrooms, ADA access, water, and restrooms to support the staff and students? As it is now, the space arrangement is not particularly efficient, plus it sets the Academy physically apart from the University. If the goal of the project is to familiarize 8th – 12th graders with college life and expectations, then having them actually a part of the main campus would serve to eliminate the feelings of alienation expressed by many staff and student workers.

Recommendation 7: Check the Fire Code regulations regarding space capacity as well as safe exit availability.

Recommendation 8: Consider revising the policy allowing friends and family members to attend the Willamette Academy sessions unless it is a special event. Alternatively, eliminate the friends visits and establish clear expectations and parameters around visits by family members. Require that family waivers be in place that mitigate our risk; but check with WU legal guidance as to their validity. Since the University allows family members under these same conditions for other activities on campus, there is a precedent set for this recommendation to policy change. These changes could be implemented at the beginning of a fall term to minimize confusion.

Recommendation 9: Consider lifting the ban on sibling enrollment. It presents as an equity issue rather than a resource issue.

Recommendation 10: Find ways of using the strengths of the Academy to market it to external donors, both potential and existing. For example, a potentially strong fund raising approach is to know that for $7200 someone could support a student all the through the 5-year Willamette Academy program.

Recommendation 11: Seek input from the mentors and ASPAs, and other student volunteers on how to revise their position descriptions to include required and on-going professional development/training.
Recommendation 12: Counsel the student workers regularly on the limits to their role as mentors. Provide a clear pathway to professional counseling resources for their mentees.

Recommendation 13: Examine the curriculum for spaces to educate parents on how to support the college experience after their son or daughter has been accepting and is in attendance. This might alleviate some of the conflict students experience when choosing between family responsibilities and school—conflict that for some Academy alums has caused them to drop out of college.

Recommendation 14: Ask the University to provide a dedicated staff person to seek funding from the many private donors that need to be reminded annually to renew their pledge to the Academy. Also, find someone to explore grant funding that is specific to college access programs serving the profile of the Academy student.

Recommendation 15: Highlight the requirements for the next Executive Director’s job description to include program evaluation and management, curriculum and assessment experience, as well as the ability to create and sustain program systems and policies that align with best practices in pre-college programs.

Recommendation 16: Interview parents separately and discuss the high level commitment. If parents do not participate, contact them and express concerns, offering to assist with transportation, child care, or whatever issues might be hampering attendance.

Recommendation 17: A number of individual donors support the Academy through in-kind donations including the form of gift certificates from local businesses, school and art supplies, and technology. It would be useful to document this information for grants writing and other fund-raising efforts of the future.

Recommendation 18: Develop a rating/ranking scale for the selection interview with Academy nominees and families to establish greater parity and objectivity in the selection process.

Section IV: Building Communities of Respect

The Role of Community in Student Success
There are many opportunities for Academy students to reflect on the importance of community within their lives but also at the Academy. The Academy is a “community” in and of itself. Students enter the Academy as 8th graders and graduate with networks of mentors, tutors, friends, and staff who have enriched their lives. According to students, mentors and ASPAs, there is a distinction between being in the AVID classroom and Willamette Academy. One of the greatest impacts on students is meeting and bonding with students of their age and similar backgrounds from a variety of SKSD middle schools and high schools. The Academy, as a five-year program, is able to consistently build communities of respect and tolerance, provided the students choose to stay in the Academy. Interviews with staff, students, instructors and WU students consistently reflect the importance of Willamette Academy as providing students from challenging backgrounds a safe, nurturing community apart from school that provides them and their parents with the resources and motivation for students to pursue post-secondary education.

Families are a part of that community, although the families interviewed stated that they did not feel there was as strong a sense of community with families as there had been during the inception of the Academy. They suggested that parents be allowed to help with activities and mentoring as appropriate, having a meaningful role and responsibility to the Academy.

As far as evidence of the role of community building in student success and retention, the information is anecdotal but it enjoys a positive and consistent theme throughout the conversations with all persons and groups interviewed.

**Developing and Maintaining Respect within the Academy**

Students in their first, second, and fifth year in the program meet with their CORE (Community of Respect for Everyone) Group every other week. The CORE leaders, 11th graders who facilitate workshops on respect and community during Saturday Sessions plan these activities under the guidance of the Curriculum Coordinator. CORE Groups are determined at the beginning of each semester and groups are assigned to either A or B week. The A and B groups meet on alternating weeks at the Center. Additionally, Senior Academy Leaders (SALs) participate in CORE Groups, thereby providing seniors with the continued opportunity to see and experience themselves as leaders and develop important skills and competencies along the way.

CORE Group meetings provide structured opportunities for students to:

- continue to build relationships and community with other students in small group settings through skill building activities;
- develop social accountability for attendance and participation in WA events; and
- cultivate relationships and facilitate peer-mentoring between 8th/9th graders and SALs.
The required Saturday sessions as well as Summer Camp introduce and maintain curriculum relative to developing a culture of respect.

What is not clear is how student learning outcomes are determined and assessed other than student surveys of perceived learning. Is there pre and post data about student understanding of respect as a core value that might better guide the curriculum and meetings, for example?

**The Role of Parents and Families in Community Building**

Family support of their student and respect for the work of the Academy are important factors considered for entry into the Willamette Academy programs. The Academy requires parents to attend regularly scheduled orientation and/or information sessions for parents according to where their son or daughter may be on the continuum (by grade level) for pre-college preparation.

Maintaining relationships with parents within various aspects of the programs is perceived by all those interviewed as vital to the Academy and to the parents. The family component of the Academy Parents and Guardians Using Education & Networking to Empower Students (PUENTES) functions to organize information sessions as well as limited social events for Academy families. Paid student staff, usually ASPAs, organizes and maintain PUENTES, with the intent of promoting community and a supportive network among families. PUENTES serves as a bridge between the students, their families and the Academy in the students’ pursuit of higher education.

Services provided to families by the Academy staff include language interpretation assistance for small group meetings as well as larger information sessions presented in both English and Spanish, The Academy also has connected with the SKSD to do “school messaging,” which allows announcements to go out to all parents by phone in a timely manner about upcoming events for Academy parents, although students reported that was not always their parents’ experience or perception. Information about college access is disseminated to families by the ASPAs in a well-organized fashion and during the appropriate timeframe. Examples include financial information such as FAFSA, scholarship applications, test-taking and schedules, how to fill out the Common Application, helping students learn time management and critical thinking strategies and skills. According to the Academy’s Coordinator for Academic Programs, the goal is to “meet students and families where they are” on the time continuum toward post-secondary entry and success. In addition there are family celebration events each semester where parents meet other parents and celebrate students’ successes.

That said, there are contrasting reports about parents’ perception of their role in the Academy as well as their expected level of support. Some reported barriers to attending activities. Other Academy students expressed disappointment in the parents of several of their peers who did not attend “required” activities, suggesting that information about the events were not always delivered in a timely
manner. If parents had more lead time, the barriers of transportation and child care might be more easily alleviated. They also expressed concern that there were not greater consequences for families who did not participate as they had pledged to do when their child was accepted into the Academy.

Parents interviewed were highly supportive of the Academy, but did not feel as included in the student’s progress or work as they expected to be. They would like to be a part of the mentoring sessions and know more about their student’s academic progress. They also thought that there could be more planned activities of a social nature drawing families and communities together at the Academy. Even so, the families interviewed were highly supportive of the Academy and vowed they would participate even after their child graduated. One mother remarked, “I will keep being part of the Willamette Academy unless I leave the country or go to heaven.”

During June of 2014, Dr. Brianne Davila, a WU professor served as principal investigator on a research project about the inclusion of Latino parents in a college access program, i.e., Willamette Academy. The study was intended to help define and shape the PUENTES program. Data collection consisted of in-depth, semi-structured and focus group interviews with thirty-nine (39) study participants. Some of the issues in this 2015 report around parent inclusion also surfaced in the Davila Report. According to the research brief, there are three challenges parents face when their children are enrolled in the Academy: role conflict, transportation barrier, and language barriers.

**Changes since the Davila review**

While the language barriers have been lessened through the use of interpreters and electronic headsets, there were comments from the parents interviewed (2015) that having someone in the leadership role who speaks or understands at least basic Spanish was helpful.

There remains the role conflict. The parents continue to view the Academy as the primary change agent for their child’s success; however, it is still the student’s responsibility to use the tools and resources the Academy gives them. The parents and their children proposed a solution to the role conflict. They suggest more activities for parents with the purpose of creating a support system. In response to how low income parents sometimes are confused and isolated about their fears of not being able to send their children to college, one student said, “My parents are learning that there are others like us.” They also suggested that parents’ expectations for their children were raised by the Academy. One student explained, “In high school, they say ‘average’ is okay. But the Academy says try harder. A’s and B’s are what you should be getting.”

Transportation remains a problem for parents. There is no easily accessible public transportation to the Academy. As well, parents often have other children to care for and cannot always come to workshops or meetings. Some don’t drive or might not always have access to a car.
One of the concerns from WU faculty and those in the WU community who have the greatest contact with students is the lack of understanding or acknowledgement on the parents’ part that once their child is admitted to college, then they may have to change the way they support him or her as a college student. For example, expectations around helping with family finances or child care often create difficult choices for college students to make. The suggestion was made several times that families might be better prepared to face the fact that their student has worked hard in the Academy and in order to succeed the family expectations and responsibilities must not keep him or her from persisting in college.

**Recommendation 1:** Examine the PUENTES program for opportunities to better educate parents about their role both during the time their child is enrolled in the Academy and when s/he transitions to post-secondary ambitions and vocational discernment. There were many stories from Academy students and families about the hardships some parents associated with not having an essential education and the aspirations they had for their children, so the seeds may be planted.

**Recommendation 2:** While the use of students as interpreters is a valuable service, provide the students with training about how to interpret and translate with ease of appropriate vocabulary. Do they have the knowledge to apply to the translation, for example, when federal policies must be explained? Other things to consider when translating might be: learning neutrality, technique, pacing, context, and more.

**Recommendation 3:** Create spaces for parents to connect as families. These might be social or they might serve a broader purpose such as parenting expectations for adolescents. Invite the parents to attend career workshops that show them the avenues and choices their children might be facing as college students.

**Recommendation 4:** Provide parents the option to share their contact information with other families through a parent directory.

**Recommendation 5:** Organize, with parents’ help, social gatherings in addition to informational workshops, allowing parents the opportunity to build deeper relationships with other families.

**Recommendation 6:** Provide parents and families with private meeting spaces.

**Recommendation 7:** Explore the transportation barriers for parents. How are other programs managing this issue, for example?
Summary of Findings

The existence of the Willamette Academy is not in question. The purpose of this comprehensive Program Review is to acknowledge the Academy’s strengths and build on them to re-design programs that are more consistent with the mission and purpose as well as the needs of the participants while enrolled in the Academy and as they matriculate into post-secondary education.

Re-thinking the Academy’s Mission and Purpose

As the first part of the current mission of the Willamette Academy elucidates, “Willamette Academy reaches out to historically under-represented communities by empowering youth who have the desire and potential to advance to higher education.” That part of the mission is well understood by all those interviewed; however, the second part of the mission has created some confusion around curriculum as well as staff qualifications and expectations: “This academic program is designed to address a number of factors that may discourage certain students from attending college or otherwise impede their academic progress. We are committed to helping our students achieve at a level that will enable them to attend the four-year college or university of their choice.”

