

**The Starr Hill Pathways Program**  
Focus Group Summary Report  
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## **Abstract**

The Starr Hill Pathways Program is an initiative from The UVA Center for the Redress of Inequity through Community Engaged Scholarship (The Equity Center). Furthermore, its mission is to “tangibly redress racial and economic inequity in university communities by advancing a transformative approach to the fundamental research mission, which will, in turn, reform institutional values, pedagogy, and operations” (Appendix 1). Starr Hill Pathways is being developed to support college-readiness for 6th-12th grade students in low-income communities in Charlottesville and Albemarle County. The program’s overarching goal is to create a system that supports and guides students of the local community to gain college admission into UVA or any college of their choice.

This report is based on work produced in partnership with Dr. Ben Allen (community partner), Executive Director of the Equity Center, and UVA students (student consultants) in the Fall 2021 “Community-Engaged Methods” class instructed by Professor Barbara Wilson, Faculty Director of the Equity Center. From the Memorandum of Understanding between the community partner and student consultants, the goals of this project are to:

1. Research and document existing pipeline programs offered throughout the different schools and student organizations within UVA for K-12 students in the Charlottesville-Albemarle region specifically with a focus on grades 6-12.
2. Contact UVA and student program leaders across school departments to further identify, connect, and document UVA pipeline programs to ensure sustained communication between the Equity Center, UVA, and the community.
3. Prepare a focus group with the leaders of UVA schools/centers to collectively think about the offerings, accessibility, and gaps of pipeline programs in Charlottesville and Albemarle.

The student consultants and community partner prepared and conducted a focus group with leaders of existing pipeline programs. From the interview content, the student consultants completed qualitative analysis and created a codebook to understand the themes discussed. The student consultants propose the focus group structure and codebook will be useful tools to utilize as the Equity Center continues to build Starr Hill Pathways.

## **Introduction**

In order to fulfill the above goals, the student consultants initially began cataloging existing pipeline programs to create a comprehensive database. The database would compile program titles, descriptions, contact person, school affiliation, academic focus area, ages served, and registration offerings. The goal of the database was to identify academic subject gaps across the current programs offered and find where the Equity Center may help knit community and program engagement together.

The group shifted direction after concluding that the completion of a database was incompatible with the timeline of the project, and they determined a more qualitative approach would fit better

into the workflow of the Equity Center's larger focus. The student consultants and community partner decided to prepare a focus group. After developing a set of semi-structured questions, the student consultants conducted a pilot focus group session with the goal of refining questions for future sessions conducted by the Equity Center, and learning more about the leaders of pipeline programs and their needs. The focus group aimed to connect leaders of pipeline programs together, prompt communication between programs and the Equity Center, and learn directly about programs' strengths and challenges in order to ideate how programs can best serve students and their families.

### **Method**

The student consultants conducted a focus group with several leaders of existing pipeline programs for students in the area. The goal of the focus group was to collectively think about the offerings, accessibility, and gaps of pathway programs in Charlottesville and Albemarle. The focus group method would also allow the pipeline program leaders to gain a better understanding of overlap between other pipeline programs and what their goals are. The community partner initially contacted ten organization leaders for interest to participate in the discussion. Based on availability, five leaders representing four programs were able to attend the focus group hosted by the student consultants and community partner. The program leaders who attended the focus group are listed below:

- James Bland, Director of Center for Diversity in Engineering
- Ellen Cook, Director of Community Engagement, UVA Athletics
- Derrick P. Alridge, Co-Director of Charlottesville Freedom School
- Johari Harris, Co-Director Charlottesville Freedom School
- Aimee Hunt, Associate Academic Coordinator, Fralin Art Museum at UVA

The student consultants guided the conversation through a series of semi-structured questions. During the focus group, the student consultants were divided into roles. There were two moderators (Elizabeth and Jessica) and three structure note takers (Gabriella, Kayla and Laura). This method allowed the focus group to be more conversational through a series of open-ended questions. The semi-structured focus group method created a greater opportunity for the collection of qualitative data that would be analyzed to develop overarching themes.

The focus group was preceded by a survey containing basic introductory questions. The intention of the survey is to equip the student consultants to direct the focus group in the most helpful possible way, and to gather a baseline of information to make the focus group process more streamlined. The questions asked in the Pre-Survey will also serve as information to add to the database on the most current Pipeline Program information. The below questions considered mainly the baseline information for what the programs are doing, who is involved, and when they happen.

### **Pre-Survey**

- What programs/ initiatives is your department doing?
- What ages do you support?
  - K-5
  - 6-8
  - 9-12
  - other
- What is the program timeline? (recurring, summer, etc)
- What schools and organizations are you working with?
- What resources do you provide to support students?
- Are there any other contacts on your team that are key in communication for your program/department?

### **Focus Group Structure**

#### Introduction

1. Introduce ourselves
  - a. Introductions/ Attendees changing name and program
  - b. Recap of Starr Hill Pathways
  - c. Zoom recording consent
1. What excites you the most about your program and what is it you are doing for the community/future college students?
2. How is your program structured in terms of staff?
  - a. How do you recruit your team?
  - b. What is the diversity of your teaching team? (experience, major, year, etc)
3. How do you currently advertise the program?
  - a. If so, do you think there are any areas of improvement in advertising your program?
4. Are there any challenges you see in implementing your program or serving students?
  - a. Any gaps that your program doesn't have the capacity to address?

#### Partnerships

1. Do you know what programs/outreach other UVA departments are doing?
2. What types of relationships do you have with the students/parents in your programs?

