

UCSB Office of Campus Outreach Initiatives
Evaluation Case Study 2003

Santa Maria High School

UCSB Partership School

Introduction

Page 2

Methodology

Page 4

Findings

Page 4-27

SMHS Student Support 5

MESA 11

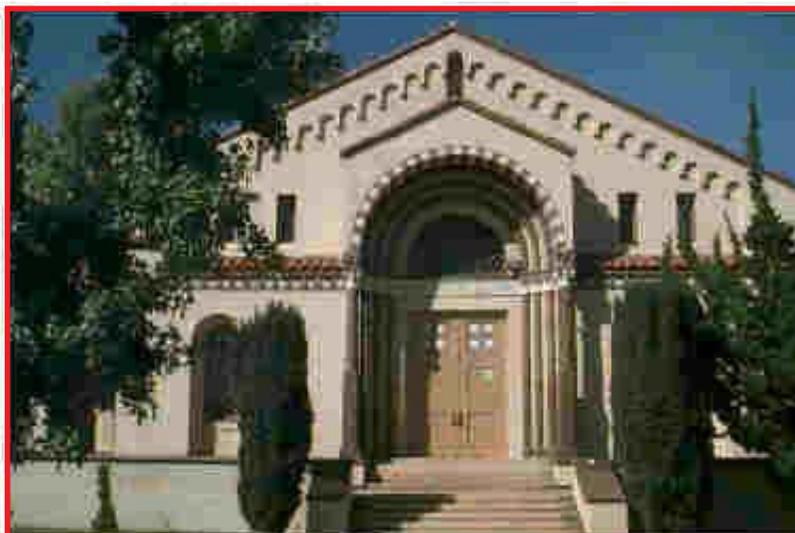
SM-B Site Coordinator 14

Professional Development ... 18

SM-UCSB Partnership 24

Conclusion

Page 27



Conducted with the support of the
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Introduction

Santa Maria High School's student population (about 3,600 students) includes a large majority of Latino students (almost 80%), many of whom are English Language Learners (over 30%) and are socioeconomically disadvantaged (about 80%).

Students in Santa Maria High School show lower percentile scores than county-wide or statewide rankings across all content areas.

The Santa Maria partnership located in northern Santa Barbara County involves schools in two districts: the Santa Maria-Bonita Elementary District (K-8) and Santa Maria Joint Union High School District. Nestled among farmlands approximately 60 miles north of the city of Santa Barbara, Santa Maria High School's student population (a total of about 3,600 students) includes a large majority of Latino students (about 80% within the high school), many of whom are English language learners (over 30%), are socioeconomically disadvantaged (about 80%), and have parents who are migrant farm workers. Santa Maria High School (SMHS) is the lower performing (from a student achievement perspective) of two high schools in its district, drawing almost exclusively from Santa Maria-Bonita (SM-B) Elementary district.



The following descriptive data demonstrates the challenges and strengths to which Santa Maria High School and UCSB Outreach must dedicate their resources.

Standardized Testing Data

Since 1997, California has required schools to participate in the Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR) Program as a measure of their students' achievement. One new component of the STAR is the *California Achievement Tests, Sixth Edition (CAT/6)*, which replaced the *Stanford Achievement Test, Ninth Edition (SAT-9)* in 2003 as the national norm-referenced test required for California students. Since the SAT-9 and the CAT/6 are published by two different companies, were developed at different times, and use different national groups of students for comparisons, no direct comparisons between the 2002 SAT-9 scores and the 2003 CAT/6 scores can be made.

Instead, the following table provides comparative data on the percentage of students who scored at or above the 50th national percentile rank (NPR) on the 2003 CAT/6 at Santa Maria High School (SMHS) compared to students in Santa Barbara County (SB) and students statewide (CA).

Santa Maria High School 2003												
CAT/6 % Scoring At or Above 50 th Percentile and Comparisons with County and State												
Grade	Reading			Language			Mathematics			Science		
	SMHS	SB	CA	SMHS	SB	CA	SMHS	SB	CA	SMHS	SB	CA
9	35	52	50	34	51	49	37	51	46	36	54	47
10	30	49	49	34	50	49	41	54	52	32	52	47
11	32	50	47	29	48	47	35	48	47	33	52	49

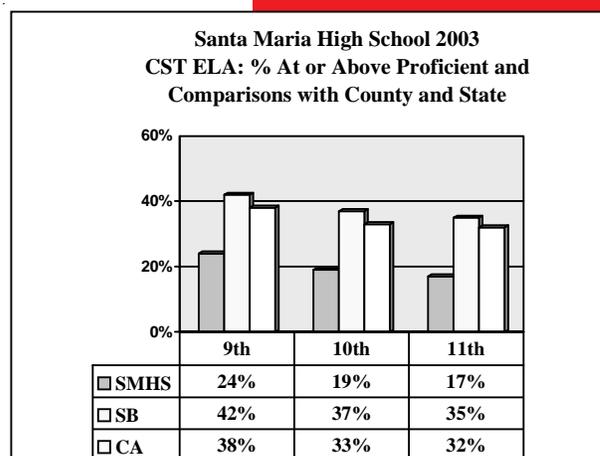
These data indicate that more students within Santa Barbara County score above the national average on the CAT/6 across all grade levels and content areas. From nine to nineteen percent fewer students in Santa Maria High School, however, score at or above the 50th percentile compared to statewide scores across all content areas. Scores are particularly lower for SMHS students in the reading and language arts content areas across grade levels.

Another component of the STAR Program is the California Standards Tests (CST), developed specifically to assess students' performance on California's Academic Content Standards. The standards tests measure achievement in English Language Arts, Mathematics (e.g., Algebra I, Geometry, and Algebra II tests), History-Social Science (e.g., World History, U.S. History), and Science (e.g., Biology, Chemistry, Physics) content areas at the appropriate grade levels. For example, only high school students who were enrolled in or completed a standards-based Chemistry course took the Chemistry test. All high school students in grades 9-11, though, are required to take the English Language Arts (ELA) tests. Therefore, the graph below shows the percentage of SMHS students who scored at or above the proficient level on the ELA tests compared to county and statewide scores.

SMHS students' ELA standards tests show lower proficiency levels than county-wide or statewide levels.

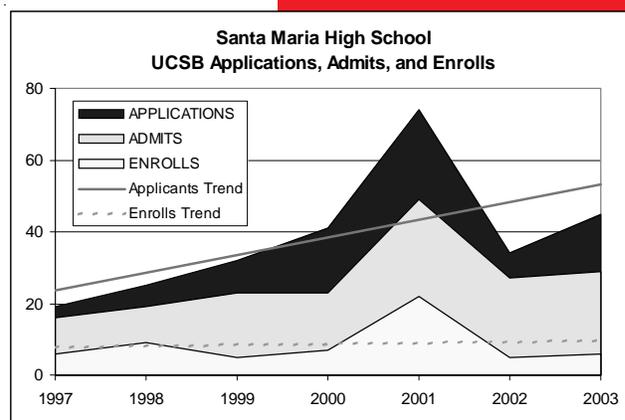
These data indicate that more students within Santa Barbara County score at or above the proficient level in English Language Arts than statewide levels, but SMHS students fall far short of the statewide or county scores.

On the Academic Performance Index (API) scale of 200 to 1000 (based on STAR testing performances and High School Exit Exam pass rates), Santa Maria High School's **2003** Growth API was **571**. (The **2002** API score is not available for comparison, because the proportion of SMHS students not participating in STAR testing in 2002 was greater than 10% of their total student population.) Santa Maria High School's statewide decile rank is a **3**.



UCSB Admission Data

The graph below illustrates the comparative numbers of Santa Maria High School students who have applied to, been admitted to, and enrolled in UCSB from 1997-2003. Trend lines indicate that rates were on a dramatic increase until 2002, when the school suffered a sharp decline in applicant numbers as well as the absence of a UCSB site coordinator. Overall, however, SMHS's admission rate has been consistently much higher (68% on average) than the overall UCSB Freshman admission rate, which generally falls around 50% of applicants.



Generally, the descriptive data presented above demonstrate high poverty rates, historically low standardized testing performances, and low UC eligibility rates for the students of Santa Maria High School. Despite these risk factors, UCSB Outreach, in partnership with the Santa Maria High School community, have seen some recent gains in UCSB applications. What has contributed to these rebounds in performance—and what more can be done to continue these positive trends—are the focal points of the interviews conducted with Santa Maria High School teachers, counselors, and administrators as described in the case study below.

SMHS enjoyed a steady increase in UCSB application and admission rates until 2002, a year that also saw the absence of the UCSB site coordinator.

Interviews were conducted with 3 Santa Maria-Bonita district administrators, 2 high school administrators, 4 high school teachers, one high school counselor, and the elementary district school site coordinator.

Methodology

To share the perspectives of the elementary and high school districts in Santa Maria, interviews of teachers, staff, and administrators from Santa Maria-Bonita and Santa Maria Joint Union High School districts were conducted. The Evaluation Coordinator of Campus Outreach Initiatives spoke with 11 individuals in the Spring of 2003, including:

- 3 elementary district administrators (Assistant Superintendents)
- 2 high school administrators (Assistant Principal and Assistant Superintendent)
- 4 high school teachers (of Math and Science)
- 1 high school counselor
- 1 UCSB Outreach Site Coordinator (responsible for elementary and middle school outreach activities).

The semi-structured interview protocol included questions about the breadth and adequacy of the UCSB Outreach Programs, the nature of the school-university partnership, outcomes associated with outreach, and goals/expectations for future outreach activities. Overall, the participants shared some unique perspectives about the context of outreach, but recurring themes and issues emerged from the interviews that offer insight into the true character of the partnership, personal experience with outreach activities, and ongoing support for continued collaboration. These trends are described and discussed below.

