

# Mapping College Prep Inequality Across LA

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## Background

The support provided to students in their high schools can have a massive impact on the next stages of their life. Whether they're pursuing higher education, or are looking to jump directly into a career, preparation and counseling can give them valuable information on how they can achieve their goals. However, the quality and accessibility of these resources can vary greatly from institution to institution. This can give more privileged individuals a massive head start coming out of high school, and creates educational inequality.

We will be focusing on the college prep aspect of this by surveying UCLA students that grew up in the Los Angeles (LA) area. According to the Academic Policy Board (APB), UCLA receives the most applications out of any college in the US. Out of these applicants, 41% are first-generation students and 45% are from low-income households, so we have the opportunity to discover a wide variety of stories from the diverse student body. By focusing on students from the LA area, we can narrow our scope while still promoting diverse perspectives due to the drastically different circumstances present across all of LA (family's educational history, financial support, ethnicity, etc.).

## Objectives

With this project, we plan to share the stories of UCLA students who went to public high school in the Los Angeles area, with respect to their experiences with college preparation resources. We plan to incorporate an interactive, layered map that helps visualize the stories we have gathered and highlight barriers, specifically first-generation college student status and a low household income bracket that prevented UCLA students from accessing services while at an LA high school. Student

input from our peers will allow us to understand the quality of college and career preparation resources and if they were accessible.

## Community methods

Our project hopes to amplify stories of UCLA students from the LA area with respect to their access to career and college preparation resources while in high school. We hope to gain specific insight into support for selecting the right college, standardized test prep resources, and college application guidance. Through connecting with students via social media (Instagram & Facebook), word of mouth, and partnering with large campus organizations such as the Association for Computing Machinery (ACM) at UCLA, we hope our survey reaches a wide audience of our peers that can share their unique experiences. Given the diverse makeup of ACM's membership, connections with other campus organizations, and our preexisting connections, we will utilize their large member base to increase the likelihood of reaching first-generation and low-income students at UCLA.

## User Stories

- As a UCLA student from a low-income area with limited access to college resources, I would like to share my experiences with not having free access to online resources, so that others can learn about them on this application."
- "As a first generation college student living in a low-income area in Los Angeles, I want to show how stressful it was to apply to college , so that I can show how the college application process is not equitable for all students."

## Potential Survey Questions

1. Did you go to high school in LA county?
2. If so, where did you live when attending high school?
3. Do you identify as any of the following? (circle all that apply)
  - First generation college attendee
  - Financial aid scholarship recipient
  - Person of color (someone who does not identify as white)

4. What college preparatory opportunities did your high school offer? (circle all that apply)
  - ☐ SAT/ACT prep
  - ☐ AP/Dual Enrollment/IB classes
  - ☐ Essay reviewing
  - ☐ Talks from college administrators
5. During high school did you ever see a career counselor or attend a career event?
  - ☐ Yes, I did both
  - ☐ I saw a career counselor
  - ☐ I attended an career event
  - ☐ I did not know about such resources
6. Did you feel supported in reaching your (college) goals in high school?  
Support may be of any form that you believe helped move you closer to your goals (academic, financial, emotional, etc.)
  - ☐ Yes
  - ☐ No
  - ☐ Unsure
7. What do you remember about this support and how did that make you feel at the time?
8. Please share how you felt that your high school education prepared you for the steps after high school graduation.

## Long-term impact

The main issue this project looks to bring awareness to is the information disparity created by the presence of preparatory resources in some high schools, but not in others. It's our hope that by developing our mapplication, we can amplify the voices of our respondents and the educational inequalities they've faced. This mapplication can empower educators and students by drawing on the voices and experiences of their communities to assist future generations. To best serve the UCLA student body, we can look to provide this mapplication to specialized programs within UCLA like First To Go to provide targeted support to disadvantaged groups, or

even more general programs like First Year Experience or Academic Advising to improve support for incoming students as a whole.

## Works Cited

- <https://www.hw.com/academics/>
- <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/answer-sheet/wp/2017/05/09/can-coaching-truly-boost-sat-scores-for-years-the-college-board-said-no-now-it-says-yes/>
- <https://apb.ucla.edu/campus-statistics/admissions>
- <https://newsroom.ucla.edu/releases/ucla-applications-for-fall-2023-admissions>

[Datasetsearch.research.google.com](https://datasetsearch.research.google.com)

- General resource

[https://hub.arcgis.com/datasets/3f58739a6e03438a9638652362dfe35a\\_0/explore?showTable=true](https://hub.arcgis.com/datasets/3f58739a6e03438a9638652362dfe35a_0/explore?showTable=true) - education levels for adults 25+ in LA

<https://geohub.lacity.org/datasets/lahub::los-angeles-private-schools/explore?showTable=true>

- Private school locations in LA (supposedly from the state should verify)

<https://data.lacounty.gov/datasets/lacounty::public-elementary-schools/explore?location=33.800844%2C-118.295000%2C8.00> - public elementary schools in LA

<https://caaspp-elpac.ets.org/>

- State test scores

<https://nces.ed.gov/programs/edge/Geographic/DistrictBoundaries>

- Data like school district boundaries