- a. What have you seen to be the most impactful ways to connect with students?  
Both to bring them into your program and to keep them engaged?
  - b. Have you seen any major impacts on the students that your program helps? /  
Have students or parents reached out to share their experience with the program?
3. Are there any demographic groups that you see being underrepresented in your programs?
  - a. Which relationships are you most wanting to build next?
4. Do you see the potential for your programs to interact or “team-up” with one another to create a large pool of opportunities for students?
5. What resources would help you to better serve students?

### Reflection

1. What do you see in other departments that inspires you?
2. Is there anything else you would like us to know?

### **Data Analysis**

The audio recording from the focus group was transcribed (Appendix 2), and the data was coded using qualitative analysis methods. From the transcription, we collected informational quotes from the program leaders’ answers. These included both logistical answers contextualizing their programs and personal answers sharing their programs’ visions and progress. We organized these quotes into themes and created a standardized codebook from this analysis (Appendix 3).

Five overarching themes were derived from the focus group as well as sub themes for each theme:

1. Feedback - how programs gain feedback for improvement.
  - a. *Parent Informed* - knowledge from parents engaged with the program
  - b. *Student Informed* - knowledge from K-12 students engaged with the program
  - c. *UVA Informed* - knowledge from UVA students engaged with the program
2. Communication - avenues to K-12 students, UVA students, and UVA departments
  - a. *Community Outreach* - K-12 schools, students and families
  - b. *UVA Outreach* - UVA student involvement
  - c. *UVA Department* - connection to UVA departments
3. Community - the role of college students and their connections between K-12 students.

- a. *Representation* - representation among college and future career fields
  - b. *Synergy* - mutual skills growth for college students and K-12 students
  - c. *Community building* - creation of meaningful connections and purpose
- 4. Logistics - the organization of programs.
  - a. *Content* - structure and theme
  - b. *Timing* - length of program and time period
  - c. *Training* - how instructors are prepared
  - d. *Staffing* - structure of staff; who teaches students vs. who manages the program
  - e. *Platform* - in-person or online learning
- 5. Goals - potential areas for change and growth, post covid.
  - a. *Growth* - retain and/or increase student capacity and school catchment area
  - b. *Staffing* - adjust staffing structure in relation to goals
  - c. *Post-Covid* - need to adjust for in-person learning and interaction

## **Discussion of Themes**

### *Feedback*

Parent engagement with the programs was described through student pickup or drop-off and event attendance was deemed successful in building relationships. For example, Derrick Altridge representing the Freedom School program stated “[we have been] very pleased with the turn out and engagement of the parents with the Freedom School,” and “we had weekly pickup of supplies and materials that gave us a chance to interact with families in ways we wouldn’t have been able to otherwise.” K-12 student engagement allowed the programs to see first-hand the impact on their leadership skills and their “ownership over their experience” as Aimee from the Fralin Museum said. Knowledge was also gained from UVA student engagement with each program. Often undergraduate students directly interacted with the K-12 students more than program staff. These sources of information serve as useful feedback about the progress of the programs and the ways in which program directors understand their impact.

### *Communication*

These pipeline programs used partnerships, advertisements, and social media to spread the word about the programs. Much of the community outreach efforts included sending information to schools and parents about the programs. UVA outreach, which meant communicating the program’s purpose to students, social media was one of the more effective tools to reach out to student groups to get them involved. The program leaders’ mainly found it hard to hear about other pipeline programs at UVA, but would find it useful to know what other departments are doing within the community or if they are doing similar work.

### *Community*

The UVA Community to K-12 students has proven to be a very synergistic relationship for both parties. Undergraduate students gain valuable teaching experience while K-12 students benefit from what the program has to offer. Representation was discussed as an important aspect of pipeline programs because it allows students to see college students that look similar to them while also opening their eyes to the different career opportunities. The common thread *community building* describes instances where meaningful connections and growth outside the classroom have been evident in the programs. It was said that there is specific time allotted for creating these informal connections within some of the programs.

### *Logistics*

The logistics of content, timing, training, staffing, and platform were mentioned in terms of program organization. Staffing was talked about the most, which mainly included UVA students or interns that engaged with K-12 students. Content ranged from flexible day to day structure to bringing in external guests or experts to speak or workshop with students. Covid also changed the delivery of many of these programs to virtual for the time being.

### *Goals*

In terms of growth, increased capacity and program expansion were agreed to be important among all program leaders. Staffing was mentioned as something that could be increased both with more UVA student leaders and interns. The transition to in-person engagement is a future goal and challenge that many of these programs are still trying to figure out.

### **Reflections**

There are a few key takeaways from the focus group interview on timing, questions, and format. First off, 30-minutes goes by rather quickly. The Google form survey used to collect initial program information was a helpful tool to maximum time with more qualitative questions. The student consultants prepared more questions than time would allow to answer, so some of the questions were not asked. It is important to identify the main questions that need to be covered and prioritize them. The challenge was balancing the time for all four program leaders to speak. Although beneficial, introductions and the first few initial questions took more time than we expected. All program leaders were engaged and ready to share information about their pipeline program. The best answered questions were clear and simply worded questions.

Zoom was used as the platform for the focus group interview. The student consultants joined the Zoom call from the same room. The community partner and the five pipeline program leaders were each on their own screen for the Zoom call. It's important to recognize the nature of the Zoom format creates more distance between the people talking. An in-person format may have flowed better and been more conversational. As the student consultants asked questions, there were moments that program leaders were called on to speak when there was hesitation to respond.