Findings

How UCSB Outreach Meets the Needs of Santa Maria High School and Feeder Schools

Over the last academic year, students, teachers, counselors, and administrators from Santa Maria High School and Santa Maria-Bonita feeder schools have taken advantage of the many resources UCSB Outreach programs have offered. For example, UCSB School-University Partnerships (SUP), Early Academic Outreach (EAO), Mathematics, Engineering, and Science Achievement (MESA), the Office of Campus Outreach Initiatives, and the four UCSB California Subject Matter Projects sponsored multiple SMHS and middle school outreach activities during 2002-2003, including:

- Specialized departmental meetings, articulation meetings, and on-going professional development opportunities including the IIMPaC Project (implemented by the South Coast Writing Project and supported by UCSB Faculty Outreach Grant funds) and the Science Partnership for School Innovation (funded by the National Science Foundation and implemented through the UCSB Materials Research Laboratory and Center for Quantized Electronic Structures—QUEST);
- Partnership schools Principal Meetings hosted at UCSB for dialogue and feedback among administrator colleagues;

- Guest presentations, conferences, and celebrations such as Ed Trust-West's "Raising Student Achievement" Spring 2003 conference, the "UC Success Night" honoring all SMHS students admitted to the University of California, the MESA Awards Banquet, and the UCSB Ambassadors Dinner honoring current UCSB undergraduates from partnership schools;
- Academic development opportunities including workshops, classroom presentations, advisement, and test preparation by EAO's Phil Lawson and Kathy Stiles (EAO Academic Counselors) and MESA's Nash Andrade (MESA Coordinator) and Luis Guerra (MESA Advisor and SMHS science and technology teacher);
- Conferences and parent meetings including *College: Making it Happen!* and others supported by UCSB Outreach and Migrant Education
- AVID ("Advancement Via Individual Determination") enrichment classes for middle schoolers and high schoolers including career exploration, study skills, test preparation, tutorial sessions, note taking, writing techniques, and college application assistance;
- UCSB academic-centered campus visits, various field trips, and MESA UCSB campus events (including MESA Prelims and Final Competitions) for high schoolers and middle schoolers;
- An outreach site coordinator at the high school, Jesús Flores, to supply college counseling, guidance, application support, classroom presentations, and coordination for academic enrichment activities;
- An outreach site coordinator for the Santa Maria-Bonita district, Christina Rogers, to provide similar academic, testing, career exploration, and college preparatory support to the middle schools of Santa Maria;
- Participation in Student Initiated Outreach Programs such as El Congreso and Los Ingenieros.

Staff and educators' perspectives about the impact and effectiveness of these UCSB events and activities are delineated below.

Santa Maria High School Site Coordinator and Student Support Services

SMHS Site Coordinator Jesús Flores

As the Santa Maria High School Site Coordinator, Jesús Flores works to coordinate and integrate UCSB outreach efforts and pre-college services into the fabric of the high school campus. He dedicates individualized attention to students' needs (by assisting with college applications, for example) and to building personal relationships with them and their families (through consistent communication and parent education events). Most importantly, in his role as site coordinator, Jesús works to facilitate the formation of a college-going culture at the school site over time through strong ties with the administration, student body, parents, and community.

When SMHS staff and administrators were asked about their contact with the SMHS site coordinator, they confirmed that Mr. Flores is helpful to students

Santa Maria students and educators participated in a wide range of UCSB Outreach activities throughout the 2002-2003 academic year.

Mr. Flores, SMHS site coordinator, prepares students for college eligibility by making presentations in class, meeting individually with them, and assisting with college applications.

“Consistency is important for the kids—to see the same face and develop a relationship with [the site coordinator]. They need a consistent message and support to make the transition and the decisions they have to make easier.”

**-- Craig Huseth,
SMHS Assistant
Principal**

and staff in many ways: by informing students about college, encouraging them to undertake activities and courses that would make them “competitively eligible,” and supporting students and families in the transition process. When queried about these specific site coordinator efforts, Mr. Craig Huseth, SMHS Assistant Principal stated that Jesús Flores “worked well” at the school. As testament to the good work the site coordinator and other college counselors are doing, Mr. Huseth described the crowded facilities of the school’s college center during any break time: “We just hope the fire marshal doesn’t go in at lunch time!” he quipped. While Santa Maria has suffered from inconsistency in the past with respect to the site coordinator position (at least four individuals have served in the post in the last couple of years), Mr. Huseth sees the situation improving. “Consistency is important for the kids—to see the same face and develop a relationship with him. They need a consistent message and support to make the transition and the decisions they have to make easier,” he emphasized. According to Mr. Huseth, Jesús was able to provide that consistency this year.

Mr. Jim Armstrong, Santa Maria Joint Union High School District Assistant Superintendent, further acknowledged the “big differences” in the number of students accepted to UCSB from SMHS as compared to the other local high school. He attributed this success to the site coordinators and other outreach staff dedicated to SMHS students. “You have one person there that shepherds them” through the system and into the university, he said. That contact with the university representatives, he knows, greatly enhances the students’ competitive eligibility and chances for UCSB acceptances.

Similarly, Mr. Eric Blanco, SMHS Counselor, applauded the work of Mr. Flores. The site coordinator, he said, has a big impact on the students, especially during the second semester when the students receive their college acceptances and have many questions about housing and other campus services. Mr. Blanco appreciated the opportunity to refer students to Jesús for more information about UCSB’s programs including EOP (*Educational Opportunity Program*), Bridge programs and STEP (*Summer Transitional Enrichment Program*), and other services and supports for undergraduates. In addition, Jesús has offered the students many opportunities to visit the UCSB campus.

Since Jesús joined the outreach staff after the end of the application period (in the Winter of the last calendar year), Mr. Blanco anticipates that his presence for a full academic year next year should have an even larger impact on student outcomes. By doing more classroom presentations, assisting the students with their personal statements, and helping them with the application process, he believes that the site coordinator can affect many more students at critical junctures in their high school lives.

When asked whether the site coordinator’s position interferes with or duplicates his work as a high school college counselor, Mr. Blanco attested to the fact that it was not duplicative; rather, it was quite collaborative. Mr. Blanco commended Mr. Flores’ availability on campus and offering of up-to-date information to his colleagues and students. He described how every year, the high school offers a Financial Aid Night for families in addition to their

College Night which includes representatives from the University of California, the Cal State system, and community colleges. Jesús was instrumental in providing current information in addition to classroom presentations about financial aid. “Having someone on campus makes the process easier,” he said. In addition, in Mr. Blanco’s work through AVID, he encounters many students who want to be in a college preparatory program. But there is not enough space or funding to accommodate all students within AVID, so Mr. Blanco refers many students to Mr. Flores for other program and opportunities. “With Jesús, we have a bigger net to catch more students,” Mr. Blanco confirmed. As a result, he has seen an increase in the number of students who want to go on to the university.

Mr. Blanco acknowledged that the fluctuation in the site coordinators at SMHS probably was the largest detriment to SMHS students who graduated the previous year. He referred to the large drop in the number of students who applied and were admitted/enrolled to UCSB from Santa Maria High in the Fall of 2002 (as compared to the large increases in the number of students in Fall 2001). The previous site coordinator, Eric Cota, had left mid-year, and the position was left unfilled. “I think that it takes a while for students to build a bond and trust,” he said. Now that Mr. Flores has been in place since the late Fall, Mr. Blanco recognizes that it is easier for the students to ask Mr. Flores questions and for him to make an impact on the students in his classroom presentations. “His credibility has increased,” Mr. Blanco confirmed. When there is no full-time site coordinator, however, the students’ momentum declines. But Mr. Blanco has great hope for an increase in the number of college admissions for next year, since Mr. Flores has built a strong rapport with a large group of juniors (entering as seniors next year). He believes that this cohort of students has a great interest in the University of California, and that the numbers of SMHS students who apply and are admitted to the UC system “will gradually come back” to the peak witnessed in 2001.

Mr. Blanco endorsed the work of the UCSB site coordinator as a “huge help to the whole process.” Due to his access to information about fee waivers, housing, and field trips, Jesús was seen by staff and students as an instrumental contact who could provide important details and/or get immediate responses from university officials. Mr. Blanco also alluded to the changing attitude of the school toward college-going. “We’re starting to see the benefits,” he suggested, attributing the culture change to the school-wide promotion of college through events such as “medal day” (where all students admitted to four-year universities are bestowed a medal during a luncheon to wear with their cap and gown). In addition, the SMHS Principal announced daily the names of students who were admitted to college while also promoting the different pathways to college.

When asked if these changes permeated to the families of the students, Eric admitted that there was still “some resistance to the students leaving their homes, but for the most part, their siblings see their success, and the families are proud of the students’ continuing education.” By speaking in Spanish and participating in many parent meetings, both Mr. Blanco and Mr. Flores have increased the confidence and sense of safety of the parents. “Mostly, the parents are concerned about ‘Will they be OK?’ They are establishing a new

“With Jesús [Flores, site coordinator], we have a bigger net to catch more students.”
-- Eric Blanco,
SMHS Counselor

By speaking in Spanish to the parents and participating in many parent meetings, Eric Blanco (SMHS Counselor) and Jesús Flores (UCSB Site Coordinator) have increased the parents’ confidence and sense of safety regarding their children’s college life.

Outreach support services were credited with increasing student (and teacher and parent) awareness of resources, providing support and information, increasing course rigor, and enhancing students' success in getting accepted to prestigious universities.

tradition, so they fear what will happen,” Mr. Blanco explained. The AVID program at SMHS has also provided support and information, and the parents of AVID students are quite happy to have UCSB representatives available on campus for their additional questions concerning campus life.