The 2014-2015 review confirms that “academics” in the generally accepted reference to subject matter and academic discourse, is not a particular strength of the Academy. Conversely, other factors that may discourage students from attending college such as lack of access to the application process are highly visible in the Academy’s curriculum. What the programs should focus on and how the curriculum is delivered most effectively pose a myriad of exciting challenges to the new leadership.

The Academy rests favorably in a locus of support and interest to the community and its partners. For example, SKSD has expressed a strong desire to continue to expand the partnership and share resources. There are many committed donors and supporters, all of which place the University in a position to heighten academy outcomes that will contribute to the emerging re-design of Willamette Academy by building on its imminent strengths.

Throughout this 2014-2015 assessment of Willamette Academy and the transition of leadership, there is an emerging perception of important factors that have significant implications for the work and goals of the Academy. For example, SKSD has implemented some important programing changes in their college preparatory efforts to raise the fluency of their students on college access. This work began in 2007 with the start-up of the first Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) high school just one year after the first external review of the Willamette Academy was completed. That review notes the lack of such programs in the public schools.
AVID is a nationally recognized college preparation program whose mission is to close the achievement gap by preparing all students for college readiness and success. Therefore, at the time of the 2006 review, there was little competition for the target population that the Academy serves. Today, that is much changed, leading to the question of how to complement SKSD’s growing pre-college programs and partner with them to enrich Willamette Academy curriculum.

**Strengths and Areas for Development of the Willamette Academy**

Summarized below are general strengths and areas for development based on interviews with over 40 students and staff as well as a close examination of all Willamette Academy documents available. Interviews were structured following frameworks for best practices in tutoring programs, particularly those from [St. Paul Public Schools Foundation](http://www.sppsf.org).

**Areas of Strength**

The full 2014-2015 Willamette Academy Program Review identified the Academy strengths on which to build new programmatic approaches. While some of the areas are in need of examination around policies and procedures, the basic tenets they represent are strong.

The first area of strength is the potential for greater collaboration and support across partnerships, particularly with Salem-Keizer Public Schools and Willamette University. The Academy is well-respected in the SKSD and the WU community. Existing partnerships, particularly with SKSD, should be reexamined and goals set through mutual collaboration. Forming an Advisory or Steering Board is highly recommended.

Second, the relationship building between Academy participants and WU students through mentoring is highly valued by the students, staff, families and mentors. While this is a definite strength, the policies and procedures associated with the various roles of mentor and staff needs further clarification. The mentoring and leadership programs in the Academy, including the WU students who volunteer substantial hours and expertise, provide a valuable asset to the Academy. Better preparing these college students to interact successfully as mentors or tutors will require stronger systems of evaluation and professional development.

Third, support from and among the families of participants is compelling. Expanding greater venues for parents and guardians to participate and contribute to the success of the program, as well as to become better informed about how to support their children toward and during postsecondary education will only intensify this bond.
Fourth, the ability to work closely with individual students to provide information about college access while supporting them over a five year plan speaks highly of the staff’s dedication to the underlying mission of the Academy. Ensuring that the student mentors working with high school juniors and seniors on college application and planning have access to adequate training is essential to maintaining and increasing this strength.

Fifth, the community of leadership and service learning development that WU students discover and value within the Academy is to be commended. This is an exemplary endeavor by the University. Students involved in service learning comment favorably on the depth of experience working at the Academy provides.

And finally, the passion and dedication shown by staff and volunteers toward the work and underlying mission of Willamette Academy is unmatched. The Willamette community and partners should not lose sight of the value of the Academy as an after school program for a carefully selected group of under-represented students sponsored by a well-respected University. This sets the Academy apart from many other programs that must travel into the schools with whom they partner, and may not enjoy the same indirect cost incentives that WU provides.

Areas for Development

The first area is the lack of a master plan that connects the programs of the Academy to its goals and objectives. The Academy has been in existence for over nine years. During that time, there is little evidence of an effort by leadership to create a comprehensive plan for curriculum development that includes a systematic assessment process to monitor and appropriately address student learning in their areas of greatest need.

Second, the research clearly shows that successful pre-college programs are data dependent and data driven (A Blueprint for Success, Educational Policy Institute, 2012, retrieved January 30, 2015). While the Academy has collected appropriate demographic data, there is little evidence of academic achievement, other than high school and college graduation. Related to that is the need to monitor students transition into college as well as reasons for engagement or drop out in higher education. General data retrieved from national college graduation databases show when the Academy alums graduate from post-secondary institutions the reasons for success or failure are not known. That valuable data might change the direction of the Academy.

Third, aligning the academic curriculum as well as the pre-college curriculum to the Salem-Keizer AVID program is highly recommended. Resource sharing that, according to AVID staff, could include free professional development for mentors and tutors by
SKSD would grow the partnership between the District and the Academy. This would entail determining which elements or components of the current program most effectively address the mission, and which should be modified or eliminated.

Fifth, policies and procedures relevant to the role and mission of the Academy need clarification. This includes but is not limited to: requiring background or conduct checks for all volunteers who work at the Academy; prohibiting siblings from enrolling in the traditional Academy; assuring safety and security of Academy buildings as well as adherence to ADA guidelines; and allowing minor children and friends to accompany Academy participants to weekly study sessions.

Sixth, while the budget has never been over drawn, it is a concern that it is always a break-even budget reliant on 1,336 donations ranging from four dollars to $45,000 annually and only a few substantial endowments. One significant donor dropped its commitment to the Academy for the year 2015-2016 and that must be addressed immediately.

The transition of leadership and re-design of the Academy suggests the importance of having someone from WU, possibly in the Office of Development and Alumni Relations partially dedicated to contacting past donors as well as, setting up a time table for grant applications and data gathering. There is also a need to hire another counselor to advise students in matters that University students have no background or skill. The current budget is not sufficiently robust to support this position. That position could be provided through a major grant source.

And finally there is the challenge that relates to the overall well-being of the Academy: the development of an efficient and effective program management system with demonstrated goals and measurable objectives beyond those available now. Federally funded pre-college programs require a certain amount of long range planning and systems for data collection and analysis which could serve as guidelines for a new infrastructure for the Academy. The TRIO talent search grant, for example, a niche that the Academy might consider, will open applications in 2015. Those grants usually fund about $250,000 annually and are renewable. Such a management plan might unveil other areas that can be cut or bolstered. For example, Summer Camp accounts for over 25% of budget expenditures. Is the length and breadth of the current Summer Camp necessary? Could some of the content be taught during Saturday Sessions, for example, and some delivered in a non-residential setting in the summer, thus cutting costs significantly.

Common Success Factors among College Access Programs: Best Practices to Guide Change

While the Willamette Academy prepares for change, it is important to understand and learn from the work of other exemplary college access programs. When examining “like programs” specific measures of success emerge. (A Blueprint for Success, Educational Policy
Institute, 2012, retrieved January 30, 2015). These best practices include intentionality, data-driven practices and program management, partnerships, structured academic tutoring and training, tracking college retention, and sustainability. These are explained below with comments regarding the status of the Academy in relationship to these best practices.

**Intentionality:** There must be a conscious effort, a plan, for maximizing results with limited resources or budget.

- The common theme of conversations held with each group or person during this study is there is no strategic plan or clear direction for the program.

- To date, the Academy has functioned largely because of competent, caring staff and teachers; however, absent a plan, there is no direction for program development that is not idiosyncratic to a particular leadership. It is not possible to establish measurable goals without direction.

**Data-driven Practices and Program Management:** Collecting qualitative and quantitative data systematically and frequently is vital. Successful programs do not create new branches arbitrarily or based on a “perceived” need. They build on existing programs mindfully, and with purpose, relying on quantifiable data around student success to guide them. It is a continuous improvement model that necessitates adequate time for planning and staffing the established program needs.

- To date, the Academy leadership provides adequate program management on a day to day basis, but long-range planning based on data is minimal. The Academy has implemented a web-based information system which creates a profile of each student, their goals, needs and progress. GPA and tutoring needs are located on the profile page which if aggregated, might provide an untapped data source for program planning.

- Second, the way the program is managed must align with the Academy’s mission. Currently, the mission speaks primarily to academic success; however, the activities and day to day operations of the Academy suggest that the emphasis is on high touch mentoring, the core of which is to motivate students to attend college by helping them and their families through the process. Staying out of trouble at school, keeping up grades, and building cultural awareness and communities of respect within the Academy are also evident emphases. None of these are arguable but the role of academic success encompasses a much broader spectrum.

- Presently, tutoring in the academic subjects is on an “as needed” basis. About half the curricula for Summer Camps and Saturday Sessions emphasize academic subjects and the Arts; the rest revolve around building communities of respect, or preparing for college, depending on participants’ grade levels. There is little evidence of the rationale for teaching certain academic subjects or
topics, other than instructor availability. Additionally, as one instructor noted, there is no assessment to determine what might have worked well for specific groups and why, so that the curriculum might be systematically replicated in the future. “It’s a teacher’s dream,” said another of the instructors, to be able to teach what you want according to your expertise; however, it can also be confusing if you have no direction for anticipated learning outcomes. In some instances preparing for college entrance exams direct the curriculum, especially in reading, writing, and math.

**Partnerships:** Whether college access programs are a part of the University campus or stand alone as non-profit organizations, funding as well as student academic success rests on partnering with members of the community and the schools. Intentionally connecting the dots, for example, between school curriculum and tutoring needs of students leads to documented success that can be used as benchmarks of progress. One of the most important partnerships can be with the University.

- Some of the university student staff of the Academy reported limited sustained connections between WU and Willamette Academy, other than the use of the Academy as a service learning opportunity for WU students. Instructors, teachers from SKSD, suggested building enduring opportunities for professors from math, science, English, and music to enrich the WA curriculum in a way that prepared Academy students for the rigor of a four-year college.

- The SKSD is poised to work with the Academy to discern if there is duplication between AVID and the Academy’s work and to decide how the two programs can most successfully complement each other.

- The Academy currently has connections with a number of colleges and universities they visit as well as with invited speakers from community organizations. Organizing these events within a strategic plan with desired outcomes and systems of evaluation, other than student perceptions, would optimize growth and development.

**Well-structured Academic Tutoring and Training:** In the current Academy system, academic mentors (University students) meet 15 minutes a week with the Academy student to discuss goals and progress. At that time, Academy students may request an academic tutor. Tutors for Willamette Academy are expected to be knowledgeable about the subject matter they teach, well trained in tutoring methods, and know the objectives related to grade level curriculum.

- Currently, mentors report that not always are Willamette Academy Student Leaders (WASL) tutors truly skilled in the subject areas they sign up to tutor and this creates frustration for students. While there is a course designed to prepare Willamette Academy WASL students to work as Academy tutors, the course does not include specific tutoring strategies. Based on the course syllabus and an interview with the instructor, the course content is geared toward acquisition and practice of cultural competency and equity issues because it is a service learning course.
• Academy tutors are provided six hours of basic tutor training by staff; but there is no systematic follow up or evaluation of how well they carry out the tutoring task, aside from student learning perceptions. There does appear to be a lot of informal follow-up and group discussions.

Tracking Retention in College beyond the Academy: Successful programs build into their data systems the means to track alums and to give them support during, at least, their first year in college. Absent this data, it is impossible to determine if the students persisted in college toward and completing, graduation.

