OVERVIEW

College Connect is a FREE annual summer enrichment program for Chicago high school students, from CPS, Charter, and Catholic schools, hosted at DePaul University. Designed for high school juniors (rising seniors in the summer), the program introduces students to college-level coursework in diverse fields of study, while also providing college readiness and financial literacy workshops, academic major and career exploration opportunities, and diverse cultural experiences. Students from over 50 high schools participate in the program every summer.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and city-wide closures, DePaul closed its campus in the Spring of 2020 and the College Connect program was redesigned for 100% remote delivery. We utilized Zoom, D2L, and other online learning platforms to facilitate remote learning and student engagement in the summer of 2020 and then again in 2021.

This report is a summary of the last 5 years of the program.

KATE AGARWAL
College Connect Program Director
BUDGET BASICS

Each year the exact program expenses vary depending on number of enrolled students, particular class expenses, and various program materials (e.g. software, presentation supplies, guest speakers, student giveaways, etc).

$5,000 stipend for each instructor*

$500 general budget for each class (for field trips, books, course materials, etc)**

$20 approximate value of student goodie bag***

*The above numbers reflect 2021 budget values. Back in 2017, instructor stipends were $3,000 per course.

** Instructors are strongly encouraged to provide free course readings and least expensive materials for their class. Program Director works with faculty on minimizing cost.

*** Goodie bag contents vary each summer, depending on what promo items we have available. They may include: program tshirt, small notebook, pen, sticker, water bottle, etc.
The goal of College Connect is to provide early college exposure to under-served students in the Chicago area.

Recruitment is focused on high schools in low-income, racially diverse neighborhoods. Program Director leads recruitment efforts via counselor outreach, school visits, virtual and in-school presentations to students and parents, email marketing, etc.

Each summer we welcome students from over 50 different high schools.

Rising seniors (11th graders at the time of application) are the target group, but we do admit younger students who demonstrate college readiness.

Applicants must provide high school transcript, recommendation letter from a teacher or counselor, and a personal statement with their online application.

We provide 5 or 6 courses for students to choose from (depending on available funds).

All courses are taught by DePaul faculty.

Program Director recruits faculty and manages the course proposal process.

We assemble a committee that reviews course proposals and selects each year’s courses.

Each class has 1 faculty lead plus 2 student Teaching Assistants who we call Peer Guides.

All student employees are recruited, hired, trained, and supervised by Program Director, with added training from DePaul Writing Center staff (to help students with writing assignments as Peer Editors), and the DePaul Center for Teaching and Learning staff (we added this extra training in summer 2020).
PROGRAM TIMELINE

FALL QUARTER

Meeting with high school and internal partners to determine desirable subject areas
Request for Proposals (RFP) revisions, Slate form updates, posting on College Connect web page
Disseminating RFP to DePaul Colleges via Assistant Deans and former program faculty
Collecting course proposals, assembling Proposal Review Committee

WINTER QUARTER

Reviewing course proposals, selecting courses & faculty
Updating program application in Slate
Marketing the program to high schools via email blasts, school visits, presentations
Assembling the Admission Committee to review student apps
Students start applying to the program

SPRING QUARTER

Processing incoming applications, while continuing marketing efforts
Reviewing applications, admitting students, enrolling them into courses
Hiring Peer Guides to support each class, training the team, start planning content
Hiring faculty, setting up stipends, finalizing HR logistics
Working with faculty on syllabi, securing course materials, finalizing program content
Working with D2L staff, Teaching & Learning team, Registrar’s Office, and all relevant DePaul partners on all necessary program elements

SUMMER QUARTER

College Connect session begins at the end of June, lasts 5 weeks, ends with a graduation ceremony
Closing out the program, finalizing grades, communicating with students, parents, high school counselors, partners

SEPT
OCT-NOV
NOV-DEC
JAN
FEB
MAR
APR
MAY
JUN
JUN-JUL
AUG
1. ACADEMICS

Each student chooses 1 class to take over the duration of the program (3 hours of class time, 3 times per week, for 5 weeks). All classes are based on syllabi from real DePaul undergraduate courses from a variety of disciplines. As of summer 2021, students earn college credit for their work in the program - 4 credit hours per class.

2. COLLEGE PREP

Every Thursday we hold "Adulting 101" sessions for the whole cohort and cover a variety of topics on college readiness: application basics, how to write a compelling college essay, where to find scholarships, how to apply for financial aid, how to select a college major, career counseling, and more. Sessions are prepared and presented by Peer Guides / TAs under Program Director’s supervision. We want to demystify the college experience and increase our students’ social capital needed for the college journeys. We recruit DePaul staff from other offices, e.g. Admissions, Career Center, Study Abroad, Financial Aid, Student Life, etc., to talk to our students about the many resources available on college campuses.