Student and Parent Support Services

When queried specifically about the academic support available to SMHS students from UCSB Outreach programs, administrators, counselors, and teachers provided their perspectives about the offered programs, resulting student (and parent) outcomes, and service gaps. They highlighted the positive collaboration between many pre-college support programs (such as EAOP, AVID, and MESA), but they also recommended additional, consistent offerings and greater UCSB visibility on campus.

Mr. Craig Huseh, SMHS Assistant Principal, recognized that the UCSB Outreach programs have helped to promote and publicize the services of the SMHS College Center, so that now many more teachers and students are aware of its existence and resources. In fact, the high school’s AVID program serves over 250 students currently, and the AVID counselor is located within the College Center, too. Through the combined efforts of the college counselors (Eric Blanco and AVID’s Cindy Moreno) and UCSB, the high school and the outreach programs were able to assist students beyond the AVID participants with guidance, personal support, financial aid information, and application assistance. As a result, Mr. Huseh recognized that more SMHS students were accepted to prestigious colleges and universities across the country, including UC Berkeley, Columbia, Stanford, as well as UCSB “with the assistance of committed adults and teachers in their clubs and organizations.” In addition, Mr. Huseh believes that the SMHS-UCSB partnership assisted in increasing the rigor of the high school’s curriculum, including an increase in the number of AP courses offered at the school (since 2000, six additional AP courses have been added).

When asked about how outreach may have assisted parents in supporting their children’s quest for higher education, Mr. Huseh briefly reflected on the demographics of the student population at SMHS. With over 3,600 students—approximately 20% who have college-going aspirations, it was critical to add personnel to the College Center. He confirmed that having counselors and university representatives available to answer questions (in English and Spanish) and provide resources greatly helped the high school community. Furthermore, SMHS has seen increases in the number of parent nights offered, the assortment of schools with representatives available for college nights, and the amount of information disseminated about financial aid opportunities.

Mr. David Mann, SMHS science teacher, also reflected on the work of AVID at SMHS and its success in getting students involved despite the economy and the social difficulties of promoting university enrollment to its target population. Mr. Mann believes that it would be greatly advantageous for UCSB to “tap into the AVID folks and give them support.” By investing in the core group of students who have remained committed through their years of participation, he believes UCSB could be very effective and demonstrate great outcomes. “That’s where I’d put my money and effort!” He enumerated the outcomes

that have since resulted from outreach endeavors, including an increase in the number of students enrolling in AP courses and the number of students going to four-year universities. While he is not completely sure of the statistics, anecdotally he also believes that there are more students acquiring fluency in English—a language, he clarified, that may be their second or even *third* language learned. He mentioned this outcome because although he no longer teaches language learners in sheltered courses, he has recognized some of his former 9th grade EL students in his *regular* classes (as juniors). Mr. Mann has also seen an increase in the number of female students in advanced science and math courses, and he has witnessed many more students choosing advanced courses to lead them to a university. He believes this shows great courage on the part of the students—especially the language learners who must overcome language deficits while participating in a class with very advanced literacy requirements. “They are gutsy kids!” Mr. Mann believes that the students now “see education as an out. They go ahead and try. Word is getting out to them to go ahead and try,” despite the fact that challenging themselves to rigorous coursework may affect their grade point averages. Mr. Mann attributes this change to individual staff (of the school and of outreach) as well as to the math department. The department made a concerted effort to have Spanish-speaking math and science teachers (for 9th graders, especially) and tutors available before school every day. The math department is, according to Mr. Mann, “making a real effort to improve instruction from the standpoint of the literacy of the teacher.”

Mr. Eric Blanco concurred, also relaying his belief that the students are increasing in their confidence and courage to apply to more competitive and distant schools. “They are flapping their wings and going farther away,” he confirmed, to universities such as UC Berkeley and UC San Diego. Their fear has reduced, and they no longer feel the need to stay close to home. In addition, according to Mr. Blanco, the SMHS community now has a record of successful students in universities, taking leadership roles at places like Berkeley. That has a great impact on the motivation of high school students, he said, giving them role models and confidence that encourages them to think, “If that person can do it, I can!” Furthermore, Mr. Blanco recognized that simultaneously, the students’ presence on those campuses have helped to improve the diversity of the college environment. Mr. Blanco highlighted the admissions data of SMHS students, which shows that 110 students were admitted to a four-year university for the Fall 2003 freshmen class. Of these 110 students, 30 were AVID participants, and 30 were AVID mentors. In addition, many were participants of MESA and/or Upward Bound—so UCSB outreach programs are well represented among the college-going cohorts. “On average,” he said, “most of the students are going [to college].” In a few cases, family or financial circumstances may lead the students to a community college first, but Mr. Blanco believes a majority of the students are going to the university. For instance, about a dozen students are planning to go to Berkeley, a dozen are going to UCLA, four are going to UCSB, and others are going to private universities such as Columbia and Stanford.

Recommendations to Improve Student Services

While staff and administrators were grateful for the support services offered through UCSB and other pre-college preparation programs, they recognized the

As a result of outreach representatives on campus and their encouragement, teachers recognized that students are more apt to challenge themselves with advanced courses.

“They are flapping their wings and going farther away [to college].”
-- Eric Blanco,
SMHS Counselor

High School teachers strongly endorsed the idea of UCSB offering remediation programs to assist junior high students in acquiring the necessary skills in reading, writing, language, math, and science to be successful in high school.

“I think we have a lot of courses that could be on the [UC course approval] list but aren’t.”

**-- Eric Blanco,
SMHS Counselor
on the need to
increase the
availability of UC-
approved college
prep courses at
SMHS**

critical need for more offerings. Mr. Riccardo Magni, SMHS Science Teacher, conceded that the solutions to the complicated problems at low performing schools are complex, but he strongly endorsed the idea of additional remediation. “Kids are hopelessly behind,” he lamented, “and they spend their 9th grade year catching up.” He believes that the students lose valuable content learning and show a lack of academic progress in the 7th and 8th grades, but they continue to be advanced to high school despite their deficiencies. As a result, he suggested that UCSB offer summer programs to facilitate the students’ transition from junior high school to high school, emphasizing that they need not only science programs but also basic skill building in reading, writing, language, and mathematics.

Likewise, Mr. Chris Odell, SMHS math teacher, sees as a major issue the preparation of students in Algebra in the 8th grade, where teachers with little or no background in mathematics are teaching courses. Unfortunately, Mr. Odell said, the result is often times students are placed in Geometry who are seriously lacking Algebra skills—deficits often not discovered until they attempt to complete Algebra II. While tutoring is offered after school, the biggest issue is one of placement, Mr. Odell confirmed, and the fact that junior high schools are pressured to pass students without proficiency in the necessary mathematics skills. But, “If they are not ready for Algebra in the 8th grade,” he cautioned, “they may never be ready.” He described how some students just never make progress in their high school mathematics courses—initially enrolling in Math A (general, non-college prep mathematics at the 7th grade standards), not passing, not participating in extra workshops or tutoring services, and taking the course two to three times throughout their high school career. Similarly, students who are participants in the junior high school’s AVID program are usually “automatically placed in Algebra” since they are considered “college prep” students, but they may not have the adequate skills to successfully complete the course. Thus, he recommended that the 7th and 8th grade students (and their teachers) needed preparation to assist the middle schoolers in making a successful transition to Algebra. As a CPM instructor, Mr. Odell has worked with junior high schools to offer suitable training to their teachers and AVID instructors, with strategies to increase student competence and performance.

Mr. Eric Blanco also detailed additional instances where he believed UCSB could have a greater presence on campus and put more effort into follow-through regarding academic development services. “Sometimes we don’t get as much as the other schools because of the distance issue,” he said, referring to UCSB’s offering of PSAT preparation only once versus on an on-going basis, and to the summer science camps that are available only to students who can get transportation to UCSB. During the past year, Phil Lawson and Kathy Stiles offered assistance with personal statements at the high school, which Eric referred to as “really huge” in terms of its impact on staff and students. Yet Mr. Blanco would like to see UCSB representatives providing additional presentations to clubs, classes, and in workshops to increase their visibility on the Santa Maria campus.

Mr. Blanco also suggested that SMHS may benefit from additional assistance in getting their college prep courses UC-approved. He declared, “I think we

have a lot of courses that could be on the list but aren't." Teachers need more information, he suggested, on how to make that happen—perhaps provided in a staff development day or workshop. Mr. Blanco believes that a workshop focusing on the exact wording and essential characteristics of the application for UC approval, for example, might greatly benefit the high school. He pointed toward other schools that have photography or ceramics courses on the UC-approved list, but SMHS has not been successful in getting many visual/performing art courses approved. In addition, he would like to see the students receive credit for their participation in outreach workshops and classes. Currently, AVID constitutes 11 classes in the SMHS master calendar, but due to budget constraints, no additional AVID courses will be offered next year, and only the senior class is an official "college prep" elective offering. Yet Eric sees that there is "great success in the AVID students going off to college from that program," and he would like to offer all AVID students, in response, an incentive or reward for their participation. He believes these may be especially fruitful areas on which UCSB Outreach, high school department heads, and district personnel could collaborate to make effective changes in the course offerings.

In addition, while SMHS receives adequate SAT preparation support, Mr. Blanco recommended that UCSB consider increasing preparation workshops for the ACT—since the school counselors encourage students to take both. In addition, in terms of the field trips and campus visits, Mr. Blanco spoke with Mr. Flores and Mr. Andrade about the possibility of expanding the visits to the UCSB and Cal Poly campus to incorporate a "fun activity" such as a basketball game or special performance. According to Eric, this kind of insight into the social life of the university would "take the trip to the next level" and allow the students to experience the complete university atmosphere—adding something "to grab their interest over the tour and a trip to the bookstore." For example, he noted, Cal Poly offered students a basketball game and overnight visit in the dorms, and this trip had a "big impact on the kids."

