

# Summer Migrant Youth Leadership Institute (SMYLI)

## Evaluation Report: Summer 2016



**COLORADO**  
Department of Education

### INTRODUCTION

The Colorado Migrant Education Program (MEP) has organized and implemented the annual Summer Migrant Youth Leadership Institute (SMYLI)<sup>1</sup> since 2001, with varying formats and venues across the years<sup>2</sup>. The purpose of SMYLI is to motivate and empower 9th – 12th grade migrant students to reach their educational goals and increase their potential as school and community leaders. Program coordinators collaborate with regional directors and community partners to develop a session packed with events and activities that provide college-like experiences (e.g., classes, presentation opportunities), strengthen life skills (e.g., teamwork), and promote and encourage interest in post-high school pursuits (e.g., completing college applications, securing financial aid or employment).

Qualifying migrant students are invited to apply for SMYLI each year. Students are eligible if they are

- Interested in developing leadership skills,
- An active member in the MEP, and
- Enrolled in high school or a High School Equivalency Diploma (HSED) program, or are an Out of School Youth (OSY).

As part of the SMYLI application process, students must meet with a mentor regarding community service endeavors at least three times, complete a minimum of 16 documented community service hours during the school year preceding SMYLI, write a personal narrative essay, submit one letter of recommendation, and create a presentation on their community service.

Former SMYLI participants may apply to serve as mentors if they completed high school or an equivalent and are currently enrolled in college as a sophomore or higher. Application materials include a resume, writing sample, and demonstrated ability to build and nurture relationships.

SMYLI provides ten days of workshops and activities that advance social, academic, and leadership skills; increase self-efficacy, confidence, and self-esteem; provide an early college environment experience and impart knowledge and skills that foster college success, such as communication and presentation skills; and navigate the college and scholarship

### **2016 SMYLI Key Points**

- 78 students aged 13-19 years completed the 2016 SMYLI
- Overall, students showed improvement on all key focus areas
- Students improved College and Career Readiness, Civic Duties and Responsibilities, and Communication Skills
- All students earned one Language Arts high school credit because of their participation in SMYLI
- 33 high school juniors and seniors earned two CSU college credits in a Foundations of Leadership Course

<sup>1</sup> Contact Lauren Radin (Radin\_L@cde.state.co.us) or Sofia Hernandez Sosa (Hernandez-Sosa\_S@cde.state.co.us) for the 2016 SMYLI agenda for greater detail of the event that is the subject matter of this evaluation report.

<sup>2</sup> From 2001 to 2005, SMYLI was a weekend event; from 2006 to 2014, SMYLI was a four day event, and in 2015 and 2016, SMYLI was a ten day event. With Tomas Mejia as director of the MEP, the SMYLI has become a credit-bearing academic and college/secondary preparedness institution grounded in leadership training, whereas it did not have this academic focus for graduation and postsecondary readiness before it became a 10 night program. Teachers (Language Arts beginning in 2016, Foundations of Leadership in 2015, Art in 2015, Public Speaking in 2016), counselors (beginning in 2016) and the use of college mentors (beginning in 2014) are all new additions, and have transformed the SMYLI MEP activity. Before this, SMYLI was a leadership/community service activity using MEP chaperones from the regions, community members for expertise, and SEA staff. SMYLI now incorporates leadership training and civic engagement into an academic program that focuses on secondary and college credit, improved academic skills, and increased postsecondary readiness.



application processes. The SMYLI program strives to reduce the negative impact of educational disruptions; build and enhance leadership, communication, and social skills; inspire and motivate students to become leaders in their communities; and increase academic achievement and the potential to pursue postsecondary education.

## **2016 SMYLI**

The 2016 SMYLI was held Monday, July 18th – Thursday, July 28th in both Estes Park and at Colorado State University (Fort Collins) to provide students with team-building and outdoor activities in Estes Park before beginning the intensive academic, civil, and collaborative learning segments in Fort Collins.

### **Events and Key Components of SMYLI**

The first two days of SMYLI 2016 kicked off with a series of team- and trust-building events in Estes Park. On the second day, students participated in a board-breaking activity designed to help them break through any emotional challenges and establish an atmosphere for sharing personal stories and developing empathy, understanding and trust among participants. Participants wrote words on the board representing barriers, obstacles, and hardships and learned how to break the board with their hands, symbolically pressing past these challenges.

*“The team building activities as a group really helped the students connect. I liked the arts, poetry, and public speaking courses because it was a space where they were able to express themselves and be more confident with speaking in public.”*

*- Mentor feedback*

From the third day forward, events were held at the Colorado State University (CSU) campus in Fort Collins. Students, mentors, and chaperones stayed in campus dormitories. Students woke early and exercised before breakfast, participated in various events throughout the day, and ended with a “closing circle,” during which they met with their designated mentor in small groups of six to eight. In this activity, mentors checked in with the students to see how things were going, and students used journals to reflect on their day--what they learned, what they realized, and any “aha” moments.

