



Closing the Achievement Gap

Strategic Plan



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Four-year college graduates earn \$1.5 million more than those with only a high school diploma.

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Even the most highly regarded college access non-profits have not incorporated SAT prep into their suite of services.

What Motivates Us

Maria deserved the best—she worked hard and earned straight A’s—but no one from Maria’s school ever attends a top college. Maria was a student government leader, a Varsity athlete, and well liked by her teachers. But she was intimidated by the SAT, and her scores showed it. During our SAT preparation program, Maria raised her score 240 points, bringing her near the averages at UCLA, where she is currently a freshman.

For us, Maria’s story is typical: over the past two years, we have helped nearly 600 students at seven program sites across California improve their scores an average of 210 points. When 210 points is nearly the difference in average scores between UCLA (1960) and Cal Poly San Luis Obispo (1730), the results are staggering: attending a college where the average SAT scores are 200 points higher results in an expected \$150,000 increase in lifetime income, and our students who attend private colleges typically qualify for \$200,000 in grants.

Maria is among 500,000 low-income SAT test-takers who score, on average, nearly 300 points lower than their wealthiest peers. At a cost of just over \$200 per student, our programs eliminate more than 75% of this gap and prove, once and for all, that all students can succeed if given the opportunity.

The Need

Over a lifetime, a four-year college graduate will earn \$1.5 million more than if she had only a high school diploma. But at the top 146 colleges, students with family incomes in the top quartile outnumber those in the bottom quartile twenty-five to one (Century Foundation). In fact, low-income students who earned A’s enroll in college at the same rate as high-income students who received D’s (The College Board). The exclusion of the poor is disheartening because top colleges offer generous financial aid and programs for first-generation and minority students.

Shawn Abbott, Stanford’s Director of Admission, told us that “testing is the biggest barrier to low-income students seeking admission to a place like Stanford.” High school GPA and SAT scores have nearly equivalent weight in college admissions, but while students spend thousands of hours earning their GPA, most low-income students take the SAT without any preparation at all. Even though more first-generation college-bound students are taking the SAT than ever before (USA Today), they remain locked out of the test preparation industry.

Moreover, many students lack even basic knowledge about the SAT. For example, the vast majority of the students we work with were unaware that a calculator was permitted during the SAT. SEE College Prep addresses these systemic challenges by providing students the mentorship and know-how to succeed on the SAT, empowering students to attend the colleges they deserve and lift their family’s future generations from poverty.

Competitive Analysis

Within the college access space, College Summit and AVID stand out as the premier national organizations, connecting students to mentors and building a culture of college in low-income communities. While their use of fee-for-service has greatly inspired our model, neither has incorporated SAT preparation into their suite of services. In addition, both organizations rely on teachers to create change, depriving students of youthful role models that they might emulate. These distinctions demonstrate the extent to which our work is complementary. In fact, we are in conversations with J.B. Schramm of College Summit and Pete Garcia, the Board Chair at AVID.

SEE College Prep is significantly more effective than even for-profit companies, which students from disadvantaged backgrounds rarely have access to.



Organization	Avg. Score Improvement	Price	Hours of Instruction	# of Practice Tests	Average Class Size	All instructors taken new SAT?
SEE	210	\$0	30	3	8	✓
Princeton Review	155	\$1,049	30	4	11	
Kaplan	160	\$1,049	21.5	4	12	

Our Program

Students in our five-week program attend university-style courses, which include two 90-minute “classroom sessions” and two 90-minute “small group sessions” each week. Lectures, capped at 18 students, introduce and facilitate discussion of all relevant material. In small group sessions of one to four students, students review homework problems that solidify course material. Students also take three full-length, proctored SAT examinations. Students leave the program with an understanding of over 1,000 real SAT questions and the confidence to succeed.

Our teaching and tutoring teams are composed of top-scoring undergraduates from universities such as UC Berkeley, UCLA, USC, Georgetown, Pomona College, and Stanford; more than half of our tutors scored in the 99th percentile when they took the SAT, and greater than 90% have prior tutoring experience. Since our program staff have recently gone through the admissions process, they can offer guidance to students in all aspects of college preparation. In fact, the majority of our students stated that their SEE tutor was the best mentor they have ever had.