Finally, Mr. Blanco commended the UC materials that relay information about the university and the admissions process to the public, but he also recognized a need to have more materials available in Spanish.

In closing, Mr. Blanco also affirmed that this year's outreach services were provided by a very consistent and reliable group from UCSB (including Nash Andrade and Jesús Flores), Allan Hancock College, and Cal Poly. Thus, the counselors were able to "route" the students to the appropriate representatives for the information and support they needed (for the UC, CSU, and CCC systems). "It worked out really well," he confirmed. "This year, a lot of kids were in the College Center. In fact, we're growing out of our space. There are a lot of students requesting services and information."

MESA in Santa Maria

The UCSB Mathematics, Engineering and Science Achievement (MESA) program offers services to students of Santa Maria High School as well as its feeder middle schools (El Camino, Fesler, and Arellanes Junior High Schools). The MESA program goals and objectives include (but are not limited to): (1)

"This year, a lot of kids were in the College Center. In fact, we're growing out of our space. There are a lot of students requesting services and information."

**-- Eric Blanco,
SMHS Counselor**

“[MESA] has been real strong. Not as strong as in the past, but there are new people working with it, and they’re part of a new group.”

-- Luis Guerra,
SMHS Teacher and
MESA Advisor

“Nash [Andrade, MESA Coordinator] was out here on a regular basis and a great support for the college center. He also brought his engineering and math expertise to students who had many questions.”

-- Eric Blanco,
SMHS Counselor

promoting interest and awareness in math, engineering, and science subjects and careers; (2) increasing college awareness; (3) increasing student confidence, communication skills, leadership, and self initiative; and (4) increasing PSAT/SAT and other standardized test scores, student grades, family educational standards, and UC eligibility and application rates.

Almost all of the educators interviewed were well aware of the efforts of the MESA program in Santa Maria. When asked about the MESA program at the high school, Assistant Principal Huseth described their initial difficulty in finding a suitable high school faculty member to take on the responsibility as campus advisor. As a result, the club was not actually “up-and-running” until October or November, but he was impressed that MESA was still able to host a banquet at the end of the school year that acknowledged about 25 seniors for their outstanding participation during the challenging times. The MESA club is, according to Mr. Huseth, “absolutely building in strength.” Much of the effort is due to the support of Nash Andrade, affirmed Mr. Huseth: “He did a great job in keeping it going, but an on-campus advisor is important.”

Mr. Luis Guerra, a first-year Santa Maria High School science and technology teacher, was finally persuaded to take on the role of MESA advisor in the Fall. When asked about the revived MESA club at SMHS, he said, “It’s been real strong. Not as strong as in the past, but there are new people working with it, and they’re part of a new group.” Mr. Guerra described how, with the loss of the MESA advisors last year (before his acceptance of the position), the students participating in the club “had to be advisors to themselves.” While it was a difficult situation that could have weakened the club, Mr. Guerra also recognized the benefit of the ordeal: “It was a leadership experience for the students.” The club began with approximately 40 members, but these eventually dwindled to about one dozen active members, mostly upper classmen who “stuck around with us.”

Mr. Guerra acknowledged the support of the UCSB MESA staff in assisting with the on-going sponsorship of the SMHS MESA club. Nash Andrade, he said, “has been great. He spends a lot of time up here; keeps us up to date with events.” Mr. Blanco, SMHS Counselor, also commended the work of Nash Andrade, who is “out here on a regular basis and a great support for the college center.” Mr. Andrade, in addition to providing services and supports through the MESA club, “also brought his engineering and math expertise to students who had many questions” about various college majors. Since each counselor at the high school and in outreach has his/her own area of expertise, Mr. Blanco believes the SMHS counselors try to refer to the appropriate individual who can help the students the most. Similarly, Mr. Andrade referred students to Mr. Blanco when they had questions about graduation requirements, their schedules, and other high school issues. “The communication and collaboration are really good between us,” Mr. Blanco affirmed. To illustrate the successful coordination between the various pre-college academic programs, Mr. Blanco described the impressive collaborative efforts of AVID, MESA, EAOP, and Cal-SOAP during SMHS’ recent Spring Break. They hosted almost one hundred SMHS students and staff (including chaperones) on an overnight excursion to the UC Santa Cruz and Berkeley campuses. “It was a very positive trip with representatives from each program,” Eric said. “The

trip was smooth,” he continued, “and many students made their decisions [about college enrollment] based on that trip.” Next year, Mr. Blanco looks forward to more collaboration among the various outreach programs.

With respect to positive student outcomes as a result of MESA involvement, Mr. Guerra was proud to acknowledge that two (out of the three) speakers at the SMHS graduation were MESA students. “The kids are getting out in front, taking leadership roles,” he suggested, as a result of their participation in the club. When asked about what benefits he might have recognized academically, Mr. Guerra verified that MESA students from SMHS were admitted and enrolling in multiple universities—from Cal Poly San Luis Obispo to UCSB and others. In addition, he believes that the students are more conscientious about what is available to them “as freshmen and sophomores—not waiting until the very end.” He contends that the students are thinking more about their opportunities after high school. They are also attending more workshops: he sees their active participation in the college center and the assistance they seek for application and scholarship information. There is much more help available to the students now, too.

When assessing the work of MESA at SMHS, one faculty member was less enthusiastic, however. “MESA is not happening at this school,” a teacher lamented. He recognized that the club had great difficulty in encouraging faculty involvement, and while he heard that there would be an exciting new robotics program offered this year, “It just never happened.” Instead, the teacher witnessed students busy with other projects such as rocketry, bridge building, and egg drops. Furthermore, the teacher believes that the students involved in athletics, ASB, and AP classes cannot afford to be out of class, so participation in AVID or MESA is of lower priority. He asserted that the students’ alertness to SAT scores, AP classes, and GPAs force them, unfortunately, to make difficult choices between participating in enrichment activities or additional core academic courses. “I don’t see a future for it quite honestly,” said the teacher of the MESA program. “There’s no bang for your buck. MESA is not helping with their grades or AP courses.” Because of the students’ lack of extracurricular time, he believes that only AVID may be salvageable. “The students can participate before school—and it helps them with their homework, keeping them on track academically, and with advocacy,” he stated. “MESA is knocking themselves out to try to make it work,” he acknowledged, but in his opinion, the program does not seem to have as much promise on their campus.

Mr. Guerra concedes that while services and resources are available to all students, he thinks that “not as many students take advantage of the support as I think would be ideal.” Furthermore, while UCSB makes an effort to “get the word out and get teachers more involved,” he suggested that there needs to be an improved working relationship between the university and the SMHS teaching staff. When asked how UCSB might facilitate this improvement, Mr. Guerra referred to the classroom resources that the Cal Poly programs provide. He said that student teachers often visit the SMHS classrooms from Cal Poly to observe the class, teach lessons to the students, and collaborate with the special education teachers. “If they [the SMHS teachers] see the person as a teacher as well, the teachers are more likely to accept them in the

“The [MESA] kids are getting out in front, taking leadership roles.”

**-- Luis Guerra,
SMHS Teacher and
MESA Advisor**

Luis Guerra, MESA Advisor, recommended that UCSB improve their working relationship with SMHS teaching staff by making more regular appearances in their classrooms.

**Christina Rogers,
UCSB Site
Coordinator for Santa
Maria-Bonita
Elementary School
District, offered
middle school
students, parents,
and teachers a host
of outreach activities
from academic
support and
conferences to field
trips and parent
presentations.**

class.” Rather than offering teachers “one-shot” outreach activities, Mr. Guerra suggested that UCSB have a more regular appearance in the SMHS classrooms to increase their familiarity and promote buy-in. Mr. Blanco concurred, recognizing great benefits in also bringing more outreach workshops and activities to the local Santa Maria area (rather than only providing them in Santa Barbara). For example, some of the MESA activities (such as competitions) could occur *locally*, and this would increase the exposure of UC to a wider local audience.

In closing, when asked what additional support he might need in his role as MESA advisor next year, Mr. Guerra affirmed that an earlier start in the year would alleviate many of the problems he had (from starting late in the year as a new advisor). He would also benefit greatly from a “map of MESA activities” that could increase his knowledge about the spectrum of programs and activities they offer. “It felt like every time I turned around, there was something else,” he explained. He would like to be better prepared for the upcoming opportunities offered by MESA—and to be more proactive in his involvement with the students.

Santa Maria-Bonita School Site Coordinator Services

Christina Rogers, as site coordinator for Santa Maria-Bonita’s middle schools, offered students, their parents, and teachers a host of outreach events and opportunities during the 2002-2003 academic year—from academic support and conferences to field trips and parent presentations.

First, she engaged all 7th and 8th grade students and teachers in school-wide classroom presentations. She also regularly visited AVID classes once a week during their tutorial session to reinforce the presentation, assist with study skills and learning styles, do mock registrations, recruit for participation in EAOP, and administer the “ACT Explore” exam (an educational planning and assessment exam developed by the makers of ACT for 8th and 9th graders) on a pilot basis. In addition, and with the help of Partnership School Initiative Funds supported by the Office of Campus Outreach Initiatives, Ms. Rogers helped to coordinate a three-day field trip for Arellanes Junior High School students to visit Sacramento State University, UC Davis, Stanford, and the State Capitol building in Sacramento (as well as see a Dodgers/Giants game). Twenty-six students and their chaperones made the trip after the school raised \$2,000 for their support—and Ms. Rogers was able to fundraise another \$1,000. Ms. Rogers also coordinated four trips for Fesler Middle School students to visit Cal Poly San Luis Obispo, UCSB, and Cuesta College (for a girls’ conference). At El Camino Junior High, she participated in their career faire. As a university representative, Ms. Rogers presented information about her position and college-going requirements to students as they rotated through the various classrooms, each hosting a different individual with a different career. In addition, she participated in El Camino’s “STAR talks,” where she reviewed the students’ previous scores on the standardized tests, helped to prepare them for the new year’s tests, and validate the tests’ importance. Finally, Ms. Rogers spent a good amount of time recruiting for and coordinating large events such as the EAOP-sponsored Junior High Conference, the *College: Making It Happen!* conference, and the UC Success Nights. She

also presented information at parent meetings and escorted the Migrant Education parents to Cal Poly's Open House. In any spare time she has, Christina also acknowledged that she assists with anything that Santa Maria High School (or high school site coordinator, Jesús Flores) needs.