• Willamette Academy might begin the process of tracking the alums enrolled at WU, partnering with various institutional offices and utilizing some of the college students they currently hire to act as mentors for the Academy alums. Later, this process might be expanded to other universities and colleges over a coordinated time frame, especially with the help of external funding.

Sustainability: Attracting funding and support for program operations is an on-going quest. The general consensus among programs similar to WU is to seek a variety of funding sources.

The challenge for the Academy and the University is having a position in place to manage these funding sources creatively and carefully; therefore, funding from a reliable, renewable federal grant source could provide a financial constant that the Academy currently does not have.

• The average cost to send a student to Willamette Academy for five years is about $7,000. This is an excellent marketing tool for potential donors, especially when the scope and sequence of the curriculum and other programs are studied and re-designed.

Conclusion: The Future of Willamette Academy

In closing the full Willamette Academy Program Review, it should be recognized that Willamette Academy rests favorably in a locus of support and interest to the community and its partners. SKSD and others have expressed a strong desire to continue to expand the partnership and share resources. In addition, there are an extraordinary number of committed donors and supporters. All of these factors and more place Willamette University in a position to pursue mindful, and intentional outcomes that will contribute to the emerging re-design of Willamette Academy, building on its imminent strengths and potential.
APPENDICES

Appendix A: Willamette Academy: A Brief Evaluation of its Strengths and Challenges at Year Five

Appendix B: How 2006 Challenges Documented in the 2006 Evaluation have been Addressed

Appendix C: Other College Access Programs in the Region

Appendix D: Description of TRIO Programs

Appendix E: Academic and Participation Requirements for All Willamette Academy Students

Appendix F: Sample Saturday Schedule for Willamette Academy

Appendix G: Letter from Assistant Superintendent of SKSD Public Schools

Appendix H: Saturday Session Curriculum Overview

Appendix I: Admission Interview

Appendix J: Executive Summary

Appendix K: Willamette Academy Glossary of Abbreviations
Appendix A

Willamette Academy: A Brief Evaluation of its Strengths and Challenges at Year Five

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August 15, 2006

Background

Willamette Academy is a college access program located at WU and currently serving 110 students from the Salem area in grades 8 through 12. Ninety-eight percent of the students served are from ethnic minority backgrounds and more than three-quarters come from very low-income homes. The expressed goal of the program has been to give young people with promise, who might not otherwise find their way to college, the opportunity to get a college education. In addition to providing participants with a series of social and academic supports, including a summer academy, a once monthly Saturday instructional program, a study hall with tutors offered four times a week, and a parent involvement program, the University offers the incentive of the CAP program. The CAP program guarantees admission and last dollar financial aid to any of the Academy students who meet three basic criteria: satisfactory completion of all college preparatory course requirements, a minimum number of extracurricular activities, and the maintenance of a 3.2 GPA. Less than one-fourth of the Academy participants, however, are on track to meet these requirements. Nine of 65 students reviewed had a GPA below 2.0.

While the Academy is sponsored by WU, its funding is independent of the University’s funding, as are its staff. The President, however, has been instrumental in garnering funds for the program’s endowment and the university development office has worked to bring in funds to support the program. Staff of the Academy report having very little contact with university administration or the life of the university as they come and go at times when normal operations have ceased —evenings, weekends, and summers. Many staff report feeling marginal to the university community, uncertain if their program was designed to serve the university or not, and a new move to the lower level of the Education building has heightened these feelings. The Academy ultimately reports to the Dean of Social Sciences who initiated this program review as an opportunity to assess the Academy’s operations at year 5. The review was set in motion prior to
the announcement that the current director would be leaving (for family-related reasons), but that fact has made the review especially timely as a new person will be stepping into the role of director.

This brief program review is based on reading all available data and print material collected on the project, including statistics on student characteristics and performance, existing documents describing the history of the program, its operations and current offerings, and its employee roles; and conducting face to face interviews with approximately 25 people including the director, assistant director, program instructors, student advisory board members, a student assistant, the parent and student coordinator, the coordinator for curriculum, Spanish and English-speaking parents, the Dean of Social Sciences, and the President of Willamette. All interviewees were exceptionally open and candid and as a result a great deal of information was collected over the period of the review.

Strengths of the Willamette Academy

It is immediately evident that Willamette Academy enjoys two major assets that set it apart from many other college access programs. The first is its very high quality staff. While it operates on a “skeleton crew” with relatively few staff and only one full-time person at this juncture, those staff are exceptionally well-qualified for the positions they hold. The current director holds a doctorate in education, and the assistant director (as well as others) holds an MA and has extensive experience working with low-income youth in a variety of roles and contexts. The teaching and curriculum staff are currently also teaching in high school classrooms, including honors and AP courses, and the tutorial program is staffed by Willamette undergraduates. An exceptionally talented undergraduate student oversees data collection and technology for the program. The staff are not only well-credentialed, and with considerable relevant experience, but they are uniformly enthusiastic about the program, the students, and their jobs. Most exude a passion for their work and a deep desire to help the students succeed in school and in life. Creativity is another word that comes to mind in describing the staff. I heard numerous creative ideas about curriculum development, program organization, outreach, and service delivery. Everyone seemed to be full of good ideas to better serve the program participants. No doubt because the cost of living in the Salem area is relatively low, the program is able to attract such talented individuals with relatively modest compensation. The same is not the case in many programs across the country.

The second major asset is the university itself. Most college access programs are located in or around public schools and their primary relationship is to the public school system. Many attempt to have strong relationships with colleges and universities, but logistics often impede the realization of this goal. By existing on the Willamette campus, the program is able to access talented undergraduates, to take full advantage of the prestige of the university and the credibility that it accords the program, and to many support staff and faculty. These resources are invaluable to the Academy, and can be even further exploited.
Challenges of College Access Programs

Naturally, the Academy also faces a number of challenges. The task of shepherding low-income, ethnic minority students successfully through school and onto college is notoriously difficult. The public schools have largely faltered in this challenge, and hence the growth of college access programs across the nation. I have written extensively about the challenges that such programs face (see, for example, Gándara & Maxwell-jolly, 1999; Gándara & Bial, 2000; Gándara, 2002; Gándara, 2004; Gándara & Mejorado, 2004), but to provide important context for the following comments, it is worth summarizing some of the challenges that these programs routinely face.

- While successful college access programs have been able to demonstrate a doubling of the college going rates for their participants (compared to students not in such programs), few, if any, have been able to demonstrate an increase in indicators of academic achievement (e.g., achievement test scores, GPA).

- Programs are typically more successful with females than males, usually having a ratio of 2/3 girls to 1/3 boys by high school graduation, even when they begin with similar numbers.

- Even very good programs often fail to take into account the variation in needs of their students, providing “one size fits all” interventions that, in fact, fit some students better than others. This results in greater success with some groups of students than others.

- Students in such programs usually do not “leap frog” from being non-college bound to enrolling in selective institutions. Rather, the pattern is normally one of “ratcheting up” the aspirations of students. Students who otherwise would not have gone on to college at all may go to a community college, those who would have only considered a two year college may go on to a four year, and those who qualified for four year colleges, may aspire to more selective institutions as a result of participating in a college access program.

- The long-term outcomes for students are not known. Little research has been done to determine if these students who do go on to four year colleges remain there and obtain a degree. However, we do know that they often face challenges at college when there is no program to turn to for assistance, and that many “backslide,” returning to local two year colleges.

- Most programs do not provide direct financial assistance and lack of funds often determines students’ decisions about going to college, and to which college, more than their aspirations do.

- Very few programs actually conduct rigorous evaluations, so they do not know which students are most benefited by which interventions, or if their outcomes are due to features of programs or something else, like the type of students they have selected to participate.

- Parents are seldom tapped effectively as real resources for programs in spite of the fact many such programs claim they have a parent component.
To the extent that college-going is viewed as the most important outcome for participants of Willamette Academy, the “success” of the program is not yet known. However, we do know that the Academy is experiencing some of the challenges that have been documented in other such programs. Willamette students’ GPAs are not increasing, and there is no other evidence of growth in academic achievement. Below, I address other challenges that the program may want to consider for this 5th year review.

Willamette Academy’s Primary Challenges

Program Mission

As I queried individuals about their agreement with the goals of the program (as had been set forth in documents I received), I found that no one was able to say what they were, and virtually all were surprised that the list was as long as it was. These goals include (see Fifth Year Program Review binder):

- Promoting scholarship
- Motivating college going
- Cultivating critical thinking
- Cultivating leadership skills
- Demystifying the college experience
- Increasing computer literacy
- Closing the achievement gap (especially with respect to the SAT)
- Nurturing supportive peer groups

There was considerable consensus among respondents that although the goals were all worthy, the list needed to be shortened and focused. Of course, in reading through the goals, it is clear that some can be encompassed within others, but none is very well defined. Lack of clear definition also makes these goals difficult to measure, and other than collection of GPA data, there has not been an effort to measure the effect that the program has had on any of these other goals.

The more fundamental goal confusion that has occurred over the life of the program, however, is not clearly alluded to in the list of goals above. This is the tension between whether the program’s primary mission is to provide a “social service” (a term used by many of the staff) to low-income students who are struggling in school, or whether it is to provide the extra boost that will push already high achieving underrepresented students over the final hurdle of getting into college—especially a college like Willamette that is selective.
This is directly related to the question of whether the program’s objective is to help diversify the Willamette campus by bringing in students who have the potential to be Willamette undergraduates.

The question of mission appears to be plaguing the program and its resolution is probably critical to long-term success of the Academy. Many people noted that disproportionate resources were being expended on students who had many personal and academic problems and were not likely to go on to college, at least not in the short run. And, some felt that this was defeating the purpose—as they saw it—of the Academy. Others noted that there were some students who did not fit the profile that the program supposedly sought, but were more conflicted about whether the program should also be trying to serve these students. Not only do the selection criteria for students and expenditure of resources (time, emotional commitment of staff, and money) depend on the resolution of this issue, but so does the definition of success of the program. If the goal of the program is more narrowly defined to be college going, then the measurement of its success should be progress toward that end. Ultimately, one important measure of success under this scenario would be the percent of students who take advantage of the CAP program and enroll in Willamette. If, on the other hand, it is a broader “social service” goal, then success might well be measured by the number of students who stay in school, improve their academic skills, manage to achieve gainful employment and avoid encounters with the criminal justice system, or other positive developmental outcomes, in addition to the numbers that go on to some kind of postsecondary education. Both are worthy and important missions for the Academy, but it is important that a consensus be achieved by the leadership and staff about what the primary mission really is.