For further work on pipeline programs, the student consultants have additional considerations that they did not have the time to accomplish in the scope of this course, and they also highlight aspects of this program that should be continued. In this project, an initial, piloted focus group was conducted. The student consultants suggest the Equity Center continue to host focus group interviews to gather qualitative information on pipeline projects. The focus group will allow pipeline programs and the Equity Center within the Charlottesville-Albemarle region to gain a better understanding of other programs. Additional groups that could be interviewed are principals or teachers of high schools and middle schools, UVA student groups organizing pipeline programs, and student groups attending the programs. In addition to the focus groups, targeted interviews should be conducted to gather additional information that the focus group format does not cover. As a practice already used by the Equity Center, the student consultants suggest creating shared documents and contact information that is accessible to all pipeline programs and to students utilizing these programs. The google form pre-survey can continue to be shared to more pipeline partners to build the most comprehensive and updated database on programs currently running at UVA. Finally, a few of the student consultants are interested in continuing to work with the Equity Center and the Starr Hill Pathways Program. These student consultants should also be available to bridge the work from this project to further work.

### **Conclusion**

The codebook helps to break down the current logistics, problems, and goals of each of the pipeline programs who were involved in the focus group. Although it only currently has five themes, if or when more focus groups or interviews happen, additional programs, themes, and subthemes could be added to the codebook. We found these themes to be the most prevalent topics talked about in our initial focus group and reflect some of the existing conditions of the programs represented in the group. These themes may have been produced based on the nature of the questions we asked, the engagement of the program leaders with each topic, or a combination of these systems.

The codebook may serve as a reference for the Equity Center to see the commonalities and differences between each of the pipeline programs. Some of the goals of the Starr Hill Pathway project are bridging the gap between the various programs, so the codebook could help knit them together. Continuation of surveys and focus groups with members of the community, school-based educators, and students can inform what the most important next steps are for the Equity Center. This could be helpful when communicating across the different schools or programs that are facing similar logistics. This process builds a communication network for stronger pipeline programs in support of the school. The codebook should remain open to change dynamically as new data informs its definitions.

# Appendices

## Appendix 1

### Starr Hill Pathways: Program Purposes and Goals

#### PROGRAM PURPOSES + GOALS

The Equity Center is a new center at the University of Virginia, officially launched in October 2019. The Equity Center grew out of many years of community advocacy for social justice in the Charlottesville/Albemarle region. The center was born of the tireless work of many in the community who worked hard to call on the University of Virginia to redress racial and socio-economic injustice.

The mission of The Equity Center is to "tangibly redress racial and economic inequity in university communities by advancing a transformative approach to the fundamental research mission, which will, in turn, reform institutional values, pedagogy, and operations". The local steering committee, faculty, staff, and wider community envision a university that proactively serves the local community by drawing upon the rich research resources that the community has to offer and equipping its students to lead in building a more just society.<sup>6</sup>

In conjunction with Albemarle County Public Schools and a host of community partners, The Equity Center was able to offer after summer school enrichment opportunities to middle school aged students, during the summer of 2021. This opportunity arose due to a request for summer programming for students set forth by Albemarle County Public Schools.

The mission of Albemarle County Public Schools is to "establish a community of learners and learning, through relationships, relevance and rigor, one student at a time."<sup>7</sup> By recognizing the power of relationships, Albemarle County Public Schools has positioned itself to make great strides in reaching every student. The Equity Center shares this belief and envisions the summer pathways program as a vehicle for creating and maintaining strong, community relationships that benefit students.

The local steering committee, staff and faculty of The Equity Center recognize that the notion of establishing a community of learners and learning may not have always envisioned the school community as part of the community at large. However, it should be clear that the Charlottesville/Albemarle community has much to offer and much to learn from Albemarle County Public Schools students. Therefore, The Equity Center sought to work from a student-centered, assets-based approach to create a model for success. This model infused student choice and agency in a manner that aligns with future ACPSS academy plans as well as the Virginia Department of Education career clusters. Exposure to these pathways aligns with the Albemarle County Public Schools' vision: "all learners believe in their power to embrace learning, to excel, and own their own future." It is important to note that there is significant alignment between ACPSS's core values and those of the Equity Center.

#### ALBEMARLE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS CORE VALUES

##### EQUITY

We will provide every student with the level of support necessary to thrive.

##### EXCELLENCE

We will provide mitigate barriers and provide opportunities for every student to be academically successful.

#### THE EQUITY CENTER CORE VALUES

##### AUTHENTIC PARTNERSHIP

Our approach to community-engaged theory and practice means we are committed to authentic, honest, and transparent community collaboration.

##### SHARED POWER

We will intentionally and equitably share our power as researchers by studying issues that address community priorities, openly sharing data and results with our community partners, and helping to translate our research into tangible actions that reduce economic and racial inequity.

##### EQUITY

We are committed to the production of knowledge that advances social justice, by joining community research partners, and ensuring fair and equitable treatment of community experts.

##### JUSTICE

Our work will contribute to the fair distribution of equal, basic rights to all members of society.

##### BENEFICIAL

We will conduct research that tangibly benefits communities, both methodologically and in implementation.

#### FAMILY AND COMMUNITY

We will engage with and share the responsibility for student success with families and community partners.

#### WELLNESS<sup>8</sup>

We will support the physical and emotional health of our students and staff.

#### ACTION

Our research will go beyond the creation and discovery of new knowledge, but we will also work to directly employ our learning to implement interventions that reduce inequity.

#### MUTUALITY

We will form meaningful partnerships with low-income, Black, Latinx, Indigenous, and immigrant community residents of all ages to create opportunities for two-way knowledge transfer and co-learning that will lead to more effective, equitable, and enduring solutions to problems impacting these communities.

#### YOUTH

We will make training and equipping young people a major focus of the Equity Center's work, because young people are at the center of many of the inequities present in our communities, from educational opportunity gaps to interactions with the justice system, to health, poverty, housing, and hunger.<sup>9</sup>

## Appendix 2

### **Focus Group Transcript**

#### **Ben**

Quick introductions—I can start with Derrick— just so they kind of know who you are beyond just a name on paper or on the Internet.