Administrators of the Santa Maria-Bonita district testified to the high value and impact of these outreach activities on their students and families and to the outstanding work of Ms. Rogers in meeting their community's needs. Mr. Art Delgadillo, Coordinator of the school district and direct supervisor of Christina Rogers, described Ms. Rogers as "an outstanding employee and representative of the UC system." She is diligent in her follow-up to the responsibilities she shares with the school district as well as with UCSB, he said, and she has been guided by a service agreement that acts as a "road map" for her scope of work. Mr. Delgadillo realizes that Christina is "only as successful as the support she gets from the administration," so he has taken an active role in the supervision and support of her position. Mr. Delgadillo complimented Ms. Roger's work as well-organized, reliable, and committed. "She keeps appointments, rarely misses a day, and is quick to learn," he said. In addition, "She is young and personable—the teachers and students like her a lot." Furthermore, Mr. Delgadillo has recognized that Ms. Rogers has a deep understanding about the intent and breadth of the outreach program and her target population. "When I talk to her, she is serious and diligent about applying her knowledge, but she is not inflexible. She will do above and beyond to gain the trust of the staff and students."

Similarly, Mr. Phil Alvarado, Assistant Superintendent, declared that having Ms. Rogers as "a full-time person here has made a world of difference." He described the site coordinator position as "an innovative way to increase parent involvement," since "not only kids need increased exposure to the university, but parents, too." Mr. Alvarado emphasized that the audience for K-8 outreach is the students, but "also, inevitably, the parents." He talked about their needs for information concerning what is involved in the pursuit of higher education and what is in store for their students. Previously, the site coordinator position was shared with the high school district, Mr. Alvarado explained. While it was a positive experience to have a university representative for the K-12 schools in Santa Maria, he believes that the elementary district was quite accommodating to the high school in terms of the sharing arrangements—especially during peak times such as the late Fall (when college applications are due) and Spring (during standardized testing periods). With Ms. Rogers as a full-time outreach coordinator in the elementary district, Mr. Alvarado believes the district is benefiting from an individual with experience in outreach (she previously worked for Sacramento State's outreach efforts) and with a focus on their students and parents. He has asked her to concentrate most of her efforts on their four junior high schools and to collaborate with key staff there involved in AVID, Cal-SOAP, MESA, and other outreach programs. Mr. Alvarado's goal for the collaboration is to "bridge outreach efforts so we don't have a fragmented, segmented MESA, Upward Bound, Cal-SOAP." He would like to see all of the efforts connected and "without being competitive in spirit."

Mr. Alvarado emphasized the support to parents in the community as a highlight

"Christina Rogers [UCSB Site Coordinator to Santa-Bonita Elementary District] is an outstanding employee and representative of the UC system."
-- Art Delgadillo, SM-B District Coordinator

"The site coordinator position is an innovative way to increase parent involvement. Not only kids need increased exposure to the university, but parents, too."
-- Phil Alvarado, SM-B District Assistant Superintendent

Parent committees such as the Parent Advisory Council and the English Learner Advisory Committee utilized Christina Rogers to address issues and opportunities and to assist in their presentations and reports.

“When I see that [the students] are concerned [with their course selections for 9th grade], I know they’ve got it.”
-- Christina Rogers,
SM-B Site
Coordinator, on
students’ realization of
the importance of A-G
courses in high school

of the recent outcomes of the UCSB outreach programs. Since the Santa Maria-Bonita district is home to Title I schools and Migrant Region 22, there exist mandated parent committees such as the Parent Advisory Council and the English Learner Advisory Committee. All of these committees, he said, have utilized Christina Rogers to address issues and opportunities and to assist in their presentations and reports. Thus, Ms. Rogers has delivered many presentations to their groups and has been available to consult with the parents to offer information and services. Mr. Alvarado reported that the coordinators who are invited to Ms. Rogers’ presentations all gave her great reviews. He believes that due to her fluency in Spanish and personal history (being born and raised in Mexico), Ms. Rogers is welcomed in the community and identified as “one of them.”

And while Mr. Delgadillo believes that it is unfair to expect *immediate* results from the outreach programs, he did acknowledge Ms. Rogers’ important strides in meeting the goals they set together this year. “In her first year,” he said, “all I asked was that she be visible, be dependable, learn the programs, be engaged and welcomed at the schools.” Mr. Delgadillo recommended that Christina focus her efforts on getting to know the teachers, the counselors, the MESA advisors, the high school staff, and the principals—and in finding “one champion on the campus” to support her outreach efforts. In this year, he said, Christina has increased the number of class presentations delivered to 7th and 8th grade students, including topics such as the system of higher education, admissions requirements, and Early Academic Outreach Program information. She has also implemented a mock registration with the 8th grade AVID students to support their proper placements in competitive, high school college prep courses. In all, he believes, she has “carried out to the best of her ability the service agreement.”

For her own part, Ms. Rogers has recognized many positive outcomes as a result of UCSB outreach in the middle schools, especially for her 8th grade students. While the 7th graders “just take in the information,” she saw that the A-G presentations (on UC admission requirements) that she gave to the 8th graders “completely shattered their misconceptions.” In particular, she witnessed students becoming upset when they finally understood their predicaments during Ms. Rogers’ mock registrations. As the students were guided in their plan of a competitive four-year high school schedule, she became aware of their newfound seriousness. Many of the students had already registered for their courses as incoming 9th graders, but the A-G lesson helped them to realize that their selection of their elective courses were not good—they were not college preparatory, UC-approved electives. “When I see that they are concerned, I know they’ve got it,” Ms. Rogers explained. It is this cognitive dissonance—the students’ realization that they have made bad choices—that helps the students to understand the significance of the issues. She tries to encourage them, though, that they have the power to change their situation—to call their high school counselor, or have their parents call, and insist upon being placed in college prep courses.

Ms. Rogers also observed students making more sophisticated judgments about the colleges they visited during their field trips, and she believes these campus visits impacted on their decision making. She remembers two young girls

walking on the Sacramento State campus saying, “Oh yeah, this is the one for me!” This elated Ms. Rogers, who knew that those students would now have a vision of college in their minds that could carry them through the hurdles. In contrast, when the students visited Cal Poly, they seemed to be more uncomfortable in the campus environment. She recognized that the students were closely observing the social atmosphere, and they were trying to assess all of the information in serious ways.

Next year, Ms. Rogers and Mr. Delgadillo have discussed a few enhancements they would like to see in her work scope. The plan is that she will go into the 4th-6th grade classrooms to present basic information on college in one or two of the elementary schools (as a pilot). She will also expand the “ACT Explore” program to administer to more 8th graders. In addition, she plans to provide Parent-School Partnership Workshops based on the training she received from MALDEF (through the *ENLACE y Avance* project). Ms. Rogers has an entire notebook full of training resources dedicated to 16 different topics, and she plans to focus on at least six major lessons with the parents, including: parent-teacher conferences, accessing student files, interpreting student records, and understanding/navigating the district and school board structure. In addition, she plans to take the parents on a campus tour of UCSB.

When asked whether she had recognized any gaps in the programs offered, Ms. Rogers said she had only experienced challenges in providing materials geared to a junior high school audience. While the *College: Making It Happen* booklet is available, there are limited supplies of other suitable materials that she can make available to the classes she visits. Most are just not age-appropriate, or they may be geared toward parents. Ms. Rogers also recognized that she had learned much this year about the most effective delivery mechanisms for outreach in the middle schools: the goals of the Early Academic Outreach Program (and other outreach programs such as MESA) are best realized through work in the classroom during the regular school day—not after school or at lunch hours. Students need to be engaged, and it is only during this mandatory class time that you can get their attention, she explained. Plus, both the teachers and the students seem to enjoy the break from their general curriculum, and teachers seem willing to incorporate the outreach information into their coursework. The support of the teachers toward her efforts have been positive, Ms. Rogers verified, and the teachers do not see her as much of an intrusion. This is a relief to her, since Ms. Rogers experienced a more negative reaction in her outreach work up in northern California, where teachers suspected she was really acting as an agent of the principal to supervise them. In contrast, most of the schools in Santa Maria have been very open and accessible to her, and Ms. Rogers is enjoying good relationships and rapport with the administration and staff.

When asked whether there were any gaps in the UCSB outreach programs or remaining problems, Mr. Alvarado could not identify any regarding the programming. He did recognize, however, that the training and experience that UCSB supports for the site coordinator positions “makes these positions ‘promote-able’ for anyone looking for a next level position. It’s a good training ground.” He documented how the first site coordinator in Santa Maria gained

Next year, Christina Rogers plans to present college information to elementary school students, to expand the administration of the “ACT Explore” exam, and to provide workshops for parents on a variety of topics.

The Santa Maria school districts focused many efforts on *articulation*: working together to develop vertically-coherent, standards-based curriculum and to ease the students' transitions to upper grade levels.

“Kelley [Baeza] and Tom [Ostwald] and others *come to us*. They frequently come to us, even at 7AM on a Friday!”

-- Ann Kemper, SM-B Assistant Superintendent, on the importance of partnership in the articulation efforts

a position as Director of the Central Coast Cal-SOAP Council, and Eric Blanco, the next site coordinator, became a certified counselor at the high school. Thus, he anticipates that “Christina’s tenure here is probably very limited.” He realizes that in her position, she is receiving excellent training and interactions with school, parents, and students—and this makes her “very marketable” for other educational opportunities.