Organization and Program Structure

In part because of the confusion about mission, but also as a result of heavy staff turnover, the evolving nature of the program as it takes on more students across more grade levels, and a lack of articulation of roles and responsibilities on the part of leadership, there is a lack of clarity about who is supposed to do what. Several staff mentioned that they felt unsure of their roles and frustrated that they did not know what the boundaries of their role were. It wasn’t clear to some “what the vision” was for the program, or even who was supposed to articulate that vision. Some staff felt that others were defining their own roles, for good or for ill, in the absence of strong direction. One individual noted that a new director coming in right now “would not be able to know what was expected of them.” Recommendations from staff were that “rules and procedures need to be systematized”, written down, and adhered to, avoiding what appeared sometimes to be ad hoc decisions; and that the director provide a “vision” for the program that all could rally around. There was also the widespread feeling that there was too much to do with too few staff and too few hours. To resolve this problem, staff needed to be allocated to cover what all could agree were the most important responsibilities—for this, agreement would have to be achieved about what exactly was most important and who could and should be assigned those tasks.
One finding that is very clear in the research on college access programs is that the single most important feature of successful programs is the careful monitoring of students. Programs that “work” always have someone who is connected to each participant and is responsible for knowing that student in depth. This is the most labor-intensive aspect of college access programs, but also the most critical. The student needs to know whom to call on for any problem, and the adult needs to know how each of the students in his or her charge is doing at any given moment. This role has not been defined in the Willamette Academy; it does not currently exist in the structure of the program, although the Assistant Director is attempting to fill that gap as he can. It is, however, too big of a task for one person with 110 students. It would probably be wise for the program to consider how it might restructure to provide this support for students. Many possibilities exist from assigning a certain number of students to each staff member, to putting some staff members in charge of this entirely, to using Willamette students or even public school personnel to help meet the need. Ultimately, the relationship between the student and this critical person is what keeps many otherwise non-college bound students in the college game.

A related issue is the lack of connection between the program and the schools that students attend. Even programs that exist on site in public schools often complain of lack of connection with school personnel. For a variety of reasons, college access programs are frequently marginalized on school campuses. They are sometimes seen as too privileged (having resources the schools don’t), or not “realistic” about the demands they make on the schools for collaboration, or unfairly providing opportunities for only some students, creating divisions among students. In sum, close cooperation with the schools is difficult to achieve, but SOME cooperation can go a long way in helping students to get ready for college. For example, working with the schools to ensure that students take PSAT and SAT exams, or alerting the Academy when a student is falling behind (before he or she fails) in a class, are ways that the connection to schools can support the goals of the program. Of course, under more ideal circumstances, some school personnel can actually participate with the program and add to the human resources available to support students. Furthering cooperation with the schools, however, requires that someone be assigned the task of doing this work. This too would require some reorganization of existing structures.

**Budgeting for Program Components**

Rarely do college access programs have sufficient funds to cover all that they would like to do. Hard decisions must be made about where to invest resources, while simultaneously working to augment and stabilize the budget. Currently the Willamette Academy consists of four program components: a summer residency program, a Saturday academic enrichment program, a study hall with tutoring, and the parent program.

By far the most expensive of these components is the summer academy, which generally lasts for 10 days for the first year students and 7 days for the subsequent grade levels. In querying both staff and students about what they considered key to the success of the
program, and therefore should NOT be changed or eliminated, the summer academy was clearly the favorite of all. Both students and staff spoke of the bonding that went on during the summer, the close relationships formed, and the role the summer academy played in setting the tone for the year ahead. Staff also felt that programming during the summer was especially strong. In my own review of programs nationally, I have to concur that, when done well, summer academies provide powerful experiences for students that can pay dividends throughout the school year. The primary purposes of well-implemented summer academies are usually two-fold: to establish supportive relationships among students (nurturing the supportive peer group) and staff, and to preview the curriculum they will be presented with during the year, and depending on the time available, focus on strengthening particular academic skills. The most effective of these programs blend summer academic “previews” with regular curriculum so that students learn the standards for performance, gain confidence in their ability to meet those standards, and strengthen specific skills that may be weak. It is clear from the interviews that the first of these goals (building community) is addressed quite successfully in the summer program. It is not clear if the second (academic) goal is equally successfully realized. I have no basis on which to judge this and can only rely on the great sense of satisfaction the staff felt to conclude that it was.

The second component, once monthly Saturday classes that have had a variety of foci, depending on who the staff were in that year and what the perceived needs of the students were, appears to be under construction again. Staff have questioned if a single curriculum, no matter how creative—and many have been exceedingly so—can actually meet the needs of a wide range of students, from 8th to 12th grades with varying interests and skill levels. For example, last year the students participated in a year long project on building a city, learning the intricate aspects of city planning. It provided many opportunities for students to be exposed to both people and ideas that they had never before encountered. However, staff questioned whether that was what some students, especially those with real skill deficits, needed most. At the same time, staff are acutely aware that students come to program voluntarily, and if material is too “school-like” they run the risk of alienating the students.

Some of the Willamette Academy is modeled after a program in California (NAI) that involves students intensively in supplementary academic activities—two hours of daily instruction in math and language arts on the USC campus before school as well as every Saturday meetings consisting of four hours of remediation and enrichment and two hours of after school tutoring during each week. The Willamette Academy model is modified to include only once monthly Saturday meetings and 4 days a week study hall, which students are obligated to attend at least once a week. But, there are real questions about the best use of the once monthly meetings—should they be more focused on specific academic skills? Should they be more enrichment than academic? Should they incorporate more socializing time to nurture the supportive peer groups? Staff are aware that meeting only once a month does not, under any circumstances, provide the opportunity to change skill levels in very profound ways, but at the same time are concerned that the Saturday meetings have swung too far towards enrichment and away from developing specific skills. This constitutes a real dilemma. If
major change in skills cannot be achieved in a once-a-month format, does it make more sense to spend the time exciting the students about learning? And, can this be done with one curriculum for all grade and skill levels?

The program has a very creative curriculum coordinator who is prolific in her thinking about the possibilities for the Saturday program. She feels that a thematic curriculum makes sense, but perhaps tempered with opportunities to strengthen specific identified areas of academic deficit. At the same time, both she and others offered that the day should be split with academic skill-based instruction as well as enrichment. One staff member mentioned that she wanted to focus more on literacy and thought that a book club would be a good way to do this, and that the Saturday sessions should prepare students for SAT test taking. Another staff member offered that Saturday classes should be integrated with the study halls so that tutors could work with students on material presented on Saturdays. Whatever curricular approach the staff agree upon, the essential value of the once a month Saturday meetings needs to be considered carefully. There is no particular evidence that the approach that staff have taken has much impact on college-going—although there are certainly logical links between exciting students about learning while binding them to the group and greater engagement in school. Moreover, because there is not a research base on such a strategy, it is hard to know how effective it may be. This is an area that should be evaluated.

The third component, the study hall with undergraduate tutors appears to work reasonably well. The problems that the study hall encounters are known to the staff who are in the process of modifying current routines to address them. For example, tutors do not always work specifically with students on particular needs, rather they may roam around “supervising” study hall. It was mentioned by staff that the pairing of tutors with students could be more effective if tutors were to develop more one-to-one relationships with students and know what their specific needs are. This requires more reconnaissance at the students’ schools, which the Assistant Director is attempting to do. Students who do not have specific homework sometimes come to study hall to fool around. They use the computers for non-school purposes, occupying machines that are needed by other students. The Assistant Director intends to open up space in another computer room nearby and have one undergraduate supervise this area so that students who are not doing homework can still be on site without disturbing those students who come to work. Finally, students noted that there are insufficient numbers of tutors with skills in areas in which they need help—math and science. Staff feel confident that they can recruit such tutors. Finally, while there is a requirement that all students attend tutoring for at least 1.5 hours per week and this is tracked by having students sign in, students are not required to sign out. So, no one knows how much time students are actually spending at study hall. Overall there is considerable evidence in the research literature that well-implemented tutoring programs can have a significant impact on students’ achievement. If students are well-matched with tutors that can provide more focused support, and if those who are in need of more intensive help attend more regularly, this program component would be expected to yield results.
Finally, the fourth component, the parent group meetings falls under the general rubric of “missed opportunities.” It was evident from meeting with the parents that few meetings had been held in recent years and that parents had never had the opportunity to meet each other, so networks were not being established among parents. Parents also noted that there were many things about which they lacked knowledge, including the need to take SAT tests, and even what those tests were, or how they specifically could finance their children’s higher education. Ironically, the Spanish-speaking parents were more knowledgeable than the English speaking parents, citing an undergraduate student (who worked in the admissions office and was therefore very well informed about application procedures) who interpreted for them and augmented the regular material to be covered in the parent meeting with considerable additional information. There is much room for improvement in this component, as it can be a critical piece of the support puzzle for these students. Parents offered a number of ways in which they felt the program could be structured to serve them better, including: (1) inviting them to attend the Saturday sessions so that they could see what their children were engaged in and possibly extend those lessons at home and in the community; (2) community service opportunities that the parents would be willing to help support, such as community clean ups to teach responsibility for community; (3) providing opportunities for networking and mutual support among parents. Parents also noted that the only time they were contacted directly by the program staff was when there was a problem with their son or daughter. They thought it would be nice to be contacted for positive, as well as negative, reasons.

Apart from the core issue of cost effectiveness of the various program components and the need to provide sufficient funding to maintain them, several staff mentioned that there was a lack of transparency about budget. They noted that they had no idea how much money was available or could be counted on for the programming for which they were responsible. Instructors noted that they did not know if any funds were available for materials, transportation, or other expenses associated with their part of the program, and so they were unable to plan effectively, and often felt frustrated if they did plan for something that could not be supported by the budget. It appears that candid discussion about funds available would be helpful.

Cultural Content

We have noted elsewhere (Gándara & Bial, 2000) that programs that paid attention to the culture of students appeared to have a greater chance of effectiveness with them. Not a great deal of attention to culture or background appeared to be evident in the program. In spite of efforts to diversify the staff, there is little diversity among them. This has been consciously countered by bringing in more diverse undergraduates, and evidently this strategy has been at least moderately effective. Students note that they like the tutors very much. However, during the interviews, one parent requested that the program provide some discussion of racism for all of the Academy participants as “these students will have to face it when they go out in the world, and they should be prepared for it.” The Academy may want to consider this parent’s advice as it develops curricula, especially in the summer Academy where there is more time to work through these issues. Another way of combating racism and feelings of marginalization is to include content in the curriculum that
incorporates racially and ethnically diverse perspectives on both historical and current issues, allowing students to see these things through multiple prisms, and giving some voice to marginalized groups.

Evaluation

Some limited data have been collected on student characteristics and outcomes by an undergraduate research assistant at Willamette. These data include background demographics and grade point averages. No other data are collected. Course taking patterns, AP and honors courses taken, test scores, whether or not students have taken the PSAT or SAT, or how teachers rate these students are not known. Neither are there good data on how much time students have spent in study hall or at Saturday sessions. And, while data may be available, the student database does not hold information on how students were rated for admission to the program, nor do there appear to be plans to collect detailed data on what students do when they complete the 12th grade as graduates or otherwise. Moreover, if indeed the Academy has a broader mission than preparing students for college, it would make sense to collect data related to the goals inherent in that mission, such as leadership skills, motivation for higher learning, writing and presentation skills, and knowledge of college application systems, for example. Teacher ratings of students on specific skills and abilities is another important way to collect meaningful data. The current data collection system is inadequate to evaluate the effectiveness of the program, or program components to determine their cost effectiveness, over time. And, in order to be competitive for grants, it will be increasingly important to demonstrate the program’s effectiveness with respect to its goals. It would be wise to be thinking ahead to at least some minimal ongoing evaluation, and the data that will be necessary to conduct such evaluation, including baseline data on student participants and information related to the goals of the Academy.