#### **Derrick**

Ok so I'm Derrick and I am in the School of Education and Human Development where I serve as the director of the Center for Race and Public Education in the South as well as the executive director of the Charlottesville Freedom School.

#### **Ben**

Thank you, Derrick. Aimee?

#### **Aimee**

Hi, I'm Aimee Hunt. I coordinate community programs at the Fralin Museum. So, including our partnership with the boys and Girls Club, we've been serving them, working with them for about 17 years, three times a week after school. And also our writers eye program, which is a partnership with Charlottesville, Albemarle, and Central Virginia schools. And not this year but most years we see about 4000 students through the museum in the fall from area schools. Thanks.

#### **James**

Good morning. James Bland— director for the Center for Diversity in Engineering here at UVA. Also up in the engineering school, and we have a couple different K12 programs, but out of our office specifically is the circle project, where undergraduate students and graduate students teach online courses to folks at K12 Central Virginia. And also, this past summer we actually had a couple folks from New York and North Carolina, Maryland, so it's pretty cool. So we're working to really develop that program, so thanks for being here. Good to see you all.

#### **Ellen**

Hi everyone, I'm Ellen cook. I am the director of community engagement within UVA athletics. So I work a lot with usually just coordinating our student athletes to get involved in the community, and this past summer was a great way for both our student athletes to go into the schools and mentor some of the kids that participated in the pilot. And then we, also, for two days brought the kids to our facilities to give them a tour, have some student athletes talk to them, et cetera. So happy to be here.

#### **Jess**

Great! So to start off we wanted to ask what excites you the most about your program and what is it that you're doing for the community and future college students? So, I don't know who wants to jump in first.

**Aimee**

I don't mind starting. I mean, it seems like, I don't know, being the first person is bad. So let's see, what excites me the most and what are we doing for future college students? Are those the two questions?

So, What excites me the most about our programs, uh, the two that I specifically mentioned and we have others, but is that there's a synergy between providing educational opportunities for the university students and also providing opportunities for students in the community. And, so both of those programs— specifically, the Boys and Girls Club program. We recruit 45 UVA students to serve as mentors each semester for the three groups from the Boys and Girls Club – three groups of 15 students – so they are paired for the semester. And, the most exciting thing for me is to see kids come up through the program and develop a sense of agency and like ownership over their experience in the museum, so specifically we had a school group tour from Greer. And on the Greer Tour we had kids from the Early Visions Program, who you know who were coming to the museum every week and in their classrooms they like, step forward into a leadership role to talk about the artwork and sort of like set the standard for their peers about like this is, this is how we behave in the museum, this is how we talk about art like this is what I see when I look at this. You know, so it was a very clear demonstration of the impact of the program, right, that they felt confident in that environment and entitled to be in the museum.

For the Writer's Eye program, it's the same thing. We have about 60 to 70 university student docents who go through a semester-long training and then lead the school tours. So there's an opportunity for the UVA students to gain teaching experience and also like the students who are coming through the museum have an opportunity to meet college students on their way, right? So there the students who are teaching them in the museum are not, uhm, I mean they are adults, but they're younger adults and a little more accessible, and particularly where we have high school groups. It's exciting to see that sort of chemistry and synergy between the students coming from the community and sort of having an opportunity to see a sort of possible next step for themselves. Sorry that was long winded.

**Jess**

That was helpful. You kind of answered our next question that's also talking about how do you structure your program in terms of staff? So if the other folks would like to jump in with kind of talking to both those questions that would be great.

**James**

Yeah, I'll go next. So, for the program that kind of we wanted, specifically, is staffed by undergraduate students mostly. That's kind of the exciting thing, so we invited students in engineering school to come up with these really cool kind of eight week long kind of classes and and sometimes it's just kind of a one a week thing, so they'll teach one week, uhm, get a new group of students in, you know, teach the same lesson for an additional week. Or sometimes they do three weeks. We kind of leave it up to them in terms of like how the class is going to be structured, but it's really cool to see them work in groups and work in teams to put together some really cool ideas of how to get folks specifically, folks in K12 kind of interested in STEM, so everything from like coding to you know, some really hard-core math classes and how that you know kind of intersects with engineering. You know, what does that look like? How do we get the local students prepared for

some of these classes if they are interested in stepping into the engineering field? So that's really cool. That's kind of our staff. We also use graduate students and some of our faculty to help all this, with some oversight in terms of what is being taught in the classes. So I'll just make sure that we know if we have spies on that.

In terms of ways that we are preparing future college students: it's just connecting the folks all the way from 3rd grade all the way up to the 9th grade to 12th grade with students that I think look like them. We're really intentional about the representation and the way that we're targeting. And you know, kind of connecting with local schools community organizations, but also the outreach for the often undergraduate students. So I think outside of just 'here's some really cool engineering concepts' and in some ways you could think about engineering, you know, kind of introduced the concepts, but also the representation I think is really important too. That's another thing that excites me: creating more access for diverse students who might not have had an opportunity to explore engineering in this kind of in depth kind of really close knit ways. That's also something that we're really intentional about, and the reason why we want to build this program. For some other context, this is only two years in it. Yeah, it's that second year, so we're definitely working on one kind of to increase our capacity, increase opportunities and get access for engineering specifically for diverse students to kind of really build that pipeline so they see that not only is it something that I could do. This engineering is a thing, right? But these folks who were in engineering looked just like me. So women, folks of color, I think that's really important. That says that we're being intentional about that, and so far so good. Uhm, hoping to answer the question of all three, and it's exciting, staffing and uh another piece I think I got everything did I?

**Jess**

Thank you. Ellen or Derrick?