Professional Development for Santa Maria Educators

Professional development offered to the Santa Maria school districts in the 2002-2003 academic year by UCSB outreach programs included services offered through the four California Subject Matter Projects (including institutes and follow-up activities in the content areas of Mathematics, Science, History-Social Science, and Writing) and the School-University Partnerships Program (SUP), which supported numerous vertical articulation events for teachers and administrators.

Santa Maria Articulation Efforts

Vertical articulation is a practice designed to promote a more coherent educational system by linking the different levels throughout the students’ K-12 educational experiences. The goal is for teachers and administrators from elementary, middle, and high school settings to work together in the development of vertically-coherent curriculum to ease the transition to elevated levels and create seamless, standards-based instruction.

When queried about the professional development opportunities that UCSB afforded to the Santa Maria school districts, many administrators and teachers focussed their comments on the districts’ practices of articulation and collaboration supported by UCSB Outreach. Ms. Ann Kemper, Director of Curriculum and Instruction in the Santa Maria-Bonita School District, affirmed that UCSB’s support of articulation included attendance at meetings (Tom Ostwald and Kelley Baeza, Director and Assistant Director of UCSB’s SUP, are “regulars” at the district articulation meetings), funding to support facilitator stipends, and funding to cover costs for attendees (and their substitutes). According to Ms. Kemper, in fact, one of the most important qualities of the articulation support is UCSB’s regular attendance: “Kelley and Tom and others *come to us*. They frequently come to us, even at 7AM on a Friday!” Ms. Kemper reflected on the various instances when Kelley Baeza attended the administrative articulation meetings: she was there to “see, listen, and determine how UCSB can support the endeavors.” Another important ingredient to the success of the articulation meetings is that there is an assigned facilitator, a role which is currently filled by Ms. Kemper. In her role, she ensures that the meetings are facilitated, the logistics are set, and the agendas are organized. “That’s what keeps it going,” she affirmed. “You need someone to take that role.” This is often not considered a necessity, but with someone designated as the facilitator, the articulation has been more consistent, organized, and sustained.

Assistant Superintendent Phil Alvarado agreed, also emphasizing that the presence of UCSB SUP at the meetings was quite “commendable.” He acknowledged that Tom Ostwald and Kelley Baeza listen to the administrators’

and teachers' concerns, collaborate and interact with Cal Poly San Luis Obispo's coordinators, and offer their services and insight when and where needed. Through the articulation meetings, he said, the teachers and administrators have discussed and developed strategies for increasing the integration of content standards across the curriculum, and they have set the California High School Exit Exam (CAHSEE) as a priority focal point for their discussions. Articulation is such a priority for the district, he illustrated, that it is "a standing item on the agenda" during their joint board meetings (four times a year) with their surrounding districts (both Santa Maria-Bonita and Santa Maria Joint Union High School Districts), Guadalupe, and Orcutt. In fact, during his report to the four boards recently, Mr. Alvarado said that the high school board members responded with this comment: "Many of us have histories with working with unified school districts, but you have greater articulation than most unified school districts!"

The high school administrators shared similar praise and pride about the articulation efforts within and between the Santa Maria districts. Assistant Principal Huseth affirmed, "Because we are not a unified district, content articulation is very important to help the students make a seamless transition from 8th to 9th grade core content areas." He applauded the efforts so far, claiming, "This year and last year in my mind—and I've been involved in articulation for years—have been the best years of articulation we've had!" Mr. Huseth believes the articulation meetings sponsored by UCSB have increased the positive professional relationships in the district and have encouraged smoother transitions in math, English, and science curriculum areas. Most importantly, the teachers are "talking and working with each other." Assistant Superintendent Jim Armstrong concurred, describing the unique situation of the district: "All of those junior high schools have one district to feed in to. What seems simple, really isn't. So articulation with those schools is so vital." He later continued, "We're completely beholden to what happens to the students in their first nine years," describing the bleak situation that ensues when a 9th grader enters with elementary-level reading skills. "No matter how you slice it, articulation is our first priority."

The administrators also revealed their perspectives about the outcomes of the articulation activities. Ms. Kemper confirmed that the articulation groups have routinely monitored their progress toward their goals—"a very important aspect frequently overlooked," she said. She believes that much progress was made on curriculum alignment, and she personally observed 7th and 8th grade teachers in discussions with high school math, social studies, and English teachers. These discussions also helped to create a greater awareness of the grade-level content and the content standards and to increase the accuracy of placements. Ms. Kemper acknowledged that placement is an especially important issue in Santa Maria High School, where there is "no wiggle room with 4,000 kids. If a student is misplaced, they may not be able to move." Over the years, Ms. Kemper has seen gradual changes to encourage more proper placements in high school courses. In particular, she noted, EL students have been placed in more appropriate classes to address their needs—and not below their academic level. They have also worked very hard to ensure that students are placed properly in algebra or geometry (or *not*), depending on the readiness of the 8th grade student. In addition, Ms. Kemper said that the

**"Because we are not a unified district, content articulation is very important to help the students make a seamless transition from 8th to 9th grade core content areas."
-- Craig Huseth
SMHS Assistant
Principal**

Articulation efforts were credited with increasing teachers' awareness of content standards, improving the accuracy of student placements in high school courses, addressing the strengths and needs of EL students, and facilitating the transition process for students in Special Education.

“My sense is that some problems have been addressed, such as student placement, but we’re fighting the year-round school issue with the middle schools. Having articulation is hard when staff are gone. You have a hard time believing there will be follow through.”

**-- SMHS Teacher,
on the barriers to
articulation between
districts**

special education teachers also collaborated to facilitate the transition process to high school, and they created additional forms to document and guide appropriate placements for their students.

Addressing the Barriers to Articulation

While the administrators overwhelmingly endorsed the articulation activities as positive and called for additional support for the following year, some high school teachers debated the effectiveness of the meetings and the relevance and reach of the activities to all classroom teachers. For example, one teacher described the realistic barriers to articulation: “My sense is that some problems have been addressed, such as student placement, but we’re fighting the year-round school issue with the middle schools. Having articulation is hard when staff are gone. You have a hard time believing there will be follow through.” For instance, he described, teachers attended the articulation meetings who were “off track” during the next session. Thus, he saw no real buy-in or obligation to sustain the work for articulation to really occur.

For example, some high school teachers involved this year made suggestions about methods of addressing the state standards, but only two or three representatives from the middle school were at the meetings. “Where are the rest of the teachers?” he asked. They also addressed the problems related to high school placements of students from the middle schools. “But just when we think we’ve identified an issue and strategy, then something new comes up,” he complained, explaining that the junior high schools are “in a constant state of change,” and instructor duties are often adjusted to fit student remediation needs.

While the teacher believes that the high school administrators have been forthcoming and offer data to the middle schools about the success of their students, “there’s not a lot of people in the audience to hear it.” He cites poor representation from the middle feeder schools (and sometimes from the high school) at articulation meetings as one large problem they must overcome. While the representatives receive emails including the meetings’ minutes and follow-up issues, the teacher thinks that many of the staff probably view the articulation as *not* a “pressing” issue. Rather, the daily work they do with students has a much greater and more immediate impact on their work. Yet still, he believes in the end that the efforts have been worthwhile in providing feedback to the middle school, in sharing data, in increasing communication between the districts, and in heeding attention to the placement issues. The teacher remains hopeful that the group will eventually “get on the same page. They are great people, but there’s just not a lot of time to talk to them.” The teacher suggested that UCSB Outreach try to publicize the articulation meetings more for greater results—and to contact individuals to bring on board as key players in building buy-in with other colleagues. “Teachers need to think it’s their idea,” he advised.

When asked why the administrators in Santa Maria may characterize the articulation efforts in a much more positive light, one teacher furthered the opinion that they might say “wonderful, glowing things because it [articulation] looks good on paper, but in the trenches, it’s sporadic.” He maintained that there really were not a whole lot of contributions to the articulation effort

beyond those of the few key individual teachers. Administrators, on the other hand, may be referring more to the regular and productive articulation that occurs between the administrators of the districts, possibly indicating a stronger “top-down” approach.

To improve or expand the articulation efforts, Ms. Kemper offered the idea to share more data with the high school concerning how students are doing on the district writing assessments. She indicated that in the articulation meetings, the high school teachers and administrators were impressed with the writing samples and their levels of achievement. In addition, Ms. Kemper supported the idea of including university faculty and staff regularly in the content articulation meetings. For example, Harvey Green (staff from the South Coast Writing Project) attended a couple of meetings, and Ms. Kemper believes more consistent attendance across the content areas would be beneficial. The faculty could help to expose the teachers to content expectations in college, reference resources at the university, and facilitate the face-to-face conversations about collaboration across K-16.

Teacher Professional Development

When teachers and administrators were asked about the professional development opportunities available to them from UCSB Outreach, they described multiple efforts in addition to the articulation activities. These programs included:

- The School-University Partnership (SUP) Program: coordinates and develops professional development opportunities for UCSB’s partnership schools’ teachers, administrators, and counselors.
- The South Coast Writing Project’s (SCWriP) IIMPac program: long-term (3 years) professional development opportunities focused on enhancing teacher expertise in teaching academic literacy via the five methods of inquiry, inservice, models, practice, and coaching.
- The South Coast Science Project: summer institutes and year-long follow-up activities aimed at enhancing science teaching strategies.
- The Science Partnership for School Innovation (SPSI): a partnership funded by the National Science Foundation and the Santa Barbara County Education Office through UCSB’s Materials Research Laboratory (MRL) and Center for Quantized Electronic Structures (QUEST) to provide a forum for collaboration between teachers, administrators, and University scientists.
- Center for Educational Change in Mathematics and Science: professional development workshops, institutes, on-line support, and curriculum development support to improve the teaching of mathematics and science.
- The Tri-Counties Math Project: on-going professional development (including AB 466 Textbook Adoption institutes) for mathematics educators.
- The California History-Social Science Project: interdisciplinary and thematic approaches are used in professional development for teachers of social science and history.