Post High School Follow On

An area in which many college access programs fall short is in providing transitional support to students as they leave the program and go on to postsecondary schooling. Often students find themselves on a college campus with nowhere to turn, and while they may have learned from the program how to access financial aid to go to college, they do not know whom to ask about financial to stay in college or which courses they need to take to complete requirements for the degree. Importantly, the lack of knowing where to turn may manifest itself most egregiously in the affective realm. Many students leave college because they feel uncomfortable and fail to integrate into a supportive peer group. If a goal of the program is college access, then it can only be successfully met if students not only go to college, but if they stay there and get a degree. While the Academy may not have the resources to continue to follow and support students in college, it would be wise to consider the transition from high school to college and make connections with programs that can take over where it leaves off.

Summary
The Willamette Academy is a remarkable program in many ways, especially with respect to its talented staff and the resources it is able to access through its affiliation with WU. This serves the student participants well. However, many of the staff of the program do not feel a part of the Willamette community. They are on campus on days and at hours when most professors, administrators, and even students are gone, they have little contact with daily life of the university. Ironically, group affiliation and community building have been some of the strongest aspects of the Academy for the students, but a similar sense of community with the university does not exist for the staff. This is a challenge probably relatively easily addressed and that may pay dividends in terms of the morale of both students and staff over time.

Among the primary challenges that the Academy needs to address are:

• Gaining consensus about the mission of the program
• Clarifying staff roles consistent with that mission
• Establishing firm criteria for student selection that reflect that mission
• Determining which elements or components of the current program most cost effectively address the mission, and which should be modified or eliminated
• Finding a way to provide more focused monitoring of students, and more focused tutoring support
• Establishing a viable way for parents to participate and contribute to the success of the program as well as to become better informed about how to support their children toward postsecondary education
• Systematically collecting data (that reflect the mission) for purposes of evaluation

It will probably require more than an afternoon’s discussion to reach consensus on a number of these issues and to develop plans for moving forward with the Academy for the next five years. To this end, it could be very beneficial to hold a retreat for the staff, perhaps in conjunction with the hiring of the new director, where thoughtful consideration could be given to these issues in a collaborative context. This would also provide an excellent opportunity for the Willamette administration to demonstrate their support for the program and its staff by hosting the retreat and participating in it.

References


Gándara, P., (2002). High School Puente: What we have learned about preparing Latino youth for higher education, Educational


Appendix B

How Challenges Documented in the 2006 Evaluation have been Addressed

There have been a number of changes in the Academy that address the 2006 Review concerns and challenges. These are numbered and examined below:

1. **Gaining consensus about the mission of the program**: There is not so much lack of consensus about the mission of the Academy programs as there is to the program goals and objectives supporting it. The underlying mission remains as reaching out to an under-served population with potential for post-secondary success; however, the secondary part of the mission addresses academic support as well as pre-college preparation support. Academic support remains a challenge while pre-college access to students and families is an asset. Additionally, it is not clear if the Academy considers post-secondary success to include community colleges.

2. **Clarifying staff roles consistent with that mission**: There is still some hesitation around role clarification; however, hiring an Academic Programs Coordinator has eased some of the burden. Student workers (mentors and ASPAs) still are unsure of their role in some aspects of guidance and advising, however. It is particularly apparent that they feel under-prepared to handle the role of counselor that many of the students’ sophisticated social, personal, and academic issues demand.

3. **Establishing firm criteria for student selection that reflect that mission**: An electronic scoring rubric for program selection as well as a system shared with the 11 SKSD middle schools with whom the Academy partners appears to have alleviated this challenge; however, there is still the issue of setting up academic support expectations that may not suffice to meet the needs of the Academy population.

4. **Determining which elements or components of the current program that most cost effectively addresses the mission, and which should be modified or eliminated**: This has not been systematically addressed. There are conversations and meetings to discuss this challenge; but, there is no master plan in place. Understanding each of the elements of the programs and how they connect is largely found in the perceptions of those in leadership roles. And with so many recent transitions in leadership, confusion exists.
5. **Finding a way to provide more focused monitoring of students, and more focused tutoring support:** This has been addressed somewhat with the implementation of the web-based profile management system which tracks the existing data sources for each student. A system of reporting on mentor exchanges with students and tutoring requests appears to be working well. However, tutoring support focused on academic needs of the students is weak. The WASL course provides excellent training in cultural competency; however, no training in subject matter tutoring. Tutor and mentor evaluations consist of surveys filled out by students after mentoring and tutoring sessions. More objective and quantifiable measures would be desirable.

6. **Establishing a viable way for parents to participate and contribute to the success of the program as well as to become better informed about how to support their children toward postsecondary education:** The PUENTES parent program meets this challenge although there seems to be a desire for more involvement among parents who are able to attend meetings and social events. Translators and translation devices are now available for all families who do not speak English; however, the second language is only Spanish which could be limiting for other language groups.

7. **Systematically collecting data (that reflect the mission) for purposes of evaluation:** Data collected consist of student GPA, progress reports, mentor reports, demographic data, and college admission data. Time spent in study hall is now recorded. Again, if the Academy is facilitating greater academic support and development for students, then the curriculum must reflect goals, objectives, assessments, and continued data analysis to inform instruction.
Appendix C

Other College Access Programs in the Region

**Whitman College Coaches and Guided Study**
College Coaches are a group of organized volunteers who offer Guided Study assistance to high school students in the Walla Walla schools. Their responsibilities range from helping students with homework to assisting students in deciding how to best study independently. College Coaches, Whitman volunteers, are assigned schools in which to work based on communication with high school staff.

**Act Six** (George Fox University is a participating member, but the program occurs in most of the Pacific Northwest, and Minneapolis)
Act Six is a scholarship program where low income first generation students are selected before their senior year of high school. They meet weekly for six months with week-end retreats and conferences, family workshops, additional college visits, and a summer option. Selected students have their Expected Family Contribution (EFC) fully covered by the program.

**Western Oregon University After School Tutoring Program**
This is an after school tutoring program for students in four K-12 school districts, including SKSD. It is organized through Western Oregon’s College of Education. Tutors are assigned to a school as this is an academic tutoring program; students do not come to campus. The goal is to encourage academic success leading to college readiness and access, but it is not a college access program in the traditional sense.

**Chemeketa Community College TRiO Programs**
Federally funded TRIO programs and Willamette Academy serve some of the same demographic subsets of the population (especially first-generation, low-income students). However there appears to be no competition with Upward Bound (UB) in particular. Because Willamette Academy students are admitted in middle school, they are already receiving support when they arrive to high school. Also, the summer programming of UB and Willamette Academy preclude students' participation in both; they'd need to miss one to attend the other, and both are required.
Portland State TRIO Programs

PSU has some similarities to Willamette Academy in terms of goals and target population but the resemblance ends there. While PSU’s array of TRIO programs serve some of the same demographic subsets of the population (especially first-generation, low-income students, from non-Caucasian descent), their programs are set up quite differently from Willamette Academy. They receive about $300,000 annually to serve about 105 high school students in Upward Bound (UB) in six Portland school, and 700 students, grades 6-12, in their Talent Search (TS) program. Federal funding resources, unlike Willamette Academy, allow them to hire full-time, trained advisors with at least a bachelor’s degree to travel to the schools for Talent Search pre-college workshops and to manage a combined on-campus and school site program for Upward Bound. TS focuses strictly on exploring college and career options while UB has a federally required academic focus as well as a college access curriculum. While some academic tutoring is done by college students, UB funding also allows PSU to hire licensed teachers for week-end workshops and summer programs. Program goals must interface with the student learning outcomes of the partnering schools and in specific core subjects (reading, writing, math, etc.). UB must track their graduates through college for up to six years. Additionally, their college bridge program allows high school seniors to enroll in one or two college courses at a significantly reduced tuition rate. Performance outcomes for UB are constant. GPA of participants remains at 2.5% or higher. The last UB cohort class graduation rate was 100% and post-secondary enrollment remained at 96% for those who attended UB all four years. College graduation rates are not yet available. PSU also has a Student Support Services program as part of the TRIO programs. SSS provides college support for high risk students.
Appendix D

Description of TRIO Programs

The Federal TRIO Programs (TRIO) are federal outreach and student services programs in the United States designed to identify and provide services for individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds. They are administered, funded, and implemented by the United States Department of Education. TRIO includes eight programs targeted to serve and assist low-income individuals, first-generation college students, and individuals with disabilities to progress through the academic pipeline from middle school to post-baccalaureate programs. TRIO also includes a training program for directors and staff of TRIO projects. Their existence is owed to the passing of the Higher Education Act of 1965.[1] TRIO was given its name because it started as a group of just three programs; the name is not an acronym.[2]

Programs

The eight programs administered are:

**Upward Bound**
Upward Bound (UB) is a federally funded educational program within the United States. The program is one of a cluster of programs referred to as TRIO, all of which owe their existence to the federal Higher Education Act of 1965. Upward Bound programs are implemented and monitored by the United States Department of Education. The goal of Upward Bound is to provide certain categories of high school students better opportunities for attending college. The categories of greatest concern are those with low income, those with parents who did not attend college,[3] and those living in rural areas. The program works through individual grants, each of which covers a restricted geographic area and provide services to approximately 50 to 100 students annually. Upward Bound alumni include Donna Brazile, Viola Davis, John Quinones and Patrick Ewing.

**Upward Bound Math-Science**
Upward Bound Math-Science (UBMS) was first authorized through the Higher Education Act of 1965 and reauthorized in the Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2008.[4] Participating students must have completed the eighth grade and be low-income or "potential first-generation college students", with two-thirds of selected applicants meeting both of the criteria.[5] The program provides counseling, summer programs, research, computer training, and connections to university faculty with the goal of improving students' math and science skills and helping them obtain degrees and careers in the maths and sciences.[6] Students
in the summer program attend 5 weeks of English, math, and science classes in the summer months. Mathematics classes include algebra, geometry, precalculus, calculus, and science courses are held for biology, chemistry, and physics. After completing the program, the student receives one college credit from the associated institution.

Veterans Upward Bound
Veterans Upward Bound (VUB) is designed to motivate and assist veterans in the development of academic and other requisite skills necessary for acceptance and success in a program of postsecondary education. The program provides assessment and enhancement of basic skills through counseling, mentoring, tutoring, and academic instruction in the core subject areas. The primary goal of the program is to increase the rate at which participants enroll in and complete postsecondary education programs.\textsuperscript{[7]}

Talent Search
Talent Search (TS) identifies junior high and high school students who might benefit from intervention strategies meant to increase the chances of the student pursuing a college education. There are currently more than 475 TS programs in the U.S. serving more than 389,000 students.\textsuperscript{[8]} At least two-thirds of the students in each local TS program must be from low-income economic backgrounds and from families where parents do not have a bachelors degree.\textsuperscript{[9]} TS is a grant-funded program. Local programs are required to demonstrate that they meet federal requirements every four years in order to maintain funding. Talent Search alumni include US Congressman Henry Bonilla.\textsuperscript{[8]}

Educational Opportunity Centers
The Educational Opportunity Centers program (EOC) provides counseling and information on college admissions to qualified adults who want to enter or continue a program of postsecondary education. The program also provides services to improve the financial and economic literacy of participants. An important objective of the program is to counsel participants on financial aid options, including basic financial planning skills, and to assist in the application process. The goal of the EOC program is to increase the number of adult participants who enroll in postsecondary education institutions.\textsuperscript{[10]}

Ronald E. McNair Post-Baccalaureate Achievement Program
The Ronald E. McNair Post-Baccalaureate Achievement Program, often referred to as the McNair Scholars Program, is a United States Department of Education initiative with a goal of increasing “attainment of PhD degrees by students from underrepresented segments of society,” including first-generation low-income individuals and members from racial and ethnic groups historically underrepresented in graduate programs.\textsuperscript{[11]}
Student Support Services

Student Support Services (SSS) receives funding through a federal grant competition, funds are awarded to institutions of higher education to provide opportunities for academic development, assist students with basic college requirements, and to motivate students toward the successful completion of their postsecondary education. SSS projects also may provide grant aid to current participants who are receiving Federal Pell Grants. The goal of SSS is to increase the college retention and graduation rates of its participants.