**Ellen**

I can jump off that. I think in athletics, what I'm excited about is bringing a population to our facilities and kind of showing them that you don't have to be a professional athlete if you're interested in sports. So what we tried to do was show them that. We had nutritionists talk to them. We had trainers talk to them. We had people that work in the business office. There's people like me, who growing up, I thought you would be a coach or an athlete and that was the only thing in athletics. And so I think opening up young students' eyes to the different jobs within athletics, where maybe you're not the most athletic person, but you still love sports, UM, I think that really kind of maybe opened their eyes to the different things that they can get involved in.

Staffing, wise, I'd say mostly me, myself, and I worked to get our student athletes to the schools. You know, just trying to get the word out; let them know what exactly was happening, coordinating schedules. I do have some great coworkers who helped with me the two days that we invited students just to make sure that you know there was a lot of kids all at once and so just having the more staff members as possible. I could foresee in the future that changing. Uh, we have some interns now on staff who I would love to give them some more work in this realm, so that's staffing. That's what I'm excited about. I think I similarly touched on what this is doing for future college students. It's showing them you can go to school to be a future nutritionist if you're really in food and sports, you can kind of merge those together. So again, just showing all the possibilities I think is both exciting and what we're doing to help future college students.

**Jess**

Thank you. Derrick?

**Derrick**

Yes, so the Charlottesville Freedom School is the name we use for our Freedom School is a collaboration with the Children's Defense Fund. The Freedom Schools were started in the mid 1980s and they're really an offshoot or an extension of the freedom schools that started in Mississippi in the summer of 1964. And basically the Freedom School is a literacy program, and for us we focus on rising 3rd through 5th graders and last year also rising 6th through 8th graders. Uhm, this past year we attempted to do 100 students, attempted to teach 100 students over the summer virtually, but at the end of the day we were able to get about 60 students in the program. So our Freedom School is staffed by undergraduate students at UVA primarily, and we hire ten teachers, which we call SLI (servant leader interns). And the servant leader interns receive their training in May of each year down at Alex Haley's farm in Tennessee, and they're basically trained in, you know, aspects of leadership, activism, teaching; and I mean it's a very, very dynamic program.

So what we hope our students walk away from our program with is just some - the basic idea that they don't have to be on the sidelines, that they can be leaders as well and that was pretty much the thrust of the student leader interns during the Freedom Schools in 1964, so it's definitely carried over from that. So our staffing works like this - we have an executive director, I serve in that position, which my job is basically to raise the funds to hold the Freedom School, which costs a substantive and is pretty expensive to host each year. And then we have a project director who oversees the day-to-day operations of the Freedom School, and then we have a site coordinator that is on the ground with the SLI's every day working in classrooms. We can only have 10 students in a classroom, and each classroom has one SLI. So that's kind of the basic structure of it.

Our outreach to the community - we serve students who need help in reading and literacy so you know, we see that as certainly a contribution to the community. But we also have some pretty serious parent engagement. We bring in scholars who have expertise in child development and we hold workshops with the parents once a week. For the first two years of our Freedom school, that's been virtual, mainly because of, you know, COVID and everything, but we have been surprised, but very pleased with the turn out and engagement of the parents with the Freedom School, particularly in these kind of workshops we had in child development, so. I'm not sure I covered everything, but that's kind of the framework of what we're doing.

**Jess**

OK, so this next question we're going to make kind of a speed round up. The question is how do you currently advertise your programs? And do you think there's any areas for improvement in advertising? So then everyone could just say a sentence or two about that, that'd be great.

**Derrick**

Well, I'll start. We advertise our programs through the community. We work closely with the NAACP. We're very active on social media and we also engage our parents who were in the Freedom School the previous year. Johari Harris is with us today. She might want to add if there's any other ways that we engage our parents alright.

**Johari**

Yes, I'm so sorry I'm late. I had in my mind the meeting starting at 11. My apologies, but yes I would say social media is our main avenue and then also we would send out announcements to the schools. We give 1 pagers to the schools we were targeting to go home in like the folders with kids if that makes sense.

**Derrick**

And we partner, we worked with Albemarle and Charlottesville schools, so I didn't say that earlier, thanks.

**Jess**

Maybe we'll go in reverse this time, so Ellen.

**Ellen**

Yeah, sure. So student athletes are kind of the population that I'm trying to recruit to be volunteers, so we also utilize social media since they're always on their phones and text messages, and we have a system called Teamworks where I can just kind of blast broad messaging to all of our students. So that's usually - and if I happen to pass them in the hallway, usually I just attack.

**Jess**

OK, James.

**James**

Oh yes, so a lot the same. So emails to different schools that were targeted. Also send 1 pagers to school counselors and principals, just get them to help us get the word out. And for our students that are actually teaching classes, emails, social media, newsletters. So a lot of the same has already been mentioned.

**Jess**

Alright, Aimee.

**Aimee**

Uhm, I would say there's lots of room for improvement. Even though all of the programs we like have a marketing department. Uh, yeah, so we have E cards that we send to like a comprehensive teacher contact list, right, to let teachers know about Writers Eye every year and schedule tours. Uhm, for the boys and Girls Club, you know when we have partners, they're coordinating the audience on their side, right?

So the students who are coming to the program for a summer program I lead for teens this summer. Uhm, like I developed a contact list of all the art teachers in the area schools and sent them information about the program and asked them to like push it out to their students. Uhm, within the university for recruiting students to our programs? Uhm yeah, we're using social media. We're reaching out to student groups. And also, there's a lot of room for improvement.

**Elizabeth**

Thanks, well we're going to pivot a tiny bit now to talking about just kind of like the bubbles around your program and what resources you do have available to you and how you might interact with other organizations in or outside of the university and so if each of you don't mind sharing, I'm going to kind of list a couple of questions and so you can answer the ones that feel relevant to the work that you're doing.