Many teachers and administrators highly praised these efforts for their

UCSB offered teachers in Santa Maria various professional development opportunities through their Subject Matter Projects, their School-University Partnership program, and other collaborative efforts with the districts.

“[*Beyond the Classroom*] is the best program I have ever done. It was outstanding! It gives science teachers the freedom and tools to develop curriculum... After 20 years of teaching, it gave me fresh ideas and fresh perspectives to keep me going.”

-- David Mann,
SMHS Science
Teacher

“It’s important for colleges and universities to understand what we’re about, to understand how dramatically different our life changed last year [with *No Child Left Behind* mandates].”

-- Jim Armstrong,
Assistant
Superintendent

innovation and effectiveness, namely the work of Fiona Goodchild and Lynn Cavazos (of the *Beyond the Classroom* project for science teachers within the Materials Research Laboratory and the Center for Quantized Electronic Structures or QUEST), Tom Ostwald and Chip Fenenga (of the Science Project), Rosemary Cabe, Wynn Clevenger, and Harvey Green (of SCWriP’s IIMPaC project), and Kelley Baeza (of the Tri-Counties Math Project and SUP). Of the *Beyond the Classroom* program, Mr. David Mann, SMHS science teacher declared, “It’s the best program I have ever done. It was outstanding! It gives science teachers the freedom and the tools to develop curriculum. It was a major shot in the arm. After 20 years of teaching, it gave me fresh ideas and fresh perspectives to keep me going.” Similarly, Mr. Riccardo Magni, SMHS science teacher, credited the Science Project with offering great benefits to teacher participants, including newfound content knowledge, networking with other teachers, and materials and activities easily integrated into his science course curriculum. These resources are very effective in teachers’ classrooms, he asserted, and the lab activities “have increased the comprehension of the students” in his classes.

Ms. Ann Kemper, administrator in the elementary district, applauded the work of the IIMPaC project, whose professional development staff travel to the school sites to individualize the training and support and “bolster the plan the school already has in place.” This, she believes, helps to build from the strengths of the school and to customize a model to fit the needs of the particular school site, saturating them with the support that is targeted to their strengths and needs. In addition, she recognized the work of Kelley Baeza at many of the junior high schools, promoting and supporting their mathematics teaching approach called College Prep Math (CPM). Ms. Kemper would like to see more assistance from these kinds of professional development models that incorporate classroom demonstrations of model lessons, coaching for teachers on site, and additional training for their math teachers.

In this context, Mr. Jim Armstrong, Assistant Superintendent of the high school district, characterized the pressing need for a strong and effective partnership between university teacher training programs and the K-12 schools. “It’s important for colleges and universities to understand what we’re about, to understand how dramatically different our life changed last year,” Mr. Armstrong implored. He referred to the influx of standards-based instruction, the basis of *No Child Left Behind* (NCLB) legislation. As the district-appointed specialist concerning NCLB, Mr. Armstrong was “shocked at how many people don’t know about it.” In addition, Mr. Armstrong described the plight of novice teachers: “There’s no ‘getting used to it’ time anymore. It doesn’t exist,” he lamented. As a result, he believes that pre-service teachers need a rigorous teacher education training program before coming on board at the schools—analogueous to the kind of preparation the Outreach programs hope to provide students prior to their arrival at the University of California. “We’re all in this together,” he confirmed, “so how much has the university pulled in the *No Child Left Behind* pieces? Suddenly, we’re responsible for so much more.”

When asked what role he saw UCSB playing in the execution of the NCLB mandates, Mr. Armstrong recommended a focus on instructional strategies in

the classroom. “How do you handle what’s in the classroom when every child must be proficient by 2013? How do you do that?” He suggested that UCSB engage teachers in learning processes that would assist them in improving their documentation, their repertoire of effective strategies, and their creation of quality assessment tools. “Everything changed. The whole system changed,” he said. “The university should have some of us [practicing educational professionals] come back and talk about how the system has changed. Accountability is on our head.” Of the utmost concern to Mr. Armstrong was the alignment of the teacher education programs with the reality of practice, especially since student teachers don’t have the luxury of “a big learning curve.” In addition, Mr. Armstrong acknowledged the importance of professional development while recognizing the difficulty in implementation, especially by trainers external to the school. “It’s brutal coming in the door. You can get real beat up.” He also empathized with those offering professional development to veteran teachers reluctant to change their methods. One suggestion he offered was to offer credit to experienced teachers to attend professional development “tune ups,” making it more attractive to participate in these educational opportunities.

Other recommendations for improvement of the professional development opportunities (offered by administrators and teachers alike) similarly included a concerted focus on increasing teacher involvement. One teacher, while recognizing the practical challenges to professional development and student support programs at SMHS such as the school’s block schedule and the language issues of the students, also admitted that a substantial portion of the teaching staff is reluctant to participate. While UCSB has “successfully implemented quite a few things” and “has been very forthcoming with support for outreach,” he acknowledged, “My colleagues are slow to warm up... I’m an island.” He conceded that the “difficulty is not on UCSB’s end. They bring the money, the connections, and the research dollars. It’s that the teachers are swamped with State standards and the swelling of class size.” The teacher described how he believes that the challenge lies in the teachers’ attitudes and understanding about UCSB’s role in delivery of outreach services: “It’s hard for the teachers to get it. To them, it looks like another layer on their shoulders to make UCSB look good.” While many teachers may oblige the administration by attending inservices, he believes that much of their participation is really just “putting in seat time but not a lot of adoption in class.” And he attributed the greatest hurdle to the State standards, which “have teachers so overwhelmed, they don’t see how they can do more.” The teacher offered one example: the incorporation of technology to enhance literacy in the curriculum. While the idea is a good one, he acknowledged, “how to do it within the standards is hard.” In the end, the teachers feel “damned if we do, damned if we don’t,” recognizing that students must be prepared in all areas to perform adequately on their standardized tests. “Anything we can do to raise test scores is what drives the curriculum,” he admitted. “The creative stuff I bring to the classroom, I’m able to do it after ten years of support from UCSB. But for people not on board, it’s unfathomable. They’re unable. Even with the dedicated staff we have here.”

When asked what role UCSB might play in improving the situation, the teacher suggested that the most helpful thing would be to offer stipends and other

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-- SMHS Teacher, on the difficulty in enlisting teacher involvement in professional development opportunities

Santa Maria teachers and administrators recommended increased visibility of the university on their school campuses, attention to teacher priorities, and incentives and accountability mechanisms to increase teacher participation in professional development.

“[UCSB] should see what’s going on here. Open your eyes and realize what we’re dealing with here.”
-- SMHS Teacher

incentives to people involved—and to tie the receipt of those incentives to their completion of a project. This method would also assist UCSB with an accountability mechanism, ensuring that a full range of participants would complete more programs. Of course, he acknowledged, the stipends are not as important as the curricular modifications and improvements they can accomplish together—such as the incorporation of technology into his class. But he does believe that professional development with a structure that allowed teachers to interact in a forum—“to bring people together, throw out a carrot, and come together in the summer”— would suit the teachers at SMHS well. Another method he appreciated was employed by Fiona Goodchild and Lynn Cavassos in their *Beyond the Classroom* project. They asked the forum of teacher participants, “What do *you* want to do?” and were responsive to their priorities. For example, the teachers his year were interested in articulation, standards, and the incorporation of technology, so the program was built around those objectives. The teachers were able to see immediate impacts on their classroom and recognized that their participation was a great benefit—it “made their teaching jobs easier. The unique individuals in the group made it work. Everybody was fired up!”

Ms. Kemper recommended another innovative idea to embed more university representatives into the district and increase the exposure of the school-university partnership. She suggested, “It may be interesting to have a university representative providing us with expertise but also sharing the day-to-day experiences at schools.” She endorsed the idea of a university professor spending time within the district “doing their work *here*.” One of the major obstacles which the schools have to overcome is the lack of a university nearby. Without a university model in the vicinity, the students cannot see it or become part of the culture. “It’s a tremendous disadvantage,” she said. But through the work of Christina Rogers, students have been introduced to universities during campus visits. “It’s critical for the kids to see what that’s all about.” Likewise, other teachers and administrators recognized that an increased university presence on the SMHS campus would simultaneously enhance relationships with the teaching staff—helping to solidify a partnership based on reciprocal understandings. “You should see what’s going on here,” one teacher stressed. “Open your eyes and realize what we’re dealing with here.”

How the Santa Maria School-University Partnership is Characterized

When asked to reflect on the spirit and genuineness of the UCSB-Santa Maria school districts’ partnership, administrators described an evolving and growing relationship. Assistant Superintendent Alvarado discussed the history of outreach in their district and UCSB’s recent commitment to the cause. “I have worked in the district for 26 years,” he documented. “But the only university that lent itself for outreach was Cal Poly.” Then six or seven years ago, he said, UCSB and Santa Maria embarked on this “long-term effort with good planning and good protocol about how we should do things best for the kids and families.” This partnership, in his opinion, was “monumental,” marking a point in history when UCSB “crossed the grade.” Mr. Alvarado believes the partnership is good for both institutions, and that both the university and the

schools greatly benefit from and complement each other's strengths. For instance, UCSB offers the research perspective, which is critical to draw out the educators from their day-to-day routines into "thought-provoking discussions." Simultaneously, the schools offer the university a chance to see and experience the realistic, practical side of providing education in today's world—to "roll up their sleeves and put the books down." Mr. Alvarado commended the work of both institutions in developing a rapport and trust that allows them to work hard together while avoiding the needless anxiety about offending each other. It is, in his opinion, a solid relationship and a good partnership based on mutual goals and intentions. Mr. Alvarado believes the most important thing is to treat each other well and to share in joint ventures with people who "you see in their heart, their effort is sincere and genuine."