3. NEW EXPERIENCES

Field trips and guest speakers are an integral part of each course - the goal is to expose students to new neighborhoods, new people, and new experiences. We provide CTA Ventra cards when the program is hosted on campus to help students with commuting and exploring the city.
COURSE OFFERINGS

2017
"In Our Own Words": Family Storytelling and Oral Histories
The Black Arts Movement as Critical Media Literacy: From BeBop to Hip Hop
Community + Art + Activism
Social Justice and Social Change: Youth-led Activism
Hospitality 101 – People, Product, Preparation

2018
Art and Literature of the Marginalized: Chicago Focus
Cybersecurity in Action
Social Justice and Social Change: Youth-led Activism
Introduction to WordPress and Web Development
Sankofa: Political History of Black Chicago
Art as an Agent for Change

2019
Justice and Rights in Health Care and Public Health
Social Media and Its Impact on Society and Literature
Documentaries for Social Change: Tell Your Story
Psychology of Stereotyping and Prejudice
Social Justice and Social Change: Youth-led Activism

2020
Breaking News: Journalism 101
Hospitality in Chicago: Leadership, Service, and Success
Life in Stills: Storytelling through Photography
From Rizzo to LeBron: Sports Reporting in the Digital Age
Animation: The Cartoon Road to Self-Expression and Social Change
Social Justice and Social Change: Youth-Led Activism

2021
Fire, Fire, Gentrifier! Neighborhood Segregation in Chicago
From SpongeBob to Naruto: An introduction to Animation
Breaking News! An Introduction to Multimedia Journalism
Thank You for Your Purchase: How Advertising Impacts Our Society
From Dreams to Business Plans: Get Ready for the Shark Tank
And the Oscar Goes to... Screenwriting 101
2017

We still used paper applications for this year. :-) This is pre-Slate.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total applicants</td>
<td>137</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Enrolled students at the start of the program</td>
<td>81</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Students who completed the program</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rising seniors</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rising juniors</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>78%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rising sophomores</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>72%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Male 39%
- Female 61%

- Part of the IB program
- Taking AP courses
- Eligible for free or reduced lunch
- First generation college students
First year we used Slate for application and student tracking. :-)
### 2019

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Applicants</td>
<td>166</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Enrolled Students at the Start of the Program</td>
<td>106</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Students who completed the program</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rising Seniors</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rising Juniors</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rising Sophomores</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>64%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>124</td>
<td>74%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Part of the IB program: 62%
- Taking AP courses: 60%
- Eligible for free or reduced lunch: 67%
- First generation college students: 64%
2019

STUDENT TESTIMONIALS

College Connect was an opportunity to experience what I will encounter in college, a guide to applying and becoming involved and even assured me that I do want to further study English literature because of the amazing English class I took the summer of 2019.

Delia Martinez, College Connect 2019

I really loved my College Connect experience. The Thursday sessions were awesome, it was fun to hang out with everyone. I feel way better prepared for applying to college later this fall. I really enjoyed our class discussions, how open everyone was, it was great sharing my opinions with the people I met. I’m glad I did the program, it was really fun!

Shavar Boyd, College Connect 2019

PARENT TESTIMONIAL

My son’s participation in College Connect had everything to do with him deciding to attend DePaul as a freshman. I cannot thank you enough for this program, he is so proud to be part of the Blue Demon family.

Kaneko Ceh, mother of Orion Light, College Connect 2019
2020

College Connect Program Report 2017 - 2021

Total applicants: 150
Enrolled students at the start of the program: 112
Students who completed the program: 97
Rising seniors: 63
Rising juniors: 33
Rising sophomores: 1

Gender distribution:
- Male: 28%
- Female: 72%

Ethnicity distribution:
- White: 47%
- Asian: 12%
- Black/African American: 6%
- Hispanic/Latinx: 5%
- Other/Multiracial: 6%

Welcome to the College Connect Program 2020!
As an IB Coordinator, I greatly appreciate DePaul’s College Connect Program and the opportunities it offers my IB students each summer. For the past several years, I have sent 10-12 (approximately) students each summer to College Connect, and they have such positive feedback each year.

Those who participate for the first time after sophomore year for the most part want to participate again during the subsequent summer.