But yeah, we would just love to hear about if your program is generally, like what your awareness looks like of other pipeline programs that may or may not be closely related to yours and if you see any potential for collaboration there? But then also kind of the other side of that being., what your relationships look like with students and parents? Maybe in the longer term, in your program and if you see any areas like particular demographics and students that you see being underrepresented in your programs. And then just what resources you might have to offer to other programs or or could benefit from from the university?

Sorry that was kind of a lot, but. Just kind of would love to hear what your feeling of your interaction with your program with the outside world looks like. So I don't know who wants to jump in first on that.

**Derrick**

Could you put a few of those questions up there? Kind of blending together in my head?

**Jess**

Will post them onto the chat.

**Derrick**

Thank you.

**Jess**

Sorry, I feel like we're trying to get a lot of information in a little amount of time.

**Ellen**

I think from an athletic standpoint, and I realize that the work that we do is a little different 'cause I just don't have as much interaction with the students and the children who are in the program, but see more of it from the undergrad student side of the student athletes. But I would love to know more about what UVA is doing I think. UVA is one of those places that's really big, and it's hard to find out what everyone's doing, but I'm always excited about partnerships and collaboration, and I think this is a really fantastic pilot that happened in the summer where we've been able to do all these things for students, kind of in one big bucket.

I would say, let's see. I'm looking at the questions. Yeah, impactful ways to connect students. So I heard great things from our student athletes when they would go into the schools and work with the students there. And just being a mentor, something I didn't touch on earlier is I really appreciated that student athletes could work with students in an area that's not athletics focused, so I think at the schools you know they were doing engineering and architecture and arts and for them to get involved that way. I think kind of outside of their comfort zone was really important and sometimes



really special for them to not see themselves as just athletes, but also as students and helping students in that way. Hopefully I hit at least one of your questions there.

### **Elizabeth**

That's great, thanks.

### **Johari**

I would say with the freedom schools, UM, so I, I'm sure Professor Alridge mentioned we were virtual and we were still able to have really good relationships with our families. And I think in part because we had like weekly pickup of supplies and materials and that gave us a chance to interact with families in ways we wouldn't have been able to otherwise. And that was the first year and then the second year we had outdoor activities which, again like allowed us to have time to just kind of have more kinds of informal conversations not focused on, say, curriculum or student behavior, and I think that went a really long way. We always have gotten really positive feedback from parents. Uhm, in terms of the other programs and outreach the UVA departments are doing, I'm not super aware of them, but I'm sure there's a lot. And in terms of like again like that most impactful ways to connect with students, I really think particularly with us being virtual, creating this space to have those like informal, just kind of connections, you know, like making sure - And I remember the SLI's talked about in our virtual program, they just had like 10 minutes for kids to chit chat with each other, you know? And so giving space for like these informal community building that's not like scripted or anything like that went a really long way for just building relationships with students and families. So I think it's definitely something we want to consider as we move into a fully in person space.

### **James**

Yeah, kind of feels similar to other folks who said in terms of what else is going on. I know in the engineering school my office specifically, we are asking that question. So what are other programs that are thinking about K12 stem education around UVA? And I know what's happening. And so we're really trying to in the next couple months or so, like really answer that question 'cause we kind of hear things going on here and there, but we want to create some synergy. So in terms of that first question, we know there's a lot happening in terms of STEM education, but still need to connect the dots there. In terms of building relationships with students and parents, I'd say our staff doesn't have direct contact with them the same way that undergraduate students who are actually teaching their classes do, but just from the feedback of some of the assessment evaluation done from the program over the past two years, which is also virtual by the way, the students do feel like they're highly engaged, and I think similar very much in the Freedom School, we're now thinking about how do we take this really great interaction that we have with undergraduate students and the students who are taking the classes, whether it be again a third grade or 12th grade. How do we change that to in-person, as we are looking forward to this summer. So again, other questions that we're thinking about.

What's most impactful? I think something that's really been helpful for us and for the undergraduate students, is we actually tap the Center for teaching excellence to come in and train some of our students, all of our students really, about like how do you best engage with youth and what does it look like to shape these classes and mold these classes? Both interactions between themselves and the students, but also really be intentional about interactions that the students who are in the class have with each other. I mean, they've been really great just giving us some best practices and some

tips on what that looks like. So we found that to be really impactful and kind of using our experts here at UVA to help our students think about that and how to mold that experience for the folks that are in the classes. So again, newer program, but that's my dogs in the background, but newer program. But again these are some of the questions we're asking ourselves there.

### **Aimee**

So in the two programs that I mentioned, the early vision program and writers eye, we don't historically have any contact with parents when the school groups are coming into the museum. And with our partnership with the Boys and Girls Club at the end of each semester, we have an exhibition of the students' work that the parents and families are invited to. But again, it's you know, like it's a really nice opportunity to meet the parents but it falls far short of building a relationship with them because our contact is, you know, is only with the kids through the club and uhm also, uh, in the like in the program that I ran this summer, it was a it was a six week studio program for teens, so we had eleven students who came all summer to the Chi Phi fraternity house, or Open Studio, and and structured lessons all day, every day. And so in that program we did have a lot more contact with the parents because the parents were coming to drop students off and were sort of regularly coming into the program and also like I'm looking for how to continue that right because it was this really intense thing and then some of the students will probably come back, but I think that we need some we need some kind of way of carrying that through from summer to summer.

I am aware of some of the other programs across the university. We've worked some with the UVA Young Writers Workshop and with Upward Bound. Our partner at upward bound that we had about three years ago left the program, so we haven't worked with them since, but that was a really effective program. They were bringing students to us several times over the summer currently... like was there a question about funding and resources rolled into this that I don't see in the chat? Because currently I have support for a writing program. One of my challenges is that our Writer's Eye program, which has been running for 35 years, is a writing competition, and we do not see in the people who rise to the top in terms of winning, we don't see that being a reflection of our community across Charlottesville. Uhm, there's a preponderance of winners from independent schools, and so we have a donor who's willing to support a creative writing program that we could, you know, we could target students from like Buford and Burley, but I feel like I need a partner for that, you know, to do a sort of like after school creative writing workshop that would be a pipeline for our Writer's Eye program.

