

Introduction

The Bridge Scholars Program is a demonstration of CC’s commitment to fostering an antiracist, anti-oppressive, diverse, equitable, and inclusive community. From its inception, the program was designed to support students from marginalized and minoritized identities and backgrounds to succeed at CC. The program was founded in 1996 by Professor Bertrand for about 10 students interested in science and medicine. In 1999, the program was expanded by Professor Riker to include students in the humanities and increasing participation to about 20 students. In 2004, this program expanded further to support students from the Southwest so that just over 30 students participated. In 2014, under the leadership of Professor Chan, who is currently VP and Dean of the Faculty, the program grew to include 60 students, 4 courses, 8 professors, 8 peer mentors, and collaborations with 7 campus offices. The program has grown even more. It now serves about 100 to 120 students every year from various backgrounds, regions, and field interests and includes 6 courses, 12 professors, 13 peer mentors, and about 12 campus offices. In 2022, the program expanded to include international students from marginalized and minoritized backgrounds.

The overarching goals of the program are 1) to provide students with a dynamic and interdisciplinary introduction to CC’s liberal arts education; 2) to provide students with the opportunity to build a community of peers who will support each other on their CC journey; 3) to provide students with the opportunity to develop connections with faculty and staff who provide support and resources that foster student success; 4) to encourage students to claim CC as their space to grow and learn; and 5) to support students in developing strategies for navigating Colorado College as people with marginalized and minoritized identities.

Survey Participants

Approximately 60% of first year students who began their engagement with BSP in summer 2022 responded to the survey. Students were encouraged to participate and entered to win one of two \$50 Downtown Colorado Springs gift cards. Table 1 shows the breakdown of student survey participation by the half block course they completed.

Table 1: Student Survey Participation by BSP Half-Block Course

<i>Number of Student Survey Participants</i>	<i>Total Number of Students in Half Block Course</i>	<i>Title of Half Block BSP Course</i>
13	18	<i>Traditional Medicine of the Southwest: Culture and Chemistry</i>
11	16	<i>Unwelt: The importance of worldviews in ecology, science, and our connections to nature</i>
10	16	<i>How Did We Get Here: Intersections of Economics & Education Inequality</i>
9	17	<i>Dyeing to be Purple</i>
9	15	<i>Environmental Justice: From Local to Global</i>
9	17	<i>The Stories Of Us</i>

Results

Summer Program Overall

Students were either extremely happy (70%) or somewhat happy (28%) with the program. In terms of how the program was helpful, 87% of the students strongly agree that they feel better prepared for their 1st semester at Colorado College and 85% strongly agreed that the experience helped them build community. In terms of learning on the Block and introducing CC’s liberal arts education, most students strongly agree that the program was helpful on both fronts; 72% and 77% respectively. Most students either strongly agreed (66%) or somewhat agreed (31%) that the program provided a helpful introduction to college level academic work. Finally, most students characterized their experience with BSP faculty as extremely positive (73%) and somewhat positive (15%).

Peer Mentors and Extra-Curricular Activities

Results indicate that students felt positively about their experiences with their mentors: 73% were extremely positive and 15% were somewhat positive. Collectively, peer mentors provided a positive BSP summer program with 82% of student participants strongly agreeing and 15% somewhat agreeing. Peer mentors organized an array of extra-curricular activities designed to build community. The top rated extra-curriculars in terms of “fun” include lasertag, penny arcade in Manitou Springs, field day, and art. Activities rated in the somewhat fun range include trips to downtown Colorado Springs, baking & decorating, karaoke, movie night 2, and the zoo. The lowest rated activities in terms of fun include smores, jeopardy/trivia night, and the first movie night. (see Table 2 below)

Table 2: Student Ratings of Extra-Curricular Activities

Activity Title	Number of Responses	Mean Rating*	Standard Deviation
<i>Interquest Laser Tag</i>	33	7.6	2.9
<i>Art</i>	20	7.6	3
<i>Penny Arcade</i>	23	7.5	3.1
<i>Field Day</i>	27	7.3	3.7
<i>Karaoke/The Voice</i>	9	6.5	3.8
<i>Cheyenne Mountain Zoo</i>	32	6.4	3.6
<i>Cheyenne Mountain Zoo</i>	32	6.4	3.6
<i>Downtown Colorado Springs</i>	27	6.3	4.1
<i>Movie Night 2</i>	8	5.7	2.9
<i>First Movie Night</i>	22	5.7	3.5

*Rating scale: 1=least helpful and 10=most helpful

Co-curricular Sessions

The top rated co-curricular sessions in terms of helpfulness include financial literacy, indoor/outdoor self-care, meet the Butler Center, and time management. Sessions rated as somewhat helpful, in order of most to least based on mean ratings, include career planning,

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pathways to academic success, community engagement opportunities, information literacy, and personal board for future success. (see Table 3 below)