Three-quarters of our staff are students of color; nearly one half are among the first generation in their families to go to college. In fact, we frequently recruit our top alumni, providing students with dedicated mentors from their communities. Ultimately, we hope that our programs will be run entirely by members of the communities we serve.

Designed by Stanford and Ivy League students, our curriculum is the first SAT curriculum tailored to the needs of low-income students. Currently, we are working with Stanford faculty to explore how we might address stereotype threat and use Spanish cognates to teach vocabulary.

Our Impact

Using formerly administered SAT examinations in an authentic testing environment, we see a 210 point improvement between students’ diagnostic and final scores—a compelling proxy for the improvements that students made throughout the course. Additionally, improvements in SAT scores lead to other quantifiable outcomes. Most notably, completion of higher levels of education is causally associated with greater future income. Those who obtain a 4-year degree earn \$1.5 million more than those with only a high school diploma, and those who attend a selective 4-year university earn \$180,000 more. Many of our students also qualify for up to \$200,000 in grant aid.

We are building a culture of SAT preparation in schools where few students go to college. For example, at South El Monte High School three years ago, zero students obtained a fee waiver for the fall SAT; last year, more than fifty fee waivers were distributed, a significant result as the University of California has found that simply by taking the SAT students are much more likely to go to college. Students tell us that our programs—which solidify basic skills in math, reading, and writing—have a positive impact on their everyday

Even in comparison to for-profit competitors Kaplan and the Princeton Review, SEE is significantly more effective.

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More than one-third of SEE's expenses are covered by earned-income; this percentage will increase to more than 50% by 2013.

school performance; we also help students keep pace with their wealthier peers who are much more likely to attend summer enrichment programs.

We are creating jobs in communities where nearly one third of teens are unemployed and, more broadly, a statewide corps of future teachers and civically-engaged professionals. This past summer alone, over fifty undergraduates obtained teaching experience in low-income communities; hundreds will participate next summer.

Community Partnership

Even established programs such as Upward Bound lack the financial resources and SAT-specific expertise to integrate SAT preparation into their programs. Our programs integrate directly into the activities of our community partners and offer us access to motivated students, classroom facilities, tutors, and other resources.

For each prospective partner organization, we conduct an intensive due diligence process that includes an interview and follow-up discussions. Some of the main considerations include whether our mission is truly shared, whether the organization sufficiently prepares its students for college, whether the organization has a demonstrated need for our SAT preparation program, and whether they can meet their responsibilities as a partner organization. We re-evaluate our partner organizations each year.

	SEE College Prep	Community Partners
Curriculum	✓	
Program	✓	
Training	✓	
Instructors	✓	✓
Students		✓
Facilities		✓
Conduct / Discipline		✓
Printing Costs		✓

Our current partners are the Eastside Preparatory School, Stanford College Prep, and the Boys and Girls Club of the Peninsula in the Bay Area; South El Monte High School in Los Angeles; Santa Ana College Upward Bound and UCI Upward Bound in Orange County; and UC San Diego Upward Bound in San Diego. We are in conversations with several new 2010 partners.

Financial Model

Though SEE is a not-for-profit organization, it generates revenue in three ways. Incremental expenses are financed through fee-for-service arrangements with its community partners. Community partners are asked to pay \$100 per student, and in cases where that is not feasible, we work with partners to reach an affordable agreement.

SEE also makes use of federal work study programs at universities, Stanford primarily, to bring in revenue. Federal work study will provide up to 90% of earnings for site directors who are eligible for community service work study programs. We expect about a quarter of our directors to be eligible for this funding.



In 2011 SEE will begin an effort to garner university financial sponsorship by asking universities to pay \$6,500 for services to its community. Our program guarantees that universities have ongoing college access programs that are a service to local communities and serve as educational opportunities for their students. Universities value consistent high quality programs, and we have evidence from Let's Get Ready (a not-for-profit organization with a very similar mission), that universities will provide their support.