Uhm, what other questions am I not answering? I think I'll look at it.

### **Elizabeth**

Yeah, I think you hit a lot of them. Thank you so much Aimee. Uhm, well we want to be respectful of all your time because this went by really fast, so unless anyone has anything like really jumping out of them that they want to share, yeah, we just want to thank you guys so much for taking the time to chat with us. And I know that Ben and the Equity Center are really excited about how this is going to move forward, and we're excited about the work. Yeah, we really appreciate your time.

### **Jess**

Also, if anything comes up that you think that we should know, please feel free just to email us. I think everyone is in the one group email, so if you'll send any extra thoughts you have to us that would be great. Thank you so much.

**Aimee**

Thank you. I think I am not in the group email so if you could add me that would be great.

**Ben**

I think Matthew is on it and so yeah, we'll swap that out so that you're on it Aimee.

**Aimee**

OK, that would be great. Uhm yeah well I would love to stay in touch. If you have any ideas for helping me move my creative writing program forward, I'd love to hear them.

**Ben**

Yeah, we'll definitely follow up, Aimee.

**Aimee**

Alright thanks. OK, take care bye.

## Appendix 3

### Codebook Content

#### Participants

Program Department	Participant
Fralin	Aimee Hunt
Engineering	James Bland
Athletics	Ellen Cook
Freedom School	Derrick Altridge + Johari Harris

#### Theme 1: Feedback

Program	Subtheme	Quote
Fralin	parent informed	we did have a lot more contact with the parents because the parents were coming to drop students off
Freedom School	parent informed	we also engage our parents who were in the Freedom School the previous year
Freedom School	parent informed	very pleased with the turn out and engagement of the parents with the Freedom School,
Freedom School	parent informed	we were virtual and we were still able to have really good relationships with our families
Freedom School	parent informed	we had like weekly pickup of supplies and materials and that gave us a chance to interact with families in ways we wouldn't have been able to otherwise
Freedom School	parent informed	the second year we had outdoor activities which, again like allowed us to have time to just kind of have more kinds of informal conversations
Fralin	parent informed	we have an exhibition of the students' work that the parents and families are invited to.
Fralin	student informed	demonstration of the impact of the program

Fralin	student informed	to see kids come up through the program and develop a sense of agency and like ownership over their experience
Fralin	student informed	step forward into a leadership role to talk about the artwork
Fralin	student informed	they felt confident in that environment and entitled to be in the museum
Fralin	student informed	we don't historically have any contact with parents when the school groups are coming into the museum
Fralin	student informed	falls far short of building a relationship with [parents] because our contact is, you know, is only with the kids through the club
Fralin	student informed	It's exciting to see that sort of chemistry and synergy between the students coming from the community
Fralin	student informed	having an opportunity to see a sort of possible next step for themselves
Engineering	student informed	the students do feel like they're highly engaged
Engineering	student informed	the students do feel like they're highly engaged
Freedom School	student informed	the SLI's talked about in our virtual program, they just had like 10 minutes for kids to chat with each other
Engineering	uva informed	our staff doesn't have direct contact with them the same way that undergraduate students who are actually teaching their classes do
Athletics	uva informed	see more of it from the undergrad student side of the student athletes
Athletics	uva informed	I just don't have as much interaction with the students and the children who are in the program

## Theme 2: Communication

Program	Subtheme	Quote
Freedom School	community outreach	We advertise our programs through the community

Freedom School	community outreach	We work closely with the NAACP
Freedom School	community outreach	We're very active on social media
Freedom School	community outreach	We give 1 pagers to the schools we were targeting to go home in like the folders with kids
Freedom School	community outreach	we also engage our parents who were in the Freedom School the previous year
Freedom School	community outreach	we partner, we worked with Albemarle and Charlottesville schools,
Engineering	community outreach	So emails to different schools that were targeted
Engineering	community outreach	Also send 1 pagers to school counselors and principals
Engineering	community outreach	kind of connecting with local schools community organizations, but also the outreach for the often undergraduate students
Fralin	community outreach	we have E cards that we send to like a comprehensive teacher contact list
Fralin	community outreach	when we have partners, they're coordinating the audience on their side
Fralin	community outreach	I developed a contact list of all the art teachers in the area schools
Fralin	community outreach	sent them information about the program and asked them to like push it out to their students
Engineering	uva department	using our experts here at UVA to help our students think about that and how to mold that experience for the folks that are in the classes
Engineering	uva department	still need to connect the dots there
Engineering	uva department	I know in the engineering school my office specifically, we are asking that question. So what are other programs that are thinking about K12 stem education around UVA?
Freedom School	uva department	in terms of the other programs and outreach the UVA departments are doing, I'm not super aware of them

Athletics	uva department	I would love to know more about what UVA is doing I think
Athletics	uva department	UVA is one of those places that's really big, and it's hard to find out what everyone's doing
Athletics	uva department	I'm always excited about partnerships and collaboration
Fralin	uva department	I am aware of some of the other programs across the university
Fralin	uva department	Our partner at upward bound that we had about three years ago left the program ... They were bringing students to us several times over the summer currently
Athletics	uva outreach	we also utilize social media since they're always on their phones and text messages
Athletics	uva outreach	we have a system called Teamworks where I can just kind of blast broad messaging to all of our students
Athletics	uva outreach	if I happen to pass them in the hallway, usually I just attack
Engineering	uva outreach	And for our students that are actually teaching classes, emails, social media, newsletters
Fralin	uva outreach	within the university for recruiting students to our programs? Uhm yeah, we're using social media. We're reaching out to student group