Training Program for Federal TRIO Programs

The purpose of the Training Program for Federal TRIO Programs (TRIO Staff Training) is to increase the effectiveness of TRIO programs through staff training and development. Through a grant competition, funds are awarded to institutions of higher education and other public and private nonprofit institutions and organizations to support training to enhance the skills and expertise of project directors and staff employed in the Federal TRIO Programs. Funds may be used for conferences, seminars, internships, workshops, or the publication of manuals. Training topics are based on priorities established by the Secretary of Education and announced in Federal Register notices inviting applications.
Appendix E

Academic and Participation Requirements for All Willamette Academy Students

(Provided by the Academic Program Coordinator)

1. In order to cultivate a space wherein all community members are valued, supported, and challenged, Academy students are expected to:
   a. Be active participants at Academy events and be willing to try new things and challenge themselves.
   b. Have pride in what we are doing together and be willing to support and get along with all Academy community members.
   c. Not be disruptive, suspended from school, or exhibit violent behavior.
   d. Be polite and respectful to all participants, students, and staff.

2. In order to maximize benefits of students’ membership at Willamette Academy, students are expected to:
   a. Not use electronic devices during Academy events.
   b. Return all assigned forms and documents including, but not limited to, Student Progress Reports, Participation Reports, and Permission Slips.
   c. Attend the Academic Resource Center at least twice a week. With the approval of program staff, this requirement may be reduced to one time per week, provided that the student is involved in extracurricular activities and maintains a minimum 3.5 GPA.
   d. Prioritize academic work when they are at the Academic Resource Center. Laptop use will be restricted to academic endeavors, except with permission of program staff.
   e. Meet with their Academic Mentor regularly. For 10th and 11th graders, this means a weekly meeting. All other students should meet at least once every two weeks.
   f. Attend required CORE Groups or workshops, depending on grade level.
      i. 8th, 9th and 12th graders are required to attend biweekly CORE Group meetings.
      ii. 11th graders are responsible for planning and implementing CORE Group activities for 8th and 9th grade participants; schedule of responsibilities to be determined at start of each semester.
iii. The following rubric details workshop requirements by grade level:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade Level</th>
<th>Workshops per Year</th>
<th>Workshops per Semester</th>
<th>Categories per Semester*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2-3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>7-8</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

g. Not miss a Saturday Session except for a family emergency, illness, or conflict with a mandatory school activity. Parents or guardians should notify Willamette Academy at least 24 hours prior to missing the event. Occasionally, missed work will need to be made up by the next session.

h. Attend all Summer Camps, unless excused by the Assistant Director. Summer Camp is mandatory for incoming 8th graders.

i. Meet established benchmarks for college and scholarship applications and timelines (College Track).

j. Participate in a minimum of 1 community service activity each term.

2. To ensure consistent progress towards achieving higher education, Academy students are expected to:

   a. Maintain a minimum grade point average of 3.0 each term.
   b. Maintain C's or above in all classes.
   c. Be known as hard workers who turn in all assignments.
   d. In consultation with Academy staff, enroll in college preparatory coursework whenever possible.
   e. Seek out co-curricular activities that will enhance their college resume, including clubs, leadership positions, and community service.

Project Promise Scholars:

1. In order to cultivate a space wherein all community members are valued, supported, and challenged, Project Promise Scholars are expected to:

   a. Be active participants at Project Promise events and be willing to try new things and challenge themselves.
b. Have pride in what we are doing together and be willing to support and get along with all Project Promise community members.

c. Not be disruptive, suspended from school, or exhibit violent behavior.

d. Be polite and respectful to all participants, students, and staff.

2. In order to maximize benefits of students’ membership at Project Promise, students are expected to:
   a. Not use electronic devices during Project Promise events.
   b. Return all assigned forms and documents including, but not limited to, Monthly Student Progress Reports, Monthly Participation Reports, and Permission Slips.
   c. For students in grade 8-11, attend the Willamette Academy Annex at least two (2) times a month. For Seniors (12th grade), attend the Willamette Academy Annex at least four (4) times a month.
   d. Prioritize academic work when they are at the Willamette Academy Annex. Laptop use will be restricted to academic endeavors, except with permission of program staff.
   e. For students in grades 8-11, connect with an Academic Mentor at least once (1) per month. Seniors are expected to connect with an Academic Mentor at least two (2) times per month.
   f. Attend required CORE Group meetings, depending on grade level.
      - 12th graders are required to attend CORE twice a month.
   g. Attend a minimum of five (5) family workshops each academic
      - Additionally, 12th graders are required to attend two college visitations.
   h. In the summer prior to their senior year, students will participate in summer College Track programming.
   i. Meet established benchmarks for college and scholarship applications and timelines (College Track).
   j. Participate in a minimum of one (1) community service activity each term.

3. To ensure consistent progress towards achieving higher education, Project Promise Scholars are expected to:
   a. Maintain a minimum grade point average of 3.0 each term.
   b. Maintain C’s or above in all classes.
   c. Be known as hard workers who turn in all assignments.
   d. In consultation with Academy staff, enroll in college preparatory coursework whenever possible.
   e. Seek out co-curricular activities that will enhance their college resume, including clubs, leadership positions, and community service.
Appendix F

Sample Saturday Schedule for Willamette Academy

The following is a glimpse at the schedule for a Saturday Session. As the activities for these sessions vary considerably from one month to the next – and from one grade level to another – these particular events do not make up a “typical” session, but depict the overall structure of the day. The schedule is available through the Academy’s internal web after instructors have submitted their Session Planning Forms online. Regarding the formatting of the schedule, note that the session leader’s name is found after the session title, followed by the relevant grade level(s) in brackets. Next appears the session’s location, with the names of any assigned teaching assistants indented below each session.

08:45 - 09:00 AM  **Student Arrival and Sign In** - Staff [10] [11] Eaton 209

09:00 - 09:15 AM  **Group Welcome** - Staff [10] [11] Eaton 209


  Teaching Assistants: Johnny & Jan

09:30 - 10:00 AM  **Email Etiquette** - Instructor A [11] Eaton 307

  **Social Networking Reminders** - Instructor B [10] Eaton 106

10:00 - 11:30 AM  **Consumer Economics - Month One** - Instructor A [10] Smullin 117, Smullin Lab
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Instructor(s)</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10:00 - 11:00 AM</td>
<td>Emailing Teachers - Instructor B</td>
<td>[10] Eaton 106</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:00 AM - 12:00 PM</td>
<td>Search for Scholarship Money! - Instructor B</td>
<td>[10] The Center</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:00 - 12:45 PM</td>
<td>Standardized Test Prep – Instructor B</td>
<td>[10] Eaton 106</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:45 - 1:30 PM</td>
<td>Lunch - Staff</td>
<td>[10] [11] Goudy Commons</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:30 - 2:45 PM</td>
<td>Group Community Building - Staff</td>
<td>[10] [11] Eaton North Lawn</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:45 - 3:00 PM</td>
<td>Group Announcements &amp; Participation Reports - Staff</td>
<td>[10] [11] Eaton 209</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:00 PM</td>
<td>Dismissal - Staff</td>
<td>[10] [11]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix G

Letter from Assistant Superintendent of SKSD Public Schools
March 12, 2015

The Salem-Keizer School District has enjoyed a strong and sustained partnering relationship with the Willamette Academy. I am grateful for the opportunity to take part in the discussions with leaders at Willamette University as you consider the next steps of this outstanding program. My purposes in writing this letter are twofold: to describe a summary of Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) in Salem Keizer, and to underscore that we wish to continue a strong and focused relationship with the Willamette Academy. The AVID programs at each of Salem-Keizer’s secondary schools have grown in size and scope over the past few years, and the mission of AVID is in some ways very close to the mission and reach of Willamette Academy. For this reason I would like to provide some helpful information about AVID so that it might inform our continued discussions together.

Our intention in using AVID has been to start with a target population of students who are historically underrepresented in college. Most, but not all AVID students are economically disadvantaged and/or in minority populations by race or ethnicity. Many are the first in their families that will attend college, and even being the first to complete high school. The students participate in rigorous classes that teach them the skills and behaviors necessary to be successful in college. Strong教师/student relationships are reinforced with additional support with in-class college tutors. Our AVID classes provide students with an atmosphere in which they can build a positive peer group, they develop hope that college is within their reach, and they create a plan to actually get there. In addition to the classes we provide for our AVID students, the academic skills and strategies are intended go “school-wide” so that all students benefit from things such as personal organization, Cornell note-taking, and Socratic seminars. All of this is work that has been firmly underway in Salem-Keizer for the past eight years.

We started with AVID in 2007 at McKay High School, with just one class of students. The following year we began district-wide implementation, but at a very intentional pace. We strategically implemented first at the schools with the highest demonstrated need; we limited it to just one section per grade (beginning with eighth grade at the middle schools and ninth grade at the high schools, and growing outward incrementally each year). Gradually over time we increased AVID to reach all secondary schools in the district and we now serve approximately 2,000 students in grades 6-12, roughly 10% of our overall population.
Currently, all Salem-Keizer middle and high schools have at least one AVID section (approximately 20-25 students) in every grade; many of our most needy schools have two or three sections at some grades. All schools are working towards the school-wide use of AVID strategies, with most schools having well over 1/3 to 1/2 of the staff who have received specific training in AVID methodology. School and district leaders are looking for implementation of school-wide practices as a benchmark for school success. The growing implementation helps to prepare all students for college, and is an intensive preparation model for nearly 10% or more of the students in the AVID classes at each middle and high school. The AVID class works to prepare students for college, with a specific focus on academic skills and habits. Academic preparation is the focus of school-wide implementation.

Looking ahead to our plans and aspirations, we hope to see stronger implementation of AVID school-wide, with students cognitively aware of the college preparation they are receiving. We would ultimately like to provide AVID to all students in underserved populations, who desire to further their education to and through college. Some middle and high schools are intentionally striving to reach AVID National Demonstration School status. We would like to start the use of “school-wide” strategies earlier, in elementary grades. Plans are underway to increase the number of English Learners who are ready for AVID through increased efforts to accelerate language development.

Turning now to our desire to continue partnering with the Willamette Academy, we recognize that new questions are emerging about perceived duplication of efforts between IVA and AVID, and the students they serve. To whatever degree this is true, there is undoubtedly a continued need for the school district to work with post-secondary institutions to forge reliable structures of support for students who need them. Our dialogue together has already uncovered a particular need that AVID by itself cannot fulfill, and IVA is uniquely poised to offer: focused mentoring for under-represented students that reinforces the college dream. As we continue to explore this and other possible areas of focus, I wish to underscore Salem-Keizer’s commitment to our relationship. The Willamette Academy has been a great partner and a shining resource in our community. The impact it has made for scores of students every year is significant. Going forward, I am confident that our continued work together will continue to yield outcomes for our students that are important and needed.