While these revenue-generating approaches cover a significant percentage of SEE's expenses, external fundraising efforts are required. In the past year, SEE has raised more than \$75,000 from The College Board, four foundations, and 250 individuals.

Future Growth

In 2009, SEE tripled in size, serving 250 low-income students across California. This coming summer, SEE will expand to serve 490 students at twenty sites in California. To maintain program quality, we must focus on recruitment and selection of quality instructors and community partners as well as our training programs. We now have part-time Recruitment Directors at seven of California's finest universities; we are also working to enhance the quality of our training programs.

In June, SEE's Executive Director and Program Director will become full time employees. In January 2011 SEE's Executive Director will leave his role to become a management consultant for McKinsey & Company, after which he will transition to SEE's Board of Directors. In September 2010, SEE will hire a new Executive Director, who will fully replace our current Executive Director in January. To accommodate future growth, SEE will hire a Programs Associate in September of 2011.

An exciting prospect for 2011 is the possibility of joining forces with Let's Get Ready, a not-for-profit organization founded in 1998 that currently offers college preparation programs to nearly 2,500 high school students with the assistance of 750 college coaches each year. We seek to merge with LGR to expand SEE's programs throughout California by building upon the expertise and infrastructure of LGR. Expenses per student will fall with scale, and sharing of best practices will benefit students across the country.

LGR's track record and experience at scale will help institutionalize our efforts in California, and offer us the credibility to grow quickly. We will expand our existing suite of services by deploying LGR's proven college preparation curriculum, and we will introduce data systems that track long-term student outcomes and a powerful online alumni network that LGR recently invested in. SEE offers a network of relationships in California and a nuanced understanding of the California landscape. SEE's on-the-ground presence enables us to move quickly and thoughtfully without placing significant strain on LGR staff. Finally, SEE offers a distinctive competency in SAT preparation that will benefit students nationally. We are currently sharing best practices that will allow us to produce better quality programs today and prepare for a possible merger in the future.

Governance

In order to effectively serve its students, SEE seeks various kinds of expertise, and has built an Advisory Board that includes Lance Fors, Board Chair of Reading Partners and a Director at JumpStart; Barbara Kibbe, General Partner at Monitor Group and Vice President of Monitor Institute; Chris Bischof, Founder and Principal of Eastside College Preparatory School; and Jeannie Rosenthal, Founder of Let's Get Ready.

SEE will double in size to serve nearly 500 students in 2010.

SEE is considering joining forces with Let's Get Ready, a \$1.4 million college-access non-profit based in New York.

SEE will develop a Board of Directors that draws on experience from both the private and public sectors.



The Team

Once they graduate in June, Garrett Neiman (Executive Director) and Jessica Perez (Programs Director) will become SEE College Prep's first full-time employees.



Garrett Neiman is a senior at Stanford University majoring in Economics and a perfect 2400 scorer on the SAT. An accomplished fundraiser, Garrett has raised more than \$300,000 for various non-profit organizations. In the past, Garrett has advised Google's Education Applications Team, interned at the U.S. Department of Education, and collaborated with Stanford and Harvard faculty on an education research project. Currently, Garrett is a Voting Member of the Stanford University Trustee Development Committee and the Public Service Student Advisory Board and is a Board Observer at the Boys and Girls Club of the Peninsula, Reading Partners, and Girls for a Change.



Jessica Perez is a senior at Stanford University majoring in English. A Quest Leadership Scholar and Gates Millennium Scholar, Jessica has returned the past three summers to work at her alma mater, South El Monte High School. Jessica has helped hundreds of students navigate the college admissions and financial aid process; she has also taught SAT prep through SEE. Jessica's efforts have inspired many students to attend college, and she has personally helped low-income, minority students gain admission to Stanford, Yale, UC Berkeley, and other prestigious institutions.

The core team also includes:

- Jessica Jones, a Harvard graduate who worked at Bain and various non-profits.
- Jeff Margolis, a Stanford PhD graduate and postdoctoral Fellow.
- Amy Do, a Dartmouth graduate who now works in Advertising at Google.

The team also includes 17 Stanford undergraduates, Stanford graduate students, and local professionals who serve in various organizational capacities.