Sharyl Barnes, IB Coordinator at Curie Metro High School
College Connect Program Report 2017 - 2021

2021

College Connect Program
Summer Enrichment Program
Online

Race & Ethnicity of our 2021 Summer Cohort

- Asian: 44%
- White: 23%
- Hispanic / Latino: 9%
- Black / African American: 5%
- American Indian / Alaska Native: 5%
- Native Hawaiian / Pacific Islander: 14%

- Total Applicants: 148
- Enrolled Students at the Start of the Program: 126
- Students Who Completed the Program and Earned 4 Hours of College Credit: 85

- Rising Seniors: 54
- Rising Juniors: 25
- Rising Sophomores: 6

We used Gather.Town to facilitate Adulting 101 sessions. We had over 90% attendance.

- Weeks of College-Level Classes: 5
- Times a Week: 3

Program Delivered Via:
- Zoom
- D2L
- Gather

- 56 Chicago & Suburban High Schools Represented
- 85 Students Completed the Program

- 54 Rising Seniors
- 25 Rising Juniors
- 6 Rising Sophomores
- 75% Female
- 25% Male

- 4 Hours of Free College Credit Earned by Each Student
- 340 Total Hours of Free College Credit Earned

- Male: 25%
- Female: 75%
2021
SURVEY RESULTS

Did your class feel like a college-level course?

- Absolutely: 73.8%
- Somewhat: 24.6%
- Not at all: 1.6%

Did the course material match your expectations based on the course description?

- Very much so: 86.9%
- Somewhat: 13.1%
- Not at all: 0%

How do you feel about the communication you received from the College Connect program staff (program logistics, D2L logins, various updates, Adulting 101 info, Gather details, etc)?

- Too little: 4.9%
- Just right: 95.1%
- Too much: 0%

STUDENT FEEDBACK

"I had a great time meeting new people and having educational discussions with them. My College Connect experience definitely changes my perspective on how I see the world.

The program is very well organized and interesting and I’m glad I joined :)

It was an amazing class! It got me more excited for college!

I loved this year summer enrichment program and it was the prefect class for me because I love marketing and advertising so it was just perfect for my career. Once again thanks for letting me be part of this beautiful community that is College Connect.

I had a lot of fun, and I feel more ready for college!

Animation was a amazing class, I really felt like I could fit in for the first time in a classroom! It was also eye opening and has allowed me to see art as a career path!"
SUMMARY

Over the 5 years of the program, we served 436 students, with overwhelmingly positive results. Students and their parents enjoyed the College Connect courses, the college prep sessions, and the various engagement activities our team has planned for each cohort. Every summer we had several students from the previous year returning for another session.

The program is most beneficial and successful as an on-campus, in-person experience, as its main goal is to provide a glimpse into the college experience and welcome students to a college campus. However, even when we were forced to transition to online delivery, we did very well. Having a dedicated team of student employees is essential to the positive program outcome - we are fortunate to have committed DePaul students who value their work with the program and do a fantastic job mentoring their College Connect students. We also worked with many internal DePaul partners whose expertise further improved the quality of our content.

Thank you for the amazing opportunity of being part of this year’s College Connect summer enrichment program. I enjoyed every minute of it! The class and the environment of the program has encouraged me to apply for DePaul next Fall. If it all works out I hope to meet you in person next year on campus.

Chloe L. Dittmer, College Connect 2021

Thank you for all your hard work leading the College Connect Program. We feel so lucky for the wonderful experience that this program gave to our daughter, Zaraí was so fortunate to have this opportunity. The Zoom graduation celebration was very special and emotional. Thanks again.

Gloria and Luis Piñeiros, College Connect 2021 parents
College Connect was one of the best programs I was able to be a part of in high school. I had a great time going to classes and trips around the city, it was such an immersive college experience and a period of growth for me as well. Being a part of the program provided me with a truly valuable experience during my summer, since then I knew DePaul was on the top of my list when applying to colleges!

Jorge Garcia
College Connect 2017 alum
Current DePaul student
College Connect Peer Guide 2019-2020

I started working as a TA for College Connect in 2020, during the pandemic. While I was worried of the effect this could have on students, I quickly realized how beneficial the program was. I assisted with the social activism course, so seeing students become interested in class to actively participating in protests and petitions was amazing! Coming back a year later was no different - students were engaged and interested as they studied gentrification and sought resolutions they could assist with in real life. College Connect provides students the opportunities to not only become engaged within classrooms, but learn skills that extend far beyond, through projects, field trips, and much more!

Ilse Arciniega
Current DePaul student
College Connect Peer Guide 2020-2021

College Connect has been a great experience for me, both as a high school student and later as a TA. The projects that were offered and the opportunities I received in this program have made a significant impact on my college career, both academically and professionally. It’s definitely a great program for future college students, especially if they’re interested in learning more about DePaul.

Samuel Oden
College Connect 2018 alum
Current DePaul student
College Connect Peer Guide 2020-2021