Ms. Ann Kemper believes that the partnership works because it is "clear that Tom [Ostwald] and Kelley [Baeza] really care and are interested. They engage in the conversations, want to be involved, and have great ideas from their different perspectives." Ms. Kemper described how both Kelley and Tom were able to "shed light" on challenging areas while also offering to them support and guidance. When asked if any barriers existed to the partnership, Ms. Kemper confirmed that there were always difficulties arising from schedules and times for the involvement of all individuals. By providing a consistent stream of funding over a period of time, though, she suggested the partnership can promote more interest and ease the doubt of participants. The current partnership with UCSB, she affirmed, primarily works well because outreach staff "listen to what our needs are. They certainly have their own needs to address, but they listen to how they can support our needs and endeavors to a higher level."

While a supporter of the partnership, Mr. Art Delgadillo firmly believes that there is still substantial "room for growth" in the partnership. He advised that the administrators at the Santa Maria-Bonita district office, including himself and Phil Alvarado, "need to make time to sit down together" with university representatives to develop more personal relationships. For example, he suggested that UCSB Outreach and Santa Maria-Bonita host together breakfast or lunch meetings halfway between the two locations, so that the partners can "get to know each other." He recognized that the school district is hierarchical, and that some university representatives have met with his supervisor, Phil Alvarado, but he emphasized that the meetings need to be broader to touch more administrators within the system.

Since Mr. Eric Blanco had first-hand experience as a site coordinator (previous to his position as an SMHS counselor), he offered his unique perspective about the difficult dual roles the outreach staff must play in providing partnership services on the high school campus. He reflected on the challenges he experienced trying to balance his obligations to the high school—who felt ownership for him—as well as his obligations to UCSB's Early Academic Outreach, who provided the funds to employ him. The high school staff and administration often requested Mr. Blanco's service to duties that were of high priority to them and their students, yet he also had to abide by the university staff requirements toward paperwork, meeting participation, and training—obligations that would take him away from the high school campus or distract

Through the school-university partnership, UCSB offers educators "thought-provoking discussions, and the schools offer the university a chance to roll up their sleeves and put the books down."

**-- Phil Alvarado,
SM-B District
Administrator**

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“We must make a commitment to change, or it’s really just high level talk and loft goals.”

-- Phil Alvarado,
SM-B District
Administrator

him from direct support to the students. It was a balancing act that was often difficult at best, and Mr. Blanco frequently felt a disconnect to both SMHS and UCSB. “It felt like I was working two jobs,” Mr. Blanco contested. Even if the administrators at SMHS felt satisfied with his performance and accountability mechanisms, he would regularly have to duplicate them for the supervisors at UCSB. This replication took time away from his work with the students, especially in the case of a large event such as the UC Success Night, which required detailed work in logistics, coordination, and planning. “How can you incorporate what UC wants to have done into what the school does?” he asked. This delicate balancing act to meet the needs of both institutions requires more support and explicit, formalized arrangements to assist the site coordinators in fulfilling their multiple roles.

In addition, Mr. Alvarado believes that “UC should stop trying to be all things to everybody. You are the Jack-of-all-trades and quickly becoming the master-of-none,” he admonished. Mr. Delgadillo suggested that UCSB Outreach work to establish a tighter focus on their efforts. While he understands that UCSB has state requirements regarding their services, he asserted that it is imperative that UCSB “be careful about how much change you think you can bring about.” For example, rather than “throwing a bunch of data at us,” Mr. Delgadillo recommended that we go back to relationship building. “Hire people with commitment and staying power, dependability,” he implored. He characterized the current outreach services as “too spotty,” and referred to the fact that “we don’t have meetings like we used to.” For example, while there was a meeting between SUP and Arellanes Junior High School administration and staff in the early part of the year, there was no follow-up to ensure changes were implemented. Mr. Delgadillo stressed that the partners need to “set up a commitment and work with each other!” Furthermore, he is skeptical about the true commitment of many faculty at the university: “I’m not sure university folk, *professors*, really want to work with us.” While occasionally they have had success in collaboration with the California Subject Matter Project faculty, Mr. Delgadillo believes that the university faculty is truly “more interested in research, not practitioners. We don’t talk the same language. We’re two different educational cultures.” Furthermore, he admonished, “We don’t take time to learn about our common ground and interests.” Rather than building a relationship on the principle that one institution will “change you and set you straight,” Mr. Delgadillo believes it is imperative for the partnership to be a “two-way street” with both the university and the districts engaging in a mutual relationship that dually contributes to the partnership. “We must make a commitment to change, or it’s really just high level talk and lofty goals. And history will repeat itself.”

Another constructive suggestion from Mr. Delgadillo was the need to have an event that could reaffirm the UCSB-Santa Maria partnership and commitment to outreach—something that would answer “Where are we, and where have we gone?” with clear and explicit data. Because of changes in personnel, he believes that not all players know the purposes and the guiding principles of the partnership, so these objectives need to be revisited. Mr. Delgadillo also strongly believes that the intended outcomes of the programs need to be clearly articulated, with an understanding that reform takes time, commitment, and

follow-up. “Are we making a difference? What are you asking for when you say ‘We want changes’? Again, these don’t happen overnight!”

Mr. Delgadillo continued that, in light of the new requirements coming down from *No Child Left Behind*, he is interested in learning the university’s perspective on the legislation and mandated courses of action (i.e., professional development and supplemental service provision). “What does research show? What impact will it have on the credentialing program? –On the high school curriculum and delivery?” he asked. While he knows that some administrators have discussed issues with UCSB, those conversations have not filtered down to his level or others. In addition, Mr. Delgadillo would like to see more information about the Santa Maria cohorts who have participated in outreach through the decades. Knowing that EAOP has been in existence since the mid 1960’s, there are two generations of students who have participated in the program. “How many of those are from north county? Who’s made it? Who hasn’t?” Mr. Delgadillo would like UCSB outreach to “paint a picture of an underrepresented student. Show who makes it and who doesn’t. What do detractors say?” Furthermore, he would like to know what kind of outcomes the student participants in MESA and AVID produce—especially those that he fears are given “courtesy A’s and B’s.” If they attend the university, how successful are they? Mr. Delgadillo is interested in more precise information that can illustrate the fact and the fiction of outcomes related to outreach supports and services.

Mr. Jim Armstrong of the high school district echoed those ideas and concerns, encouraging that the school districts and colleges/universities need to have “ongoing conversations with those individuals that can make things occur. And we need to have data to support things happening.” Of particular importance is admissions data, he said: “If we don’t know how the game is being played, we don’t know how to shoot the game.”

Summing up his perspective, Mr. Alvarado emphasized, “I just hope we continue to be even stronger partners.” He referred to the recent work that he and UCSB directors have accomplished (including Joe Castro, Britt Ortiz, and Tom Ostwald), with a focus on the effects of *No Child Left Behind*. They have “dialogued intensely about the impact and the sanctions” of the law, he said, and the need for professional development services in the district. Through their partnership, Mr. Alvarado hopes to continue to increase the number of grants jointly submitted between the district and UCSB. He praised the collaboration on recent National Science Foundation grants (e.g. the “Improving Teacher Quality” proposal), which is providing a university-affiliated grant writer on the project. Since most schools do not have the personnel to devote to grant writing, this assistance is gratefully received. Even if the proposals are not accepted, Mr. Alvarado said, he sees this kind of collaboration as a “good way to keep the university and the schools tied together” and a way to “keep the flame ignited.”

To strengthen the commitment to the UCSB-SM partnership, administrators of the Santa Maria districts called for more data:

UCSB should “paint a picture of an underrepresented students. Show who makes it and who doesn’t” to illustrate the fact and the fiction of Outreach outcomes.

-- Art Delgadillo,
SM-B District
Administrator

“If we don’t know how the game is being played, we don’t know how to shoot the game.”

-- Jim Armstrong,
High School District
Administrator

Despite some challenges and amidst devastating budget cuts, there was an indisputable affirmation of the Santa Maria's students' potential, their families' strengths, and the educators' commitment to quality education.

Conclusion

UCSB Outreach services have provided the community of Santa Maria with rich and varied academic enrichment activities for their students and professional development opportunities for their teachers and administrators. Through college and career advising, test preparation, field trips, enrichment opportunities (such as summer bridge programs), and parent meetings, more students have enrolled in rigorous college preparatory courses, improved their attitudes and awareness about college requirements, and have been successfully admitted to colleges and universities. Due to long-term and concentrated efforts of the South Coast Writing Project, the Science Partnership, other professional development activities, and articulation efforts for teachers and administrators, middle school and high school educators have also enhanced their standards-based pedagogy for heterogeneous classrooms, increased their collaboration, improved students' skills across content areas, and articulated with colleagues at various grade levels and across curriculum.

Yet obstacles remain within the partnership primarily due to teachers' reluctance or inability to participate in professional development, cultural and neighborhood boundaries that challenge pathways to higher education, and logistical complexities that restrict the opportunity for delivery of more intense (and frequent) student support services and professional development. Furthermore, new federal mandates legislated in *No Child Left Behind* (NCLB) has school administrators statewide anxious about upcoming audits and inevitable ramifications to low performances or insufficient teacher preparation.

Despite the challenges and amidst devastating State budget cuts, there was an indisputable affirmation of the students' and families' potential in the Santa Maria community and an appreciation for UCSB's support and partnership. These are the strengths upon which UCSB Outreach, in collaboration with the local schools, hopes to build future connections, enhance learning environments, and realize students' dreams.



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