Respectfully,

Kelly K. Ohlisa
Assistant Superintendent
Appendix H

Saturday Session Curriculum Map and Subject Overview

First Year
General Objectives: Current events, community building, community resources (organizations, businesses, etc.)

Fall
☐ Constructing our Community of Respect
☐ Academic Year Expectations
☐ Representing the Academy
☐ Teacher Communication
☐ Email, Social Networking Etiquette

Winter
☐ Semester transition, teacher communication
☐ Public Speaking, middle school presentations
☐ Communication Styles
☐ Advocating for Self (high school course advising)

Spring
☐ Self-esteem, -identity, -confidence building
☐ Note taking, time management

Second Year
General Objectives: Current events, research skills

Fall
☐ Academic Year Expectations: High School Years
☐ Teacher Communication
☐ High School Transcripts 101, College Achievement Plan
☐ Time Management
☐ Local scholarship searching
Winter
- Phone Etiquette
- Exploring resources in the community
- Semester transition, personal evaluation
- Course advising

Spring
- Public speaking
- Researching summer/co-curricular involvement
- Residential Summer Program (family meeting)

**Third Year**

*General Objectives: SAT/ACT preparation, consumer economics, life skill, post-high school goal-setting (long- and short-term)*

Fall
- Financial literacy
- Teacher Communication
- College Board registration
- Improvisation, public speaking

Winter
- Housing, transportation 101
- Semester transition
- Review college resume
- Employment, interview skills

Spring
- Life skills
- Nonverbal communication
- Value of College Degree

**Fourth Year**

*General Objectives: SAT/ACT emphasized, etiquette, leadership opportunities in preparation for SAL role*

Fall
Teacher communication
College resume
Career exploration

Winter
Semester transition, teacher communication
Beginning scholarship search
Essay writing

Spring
SAT practice exam
SAL training and preparation
SAT/ACT (mandatory)
College admissions talks

Fifth Year
General Objectives: Completing college and scholarship applications, peer mentoring via CORE

Fall
SAT/ACT retakes
Career exploration
Securing recommendations
Completing college admission applications
Scholarship search, applications continued
Financial Aid 101

Winter
FAFSA completion session
The importance of 7th and 8th semester grades
Understanding the Financial Award Letter

Spring
Peer mentoring for younger students
Graduation preparation
Transition to college
Appendix I

Selections Interview for Willamette Academy Nominees

Interview Structure:
- Introductions
- Review Instructions
- Interview
- Questions for Us?
- Review Timeline

STUDENT

1) What are three things about yourself that you really like?

2) What do you like most about school? What do you like least about school? Why?

3) After school ends, what do you do (activities, etc.) until you go to bed at night?
4) What do you think it takes to be a good (successful) student?

5) When you spend time with your friends, what do you like to do? How do they help you be successful in school?

6) What do you think the teacher of your favorite class would say about you? What would the teacher of your least favorite class say about you?

7) What do you think happens at Willamette Academy? Why do you want to attend Willamette Academy?

8) What do you want to be when you grow up? Why?

9) What, besides money, do you need in order to go to college?
10) What do your parents/family do to help you be successful in school and in life?

PARENTS/GUARDIANS

1. What do you think Willamette Academy will do to help your child?

2. How are you involved in your child’s life and education?

3. How would you describe the good qualities of your child?

4. Willamette Academy is a five-year commitment; are you prepared to make such a commitment?

Recommendation - What would be your recommendation if you had to make the decision to admit this student?
Highly Recommend  Recommend  Recommend w/Reservations  Would Not Recommend

Notes RE: Recommendation:
Appendix J

Executive Summary

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
WILLAMETTE ACADEMY PROGRAM REVIEW
March 25, 2015

Following the Introduction, this summary capsules the analysis of data and findings associated with the comprehensive Willamette Academy 2014-2015 Review. Part I describes specific strengths and areas for development of Willamette Academy. Specific and detailed recommendations are listed in Sections I-IV of the full 2014-2015 review. Part II discusses common success factors among college access programs: best practices. The second part comes at the request of the Steering Committee guiding this project. Those practices are examined individually with commentary regarding the current status of the Academy. A final statement of conclusion finalizes this Summary.

INTRODUCTION

Willamette Academy, located on the Willamette University (WU) campus in Salem, Oregon, is an after school and week-end, college access initiative. Since early college planning is a crucial but often overlooked by students from underserved backgrounds, the Academy partners with the eleven middle schools in the Salem-Keizer School District (SKSD) to recruit and nominate program applicants in grade 7. SKSD is the second largest school district in Oregon. Successful applicants and their families are expected to commit to five (5) years of participation in the Academy. Willamette Academy provides a number of academic and information support systems that equip students and their families for the college-going process. Once students enroll in the Academy, a network of program

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staff and community collaborators provide curriculum to promote the Academy’s goal of supporting the students’ successful progress through high school and matriculation into a four-year college.

Willamette Academy is currently serving 225 students from the Salem area in grades 8 through 12. Of those, 75 students are enrolled in Project Promise, a shortened version of the Academy with similar goals, while the remaining 150 are enrolled in cohorts in the traditional five-year Willamette Academy. The last cohort to graduate, in 2014, was comprised of 40 students. About 88% of the students served are from ethnic minority backgrounds and about 63% come from households that fall below the Federal Poverty Line. Only about five percent of the students’ parents attended college; therefore, may not have the knowledge, skill, or experience to direct their own children to college no matter how important it might seem to them. For this reason, Willamette Academy makes a special effort to inform, include, and consistently reach out to parents and guardians of all the Willamette Academy students.

Mission
Willamette Academy reaches out to historically under-represented communities by empowering youth who have the desire and potential to advance to higher education.

This academic program is designed to address a number of factors that may discourage certain students from attending college or otherwise impede their academic progress. We are committed to helping our students achieve at a level that will enable them to attend the four-year college or university of their choice.

Programs and Purpose
To provide students who show determination and promise the opportunity to access post-secondary education; the emphasis is on four-year institutions. The Academy offers participants a series of social and academic supports, including a summer academy, a once monthly Saturday instructional program, a study hall with tutors offered four times a week, and a parent involvement program.

As stated, there are two programs operating in parallel within the Academy: the traditional, full-length Willamette Academy and Project Promise. Project Promise began serving students in 2012. The target population for both programs is the same; however, students are not dual enrolled. With application numbers on the rise, the leadership staff of the Academy established Project Promise seeking to include more students in need of assistance and support in reaching college potential using existing Academy and University resources. Enrollments in both programs have remained constant since 2012.
To date, the Academy is serving 150 students from SKSD in grades 8 through 12 in the traditional Academy. There are 75 additional students enrolled in Project Promise for a total of 225 participants.

The Academy functions on a rolling enrollment model, that is, during the month of March, all middle schools in the SKSD are invited to nominate 7th grade students meeting the acceptance criteria for the Academy. Successful candidates enter the Academy at the beginning of their 8th grade year. The Academy’s average student completion rate is 84% percent. A small percentage of students may not complete due to a family move, behavior, participation issues, failure to maintain at least a 2.0 GPA, or the student or family self-selects out of the program. Due to the nature of its pursuits, the Academy garners considerable attention in the community, receiving over 500 applications for 40 participant slots annually. Eighth grade cohorts during 2007, 2008, and 2009 were comprised of 89 students in the traditional Academy program.

EXAMINING THE WILLAMETTE ACADEMY’S MISSION AND PURPOSE

The objective of this summary is to summarize the candid and extensive Willamette Academy Program Review conducted from December 2014 to March 2015. The existence of the Willamette Academy is not in question. The purpose of the Review is to acknowledge the Academy’s strengths and build on them to re-design programs that are more consistent with the mission and purpose as well as the needs of the participants while enrolled in the Academy and as they matriculate into post-secondary education.

Re-thinking the Academy’s Mission and Purpose

As the first part of the current mission of the Willamette Academy elucidates, “Willamette Academy reaches out to historically under-represented communities by empowering youth who have the desire and potential to advance to higher education.” That part of the mission is well understood by all those interviewed; however, the second part of the mission has created some confusion around curriculum as well as staff qualifications and expectations: “This academic program is designed to address a number of factors that may discourage certain students from attending college or otherwise impede their academic progress. We are committed to helping our students achieve at a level that will enable them to attend the four-year college or university of their choice.”

The 2014-2015 review confirms that “academics” in the generally accepted reference to subject matter and academic discourse, is not a particular strength of the Academy. Conversely, other factors that may discourage students from attending college such as lack of access
to the application process are highly visible in the Academy’s curriculum. What the programs should focus on and how the curriculum is delivered most effectively pose a myriad of exciting challenges to the new leadership.

Throughout this 2014-2015 assessment of Willamette Academy and the transition of leadership, there is an emerging perception of important factors that have significant implications for the work and goals of the Academy. For example, SKSD has implemented some important programming changes in their college preparatory efforts to raise the fluency of their students on college access. This work began in 2007 with the start-up of the first Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) high school just one year after the first external review of the Willamette Academy was completed. That review notes the lack of such programs in the public schools.

AVID is a nationally recognized college preparation program whose mission is to close the achievement gap by preparing all students for college readiness and success. Therefore, at the time of the 2006 review, there was little competition for the target population that the Academy serves. Today, that is much changed, leading to the question of how to complement SKSD’s growing pre-college programs and partner with them to enrich Willamette Academy curriculum.

ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS

Part I: Strengths and Areas for Development of the Willamette Academy

Summarized below are general strengths and areas for development based on interviews with over 40 students and staff as well as a close examination of all Willamette Academy documents available. Interviews were structured following frameworks for best practices in tutoring programs, particularly those from St. Paul Public Schools Foundation.

Areas of Strength

The full 2014-2015 Willamette Academy Program Review identified the Academy strengths on which to build new programmatic approaches. While some of the areas are in need of examination around policies and procedures, the basic tenets they represent are strong.

The first area of strength is the potential for greater collaboration and support across partnerships, particularly with Salem-Keizer Public Schools and Willamette University. The Academy is well-respected in the SKSD and the WU community. Existing partnerships,
particularly with SKSD, should be reexamined and goals set through mutual collaboration. Forming an Advisory or Steering Board is highly recommended.

Second, the relationship building between Academy participants and WU students through mentoring is highly valued by the students, staff, families and mentors. While this is a definite strength, the policies and procedures associated with the various roles of mentor and staff needs further clarification. The mentoring and leadership programs in the Academy, including the WU students who volunteer substantial hours and expertise, provide a valuable asset to the Academy. Better preparing these college students to interact successfully as mentors or tutors will require stronger systems of evaluation and professional development.

Third, support from and among the families of participants is compelling. The exploration of greater venues for parents and guardians to participate and contribute to the success of the program, as well as to become better informed about how to support their children toward and during postsecondary education, will only intensify this bond.

Fourth, the ability to work closely with individual students to provide information about college access while supporting them over a five year plan speaks highly of the staff’s dedication to the underlying mission of the Academy. Ensuring that the student mentors working with high school juniors and seniors on college application and planning have access to adequate training is essential to maintaining and increasing this strength.

