

Focusing Philanthropy Staff

- Parnia Banki

Program Visited

- Scripps College Academy, Claremont, CA

Scripps College Academy Staff

- Roberto Escobar, Executive Director

Executive Summary

Parnia Banki visited Scripps College Academy (SCA) on June 27, 2019. The purpose of the visit was to observe the program, meet students, and meet with program staff.

Background

Founded in 2002, Scripps College Academy (SCA) is an intensive, multi-year, pre-college program for high-achieving young women with limited resources who seek to become the first generation in their families to attend college. Through a rigorous sophomore summer residential experience followed by monthly programming throughout high school, SCA Scholars develop the confidence and skills to be well-prepared college applicants and successful college students.

The first component of the program is the two-week Summer Residential Program for rising high school juniors which provides the opportunity to experience living among their peers and studying at a private, liberal arts institution. For many SCA Scholars, this is their first time on a college campus and their first experience living away from home. Participants attend classes to develop their writing, critical analysis, discussion, and presentation skills under the guidance of Scripps College professors, staff, and undergraduate mentors and participate in workshops, field trips, and arts and recreation activities.

Following the Summer Residential Program, SCA Scholars take part in additional academic and college- preparatory programming throughout high school. These weekend activities include faculty-led book clubs, research opportunities, SAT/ACT preparation classes, and field trips to museums and other cultural centers.

During their junior year in high school, SCA Scholars and their families receive individualized assistance in the college application and financial aid processes. Through home visits with SCA staff, workshops by admission and financial aid experts, and the mentorship of Scripps College students, Scholars are encouraged and supported in applying to a wide range of college and scholarship opportunities that fit their academic and personal goals. Consistently, SCA Scholars graduate from high school with top academic honors and pursue higher education. Many earn prestigious national awards following high school, including the Gates Millennium and Posse Foundation Scholarships.

In addition to the SCA Scholars Program, SCA also includes community outreach programming to provide academic and college preparatory services, free of charge, to young women and parents in the local community. Programs include tutoring, a weekly academic assistance program open to female students in grades 6-12, and SCA College Club, a series of college-introductory workshops for middle school girls. These programs reach between 200-250 students each year and provide valuable service-learning opportunities to the Scripps College students who serve as tutors and role models.

Recruitment Efforts

Executive Director, Roberto Escobar and the Assistant Director, Aimmee Arrayga visit 30 high schools each year to encourage students to apply to SCA. On average 200 students submit applications every year and the result is 50 students are accepted. SCA makes an effort to recruit students from Title I schools with GPA's of 3.0 or above and makes a special effort to recruit students from the Inland Empire.

The demographics of attendees this summer are:

- 50% from the Inland Empire
- Average GPA: 3.8
- 67% Mexican-American
- 8% African-American
- 25% Asian, Middle Eastern and other

Assistance with College Applications

SCA scholars take ACT prep classes during the fall of their junior year. Scholars attend eight Saturday classes for four hours each. SCA provides the instructor, books and study materials. SCA also provides transportation via a shuttle services with 3 pick-up sites and Metrolink tickets.

SCA helps each student explore various colleges and helps them find the right match. SCA recommends seniors apply to four UC schools, four Cal State schools, and four private colleges. SCA also holds financial aid workshops for parents and students to explain how to secure fee waivers and to fill out the complicated aid applications.

Visit

We met three scholars over lunch: Ashley, Luzmila, and Yulissa. They each said they were enjoying the program and learned a lot over the last two weeks. Each of them was happy they made the decision to attend even though they were anxious, didn't know what to expect, and had never been away from home.

Ashley is interested in science and wants to major in Biochemistry and become a doctor. She said SCA taught her how to ask for what she wants. She learned that she can speak up to her college counselor and that her opinion matters. She now knows she can advocate for herself and she feels empowered to do so. Luzmila's sister had graduated from the program so she knew what to expect but was still surprised at how much she learned. She's more confident about applying to colleges to study math and she knows that her grades and scores are competitive. Yulissa, who plans to study business, learned a lot about her college choices and how she can access those colleges.





Key Observations

Breaking the informational glass ceiling is the key to college access and a chance at success. Each student works with a dedicated counselor who helps them customize a college application plan. Students who attend the SCA summer program gain the life experience of living on a college campus and make friends with other college-bound girls. They spend two weeks learning how to choose colleges that are a best fit for them and the strategies to submitting successful applications. The SCA curriculum is an invaluable resource that most students do not have and cannot afford. With SCA's help, students are able to navigate the application process, from test taking, to formulating personal goals, to selecting colleges, to strategizing, to writing and reviewing essays, to securing financial aid, etc... SCA is clearly doing an effective job as nearly 100% go to four year colleges after high school graduation.