

Project Summary

Title: Pathways to Your Future: Destination UC

Rationale: Less than half (46%) of students complete college once they start (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development) and just over half the students (56%) who embark on a bachelor's degree program finish it within six years (Pathways to Prosperity Study, 2011). Research shows that high school graduates who select majors that are congruent with their interests, are able to match educational plans with requirements of desired careers, have opportunities to explore various careers, attend an institution that is a good match and develop realistic goals are more likely to be successful in achieving their educational and career aspirations (e.g., Kuh, Kinzie, Buckley, Bridges, & Hayek, 2006). As such, young people need opportunities to explore and develop their educational and career interests as well as goal management skills.

Goal: *4-H Pathways to Your Future: Destination UC* is an education and career exploration project designed for youth in grades 7-12. The project goals are to: 1) recruit and prepare young people for a successful educational experience at the University of California (UC) and 2) increase the number of young people who attend UC.

Specific Objectives: Project objectives include: a) connect academic and career aspirations to individual interests, skills or talents; b) increase understanding of pathways to higher education; c) increase identification of individual pathways to higher education; d) increase understanding of how to prepare for UC; e) increase the number of young people who plan to attend UC; f) explore career options; g) improve goal setting and management skills; and h) improve life skills.

Research and Outreach Approach: The project includes a sequenced curriculum, guest speakers and experts including UC alumni, UC staff, and college admissions advisors, a tour of a UC campus and a family workshop component. The proposed three year project will include refinement and further development of an existing curriculum and implementation in diverse communities that promotes positive youth development while preparing young people for college and careers. The first year includes curriculum development, professional development workshops for pilot counties, and a pilot at 3 sites (reaching 60 youth and families). Year 2 includes revisions to the curriculum based on the pilot, professional development workshops for implementation sites, and implementation at 30 sites with 4-H and FFA youth (reaching 600 youth and families). In the final year, products will be available for widespread use including a peer-reviewed curriculum and toolkit. The program and resources will be promoted in 4-H, FFA, other youth-serving organizations and schools. It is important to mention, that the *Pathways* project fulfills the requirements of the Career Technical Education Incentive Grant Program (CTEIG) offered through the California Department of Education to schools and county offices and is an opportunity to leverage partnerships and funding to support sustainability of the project. The project team will also continue to offer professional development workshops across the state at a cost to participants after the grant period ends to sustain the program.

Outcomes and Impacts: Expected short-term outcomes will be assessed via pre and post-test surveys and embedded assessment strategies. It is expected that as a result of participating in the *Pathways* project young people will be able to connect academic and career aspirations to their interests, skills or talents; increase understanding of different pathways to higher education and their pathway; increase understanding of how to prepare for UC and plans to attend UC; explore different careers; and improve goal management and other life skills. Parents will have a better understanding of financial assistance available and how to apply, the college admissions process, and how to support their children's educational and career aspirations. Long-term expected impacts are to increase the number of young people who attend UC, improve retention and reduce the time to degree.