### Theme 3: Community

Program	Subtheme	Quote
Engineering	representation	it's just connecting the folks all the way from 3rd grade all the way up to the 9th grade to 12th grade with students that I think look like them
Engineering	representation	We're really intentional about the representation and the way that we're targeting
Engineering	representation	creating more access for diverse students who might not have had an opportunity to explore engineering

Engineering	representation	we're definitely working on one kind of to increase our capacity, increase opportunities and get access for engineering specifically for diverse students
Athletics	representation	showing them that you don't have to be a professional athlete if you're interested in sports
Athletics	representation	opening up young students' eyes to the different jobs within athletics
Athletics	representation	It's showing them you can go to school to be a future nutritionist if you're really in food and sports, you can kind of merge those together
Freedom School	representation	the basic idea that they don't have to be on the sidelines, that they can be leaders
Fralin	synergy	synergy between providing educational opportunities for the university students and also providing opportunities for students in the community
Fralin	synergy	the students who are coming through the museum have an opportunity to meet college students
Fralin	synergy	UVA students to gain teaching experience
Fralin	synergy	It's exciting to see that sort of chemistry and synergy between the students coming from the community
Fralin	synergy	having an opportunity to see a sort of possible next step for themselves
Athletics	synergy	I heard great things from our student athletes when they would go into the schools and work with the students there
Athletics	synergy	I really appreciated that student athletes could work with students in an area that's not athletics focused
Athletics	synergy	really special for them to not see themselves as just athletes, but also as students and helping students in that way
Engineering	synergy	it's really cool to see [the UVA students]



		work in groups and work in teams to put together some really cool ideas
Engineering	community building	How do we get the local students prepared for some of these classes if they are interested in stepping into the engineering field?
Engineering	community building	be intentional about interactions that the students who are in the class have with each other.
Fralin	community building	we do not see in the people who rise to the top in terms of winning, we don't see that being a reflection of our community across Charlottesville
Freedom School	community building	giving space for like these informal community building that's not like scripted or anything like that went a really long way for just building relationships with students and families
Freedom School	community building	creating this space to have those like informal, just kind of connections
Athletics	community building	just showing all the possibilities I think is both exciting and what we're doing to help future college students

#### Theme 4: Logistics

Program	Subtheme	Quote
Engineering	content	We kind of leave it up to them in terms of like how the class is going to be structured
Athletics	content	We had nutritionists talk to them. We had trainers talk to them. We had people that work in the business office
Freedom School	content	we serve students who need help in reading and literacy
Freedom School	content	We bring in scholars who have expertise in child development and we hold workshops with the parents once a week
Fralin	timing	so they are paired for the semester
Engineering	timing	students in engineering school to come up with these really cool kind of eight week long kind of classes and and

		sometimes it's just kind of a one a week thing
Athletics	timing	I do have some great coworkers who helped with me the two days that we invited students
Fralin	timing	a six week studio program for teens, so we had eleven students who came all summer to the Chi Phi fraternity house, or Open Studio, and and structured lessons all day
Freedom School	platform	that's been virtual, mainly because of, you know, COVID and everything
Freedom School	staffing	this past year we attempted to do 100 students, attempted to teach 100 students over the summer virtually, but at the end of the day we were able to get about 60 students in the program
Freedom School	staffing	We can only have 10 students in a classroom, and each classroom has one SLI
Freedom School	staffing	Freedom School is staffed by undergraduate students at UVA primarily, and we hire ten teachers, which we call SLI ( servant leader interns)
Freedom School	staffing	we have an executive director, I serve in that position, which my job is basically to raise the funds to hold the Freedom School,
Freedom School	staffing	a project director who oversees the day-to-day operations of the Freedom School
Freedom School	staffing	a site coordinator that is on the ground with the SLI's every day working in classrooms
Athletics	staffing	student athletes are kind of the population that I'm trying to recruit to be volunteers
Athletics	staffing	we have some interns now on staff who I would love to give them some more work in this realm
Athletics	staffing	staffing, wise, I'd say mostly me, myself, and I worked to get our student

		athletes to the schools
Fralin	staffing	We recruit 45 UVA students to serve as mentors each semester
Engineering	staffing	We also use graduate students and some of our faculty to help all this, with some oversight in terms of what is being taught in the classes
Engineering	staffing	staffed by undergraduate students mostly
Engineering	training	we actually tap the Center for teaching excellence to come in and train some of our students
Fralin	training	university student docents who go through a semester-long training and then lead the school tours
Freedom School	training	servant leader interns receive their training in May of each year down at Alex Haley's farm in Tennessee, and they're basically trained in, you know, aspects of leadership, activism, teaching

#### Theme 5: Goals

Program	Subtheme	Quote
Engineering	covid	how do we take this really great interaction that we have with undergraduate students and the students who are taking the classes ... How do we change that to in-person
Freedom School	covid	as we move into a fully in person space
Engineering	growth	how do you best engage with youth and what does it look like to shape these classes and mold these classes?
Engineering	growth	we're really trying to in the next couple months or so, like really answer that question 'cause we kind of hear things going on here and there, but we want to create some synergy
Engineering	growth	we're definitely working on one kind of to increase our capacity, increase opportunities and get access for

		engineering specifically for diverse students
Fralin	growth	we have a donor who's willing to support a creative writing program that we could, you know, we could target students from like Buford and Burley
Fralin	growth	I think that we need some we need some kind of way of carrying that through from summer to summer.
Athletics	staffing	could foresee in the future [staffing] changing
Athletics	staffing	we have some interns now on staff who I would love to give them some more work in this realm