



NAASS Member: University of California, Berkeley

Initiative Title: UC Berkeley's Summer Sessions Cultivates Connection for High School Students

Award Category: Shift to Virtual Learning

Description:

For a large public university like UC Berkeley, it is very important to foster a sense of belonging for all incoming pre-college students, particularly with the pivot to virtual learning due to COVID-19. Considering the chaotic nature of the spring term, the Pre-College Scholars team was mindful about introducing ways to ground students, create connection, and invite structure to their summer experience. After much consideration, the team launched a virtual space solely for pre-college students. Titled the Cub Hub, this space is a Canvas site meant to serve as a 'recourse center' with the goal of simulating the type of support and experiences students would have had if they attended the program in-person. In addition to including student handbooks, forms, and other logistical resources, the Cub Hub housed recordings of all orientations, workshops, panels, and conversations, providing full access even after the formal conclusion of the program.

This 'one-stop shop' continued to be updated throughout the entire summer with resources that ranged from self-care and effective study habits to mentorship opportunities and staff meet-and-greet videos. To ensure the students stayed on track, a program calendar was created and leveraged to reflect all the important logistical deadlines students needed to keep in mind in addition to mostly optional synchronous programming. Academic and non-academic units on



campus were contacted to feature content that included creative campus tours, housing tours, and Berkeley student stories. Virtual advising was available through the space for those who needed a 'real time' connection.

In light of COVID's impact on the admissions process for fall 2021, staff also devised a series of recorded presentations that lived in the hub to help students know what to expect and how to move forward in relation to the admissions process at UC and other institutions of higher education.

To keep students engaged and returning to the hub, Summer Sessions launched a series of weekly challenges introducing various parts of the university (Study Abroad, Performances and Theater, etc.) with prompts that invited students to share their stories and their lives. These included homemade promo videos of their favorite artist, a Google Earth travel tour, a flyer-design of a course they will teach in the future, and many more. UC Berkeley is very proud to say this past summer was one of the most successful iterations of the pre-college program to date!

For more information about this initiative, contact:

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