Table 3: Student Ratings of Co-Curricular Sessions

Session Title	Number of Responses	Mean Rating*	Standard Deviation
<i>Money Smarts: Build Your Financial Literacy</i>	41	7.8	2.3
<i>Financial Aid 101: Fund your way to a college degree</i>	48	7.5	2.4
<i>Indoor/Outdoor Self-Care</i>	22	7.4	1.8
<i>Meet the Butler Center</i>	44	7.3	2.7
<i>Time Management on the Block</i>	27	7.1	2.8
<i>Getting a Jumpstart on Career Planning</i>	22	6.8	3.5
<i>Personal Pathways to your Academic Success</i>	25	6.7	2.3
<i>The academic and career benefits of community engagement work</i>	23	6.7	2.8
<i>Information Literacy</i>	33	6.6	2.3
Building your own personal board of directors for future success	13	5.6	3.1

*Rating scale: 1=least helpful and 10=most helpful

Qualitative Feedback

Twenty-one or 35% of student respondents provided written feedback in response to the following prompt: “If you have additional feedback about your Bridge Scholars Summer Program experience, please provide it in the space below. We welcome suggestions for how to improve the summer part of the program”. Below are respondents written suggestions verbatim.

James and Fiorella are two of the most amazing people I have met so far on campus. I feel super lucky to have had them as my Bridge mentors

I think there should be less meetings related to college life IF we are going to have those same meetings during ISO, NSO. It was somehow draining to listen to the same things during Bridge and then NSO.

Less workload to give peers more time to socialize

I think that activities where you can meet people and have just one on one conversations would definitely help some people make more friends.

Some focus on international students' financial aid situations at the sessions connected to finances. This year it barely made a difference whether or not we were there (at those sessions in particular).

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I really enjoyed the opportunity to get families with campus and build relationships. I did not enjoy having to move from Loomis to South without a car. The process of moving dorms was stressful and time consuming.

I loved the Bridge Scholars Program; the only thing I would say is that a lot of the mandatory afternoon programming was repeated during NSO. I don't really see the point in doing the same thing more than once.

One of the van drivers was really sketchy. So I would make sure that the drivers are adequate. Otherwise I had an amazing time.

I have no feedback specifically for the bridge program but I think working more with NSO to kind of modify NSO for students that were already in the bridge program as some of the information in NSO was very repetitive and hard to sit through sometimes.

I felt NSO was repetitive of everything we learned in bridge. Is there any way you could add a few more NSO things to bridge and allow bridge students to skip NSO (excluding Priddy, Priddy was great).

N/a

Time management on the block plan would have been more useful if it was more specific to the block plan rather than general time management skills.

It was so fun to be with a smaller community on campus before everyone else comes. I would say to interview Nickie and Guanyi on how they structured their bridge class. It was meaningful to my college experience thus far and helped me form the friends I have today!

Bridge made my transition so much easier into the business of college. I really felt prepared once orientation started with the rest of the freshmen.

The experience was mostly positive. I don't think that, given the volume of Bridge activities/sessions, the coursework was reasonable for the first class. Or perhaps the activities/sessions were unreasonable given the courses. I think it's tricky getting the balance right, though--introducing college-level classes while also having meetings and activities throughout the day.

The mandatory afternoon sessions were a bit suffocating.

I honestly loved every part of the bridge program. From the mentors to my peers I learned and gained so much from this program. I am so happy I joined and was able to be a part of this community.

I was not happy with the welcome celebration on the first night because the first part did not feel applicable to me or other new students. It also didn't feel like the right environment for a panel. My peers and I were more eager to do activities and meet each other. Some of the co-curricular programming felt inefficient. I really enjoyed Shannon's session of financial literacy and the library tour. The Personal Pathways to academic success session was not helpful and I did not feel it gave a good introduction or was relevant to the writing center and qrc. I loved Bridge and would highly recommend it to anyone but I thought that some of time spent in lectures/info sessions could be used more efficiently.

It would've definitely been more helpful to have started in my assigned dorm room! I had a hysterectomy over the summer and my parents couldn't come back up so soon so I had to move all my own stuff across campus at the end of the program. I think it'd be nicer to start in my actual assignment so I could really use the time to familiarize myself with my dorm and my routes around campus and not starting in a dorm I don't live in or need much knowledge of.

Big fan of bridge, especially the cool people I met. Juan Miguel and Maybelline were amazing.

N/A

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Please do not make the next bridge scholars sit through the co-curricular activities as well as the NSO ones. They are repetitive and frustrating.

Recommendations for Improvement

While BSP summer 2022 was a huge success, based on the quantitative and qualitative findings reported here there are three main areas for improvement. The first is to decrease the number of co-curricular activities so that there is more time for activities and assignments related to half block courses and extra-curricular activities to build community. In addition, we want to work on creating a program experience that is engaging, but also leaves room for student participants to cultivate self-care routines to support their mental and physical health. The second is to better coordinate with NSO so that the co-curricular activities that are offered do not overlap. And finally, the third area of improvement is to recognize the ways domestic and international student experiences differ and to name these differences to foster inclusion and enhance the international student experience.