Fifth, the community of leadership and service learning development that WU students discover and value within the Academy is to be commended.

And finally, the passion and dedication shown by staff and volunteers toward the work and underlying mission of Willamette Academy is unmatched. The Willamette community and partners should not lose sight of the value of the Academy as an after school program for a carefully selected group of under-represented students sponsored by a well-respected University. This sets the Academy apart from many other programs that must travel into the schools with whom they partner, and may not enjoy the same indirect cost incentives that WU provides.
Areas for Development

The first item to be addressed is the lack of a master plan that connects the programs of the Academy to its goals and objectives. The Academy has been in existence for over nine years. During that time, there is little evidence of an effort by leadership to create a comprehensive plan for curriculum development that includes a systematic assessment process to monitor and appropriately address student learning in their areas of greatest need.

Second, the research clearly shows that successful pre-college programs are data dependent and data driven (A Blueprint for Success. Educational Policy Institute, 2012, retrieved January 30, 2015). While the Academy has collected appropriate demographic data, there is little evidence of academic achievement, other than high school and college graduation. Related to that is the need to monitor students transition into college as well as reasons for engagement or drop out in higher education. General data retrieved from national college graduation databases show when the Academy alums graduate from post-secondary institutions the reasons for success or failure are not known. That valuable data might change the direction of the Academy.

Third, aligning the academic curriculum as well as the pre-college curriculum to the Salem-Keizer AVID program is highly recommended. Resource sharing that, according to AVID staff, could include free professional development for mentors and tutors by SKSD would grow the partnership between the District and the Academy. This would entail determining which elements or components of the current program most effectively address the mission, and which should be modified or eliminated.

Fifth, policies and procedures relevant to the role and mission of the Academy need clarification. This includes but is not limited to: requiring background or conduct checks for all volunteers who work at the Academy; prohibiting siblings from enrolling in the traditional Academy; assuring safety and security of Academy buildings as well as adherence to ADA guidelines; and allowing minor children and friends to accompany Academy participants to weekly study sessions.

Sixth, while the budget has never been over drawn, it is a concern that it is always a break-even budget reliant on 1,336 donations ranging from four dollars to $45,000 annually and only a few substantial endowments. One significant donor dropped its commitment to the Academy for the year 2015-2016 and that must be addressed immediately.

The transition of leadership and re-design of the Academy suggests the importance of having someone from WU, possibly in the Office of Development and Alumni Relations partially dedicated to contacting past donors as well as setting up a time table for grant applications and data gathering. There is also a need to hire another counselor to advise students in matters that University students
have no background or skill. The current budget is not sufficiently robust to support this position. That position could be provided through a major grant source.

And finally the challenge that relates to the overall well-being of the Academy: the development of an efficient and effective program management system with demonstrated goals and measurable objectives beyond those available now. Federally funded pre-college programs require a certain amount of long range planning and systems for data collection and analysis which could serve as guidelines for a new infrastructure for the Academy. The TRIO talent search grant, for example, a niche that the Academy might consider, will open applications in 2015. Those grants usually fund about $250,000 annually and are renewable. Such a management plan might unveil other areas that can be cut or bolstered. For example, Summer Camp accounts for over 25% of budget expenditures. Is the length and breadth of the current Summer Camp necessary? Could some of the content be taught during Saturday Sessions, for example, and some delivered in a non-residential setting in the summer, thus cutting costs significantly.

Part II: Common Success Factors among College Access Programs: Best Practices to Guide Change

While the Willamette Academy prepares for change, it is important to understand and learn from the work of other exemplary college access programs. When examining “like programs” specific measures of success emerge. (A Blueprint for Success. Educational Policy Institute, 2012, retrieved January 30, 2015). These best practices include intentionality, data-driven practices and program management, partnerships, structured academic tutoring and training, tracking college retention, and sustainability. These are explained below with comments regarding the status of the Academy in relationship to these best practices.

Intentionality: There must be a conscious effort, a plan, for maximizing results with limited resources or budget.

- The common theme of conversations held with each group or person during this study is there is no strategic plan or clear direction for the program.

- To date, the Academy has functioned largely because of competent, caring staff and teachers; however, absent a plan, there is no direction for program development that is not idiosyncratic to a particular leadership. It is not possible to establish measurable goals without direction.

Data-driven Practices and Program Management: Collecting qualitative and quantitative data systematically and frequently is vital. Successful programs do not create new branches arbitrarily or based on a “perceived” need. They build on existing programs mindfully,
and with purpose, relying on quantifiable data around student success to guide them. It is a continuous improvement model that necessitates adequate time for planning and staffing the established program needs.

- To date, the Academy leadership provides adequate program management on a day to day basis, but long-range planning based on data is minimal. The Academy has implemented a web-based information system which creates a profile of each student, their goals, needs and progress. GPA and tutoring needs are located on the profile page which if aggregated, might provide an untapped data source for program planning.

- Second, the way the program is managed must align with the Academy’s mission. Currently, the mission speaks primarily to academic success; however, the activities and day to day operations of the Academy suggest that the emphasis is on high touch mentoring, the core of which is to motivate students to attend college by helping them and their families through the process. Staying out of trouble at school, keeping up grades, and building cultural awareness and communities of respect within the Academy are also evident. None of these are arguable but the role of academic success encompasses a much broader spectrum.

- Presently, tutoring in the academic subjects is on an “as needed” basis. About half the curricula for Summer Camps and Saturday Sessions emphasize academic subjects and the Arts; the rest revolve around building communities of respect, or preparing for college, depending on participants’ grade levels. There is little evidence of the rationale for teaching certain academic subjects or topics, other than instructor availability. Additionally, as one instructor noted, there is no assessment to determine what might have worked well for specific groups and why, so that the curriculum might be systematically replicated in the future. “It’s a teacher’s dream,” said another of the instructors, to be able to teach what you want according to your expertise; however, it can also be confusing if you have no direction for anticipated learning outcomes. In some instances preparing for college entrance exams direct the curriculum, especially in reading, writing, and math.

Partnerships: Whether college access programs are a part of the University campus or stand alone as non-profit organizations, funding as well as student academic success rests on partnering with members of the community and the schools. Intentionally connecting the dots, for example, between school curriculum and tutoring needs of students leads to documented success that can be used as benchmarks of progress. One of the most important partnerships can be with the University.

- Some of the university student staff of the Academy reported limited sustained connections between WU and Willamette Academy, other than the use of the Academy as a service learning opportunity for WU students. Instructors, teachers from SKSD, suggested building enduring opportunities for professors from math, science, English, and music to enrich the WA curriculum in a way that prepared Academy students for the rigor of a four-year college.
• The SKSD is poised to work with the Academy to discern if there is duplication between AVID and the Academy’s work and to decide how the two programs can most successfully complement each other.

• The Academy currently has connections with a number of colleges and universities they visit as well as invited speakers from community organizations. Organizing these events within a strategic plan with desired outcomes and systems of evaluation, other than student perceptions, would optimize growth and development.

Well-structured Academic Tutoring and Training: In the current Academy system, academic mentors (University students) meet 15 minutes a week with the Academy student to discuss goals and progress. At that time, they may request an academic tutor. Tutors for Willamette Academy are expected to be knowledgeable about the subject matter they teach, well trained in tutoring methods, and know the objectives related to grade level curriculum.

• Currently, mentors report that Willamette Academy Student Leaders (WASL) tutors are not always truly skilled in the subject areas they sign up to tutor and this creates frustration for students. While there is a course designed to prepare Willamette Academy WASL students to work as Academy tutors, the course does not include specific tutoring strategies. Based on the course syllabus and an interview with the instructor, the course content is geared toward acquisition and practice of cultural competency and equity issues because it is a service learning course.

• Academy tutors are provided six hours of basic tutor training by staff; but there is no systematic follow up or evaluation of how well they carry out the tutoring task, aside from student learning perceptions. There does appear to be a lot of informal follow-up and group discussions.

Tracking Retention in College beyond the Academy: Successful programs build into their data systems the means to track alumni and to give them support during, at least, their first year in college. Absent this data, it is impossible to determine if the students persisted in college toward and completing, graduation.

• Willamette Academy might begin the process of at least tracking the alums enrolled at WU, partnering with various institutional offices and utilizing some of the college students they currently hire to act as mentors for the Academy alums. This process could expand to other universities and colleges over a coordinated time frame, especially with the help of external funding.

Sustainability: Attracting funding and support for program operations is an on-going quest. The general consensus among programs similar to WU is to seek a variety of funding sources. Some were federal grants, others, like the Academy, represented hundreds of small donors.
• The challenge or the Academy and the University is having a position in place to manage these funding sources creatively and carefully; therefore, funding from a reliable, renewable federal grant source could provide a financial constant that the Academy currently does not have.

• The average cost to send a student to Willamette Academy for five years is about $7,000. This is an excellent marketing tool for potential donors, especially when the scope and sequence of the curriculum and other programs are studied and re-designed.

**CONCLUSION: THE FUTURE OF WILLAMETTE ACADEMY**

In closing Willamette Academy Program Review, it should be recognized that Willamette Academy rests favorably in a locus of support and interest to the general community, the University, and its partners. SKSD and others have expressed a strong desire to continue to expand the partnership and share resources. In addition, there are an extraordinary number of committed donors and supporters. All of these factors and more place Willamette University in a position to pursue mindful, and intentional outcomes that will contribute to the emerging re-design of Willamette Academy, building on its imminent strengths and potential.
Appendix K

Willamette Academy Glossary of Abbreviations

Internal (Developed by and for the Academy)

- AD Assistant Director
- AM Academic Mentor
- ASP Academic Support Program
- ASPA Academic Support Program Assistant
- ASC Academic Support Coordinator
- AT Academic Tutor
- CAP College Achievement Plan
- Center Academic Resource Center
- CORE Community of Respect for Everyone
- CT College Track
- CTM College Track Mentor
- ED Executive Director
- FIM Family Information Meeting
- FITS Fun In The Sun
- GCal Google Calendar
- GDrive Google Drive
- NOM Nominations
- PG# Parents and Guardians for Grades # (Used on the Calendars)
- POA Plan of Action
- PP Project Promise
- PUENTES Parents and guardians Using Education and Networking To Empower Students
- RATA Residential Assistant and Teacher's Assistant
- RO Request Off
- SAL Senior Academy Leader
- SAT Scholastic Aptitude Test
• SID Student Identification Number
• SLA Service Learning Assistant
• SPI Summer Program Intern
Internal (Developed by and for the Academy) Continued

• SPF Session Planning Form
• SRE Staff Record Entry
• SRE Student Record Entry
• TA Teaching Assistant
• TGIX Thank Goodness It's X(day of the week)
• TMS Task Management System
• WA Willamette Academy
• WAnnex Willamette Academy Annex
• WASI Willamette Academy Summer Intern
• WASL Willamette Academy Service Learning
• WB Writers' Bureau
• WU Willamette University

External (Developed outside of and commonly used by the Academy)

• ACT American College Test
• AVID Advancement Via Individual Determination
• EFC Estimated Family Contribution
• FAFSA Free Application for Federal Student Aid
• NMSQT National Merit Scholarship Qualifying test
• PSAT Preliminary SAT
• R19 (Form) Authorization to release or disclose education and protected health information
• SAR Student Aid Report
• SKSD Salem-Keizer School District
• WITS Willamette Integrated Technology Services
References