*“I like that we get to be in classes and do the activities with the students throughout the day because that makes us connect better with them and helps the overall experience of SMYLI.”*

*- Mentor feedback*

Students attended classes, seminars, and workshops on language arts, delivering presentations, and elements of foundational leadership, worked on their personal essays, and attended various seminars and workshops. Students learned about public speaking, caring for themselves and others (including seminars and workshops on healthy lives, healthy relationships, and drunk driving), the path to civic responsibility (including learning how laws are made and attending a presentation on civics), and the path to college (including information about financial aid and presentations from CAMP and AmeriCorps). Students learned about creative expression (such as preparing and participating in a talent show and guest speakers from Café Cultura), finding their identity (such as presentations from Padres y Jovenes Unidos on individual rights and grassroots community organizing, a presentation from Dr. Mary Ellen Good about the migrant way, and other presentations about the importance of their identity), and career paths (such as a career panel and presentations from Goodwill).

SMYLI provides numerous opportunities for students to refine writing, public speaking, and presentation skills. For example, SMYLI participants are required to develop, revise, and finalize presentations and personal narrative essays, as part of the classes noted above. As previously stated, applications to SMYLI include a presentation based on their community involvement work; during the event, participants have opportunities to work with event staff to improve the quality of their narratives. Students also worked on the computer with individual teachers to refine their presentations, which were all created in either PowerPoint or Prezi. They practiced their presentation multiple times, and on the final full day, students presented to their teacher and peers in small groups. The final presentation was part of their class grade.

Another objective of SMYLI is for students to refine their application narrative to prepare it for college applications. Students receive training and feedback on how to improve the quality of their narrative and are provided the opportunity to make those suggested revisions. While they might not use the exact same essay to apply to college, they gain knowledge in creating college application essays, concluding their participation at SMYLI with this essay-writing skill in their toolbox. Leaving SMYLI, students have college credit, a presentation about their community involvement, and a personal essay to use for their college application(s).

## Key Focus Areas

The five key focus areas of SMYLI 2016 were communication, civic duties and responsibilities, college and career readiness, leadership skills, and life skills. These five focus areas were determined Colorado Department of Education's (CDE) Office of Migrant Education staff to be the most important areas for improvement. The focus areas are derived from the program purpose of Title I, Part C of the Elementary and Education Act (Section 1301), to "support high quality and comprehensive educational programs for migratory children to help reduce the educational disruptions and other problems that result from repeated moves."<sup>3</sup> Events for SMYLI were purposefully planned to develop participants' skills and beliefs regarding these key focus areas.

Communication was interwoven within many of the offerings throughout conference events. The credit-available courses in Secondary Language Arts and Foundations of Leadership and Effective Communication explored the importance of communication in the ability to express oneself in a variety of situations (individual, group, formal and informal) and modalities (written, verbal, non-verbal, presentational). The presentation and participation exercises in Public Speaking with Michele Mares provided opportunities to model and practice effective listening, questioning, and presenting skills.

*"Me gustó conocer a personas con historias diferentes, personas que quieren ayudar a la comunidad." ("I liked getting to know people with different backgrounds, people that want to help the community.")*

- Participant feedback

A general overview of the legislative processes and how a bill becomes law was highlighted in the Civic Duties and Responsibilities focus area. The presenter and role model was the Colorado High School Activities Association (CHSAA) student president. Students participated in activities to explore grassroots organizing strategies, delve into how culture and equity drive social justice issues, uncover their potential as civic agents, and accept the responsibility to become personally involved in their community. Students were encouraged to identify ways in which they could engage in the community.

The focus area of College and Career Readiness included activities in which students learned how to apply for college and how to apply for financial aid. Often students knew what they needed to do, but lacked the additional supports necessary. This session began with students completing their Individual Career and Academic Plan (ICAP)<sup>4</sup> to identify the skills and education needed to pursue their chosen career in order to provide a focus on and connection to college and career readiness. Additional activities allowed students to refine the materials they used in the SMYLI application: the personal narrative essay, resume, and formal presentation. A collaborative partner, Goodwill, sent 12 community volunteers to facilitate workshops intended to help students review resumes, conduct student interviews, and provide specific feedback for students to consider regarding areas of strengths or challenges in their presentation skills and associated materials.

<sup>3</sup> <https://www2.ed.gov/policy/elsec/leg/esea02/pg8.html>

<sup>4</sup> ICAP is a multi-year process that intentionally guides students and families in the exploration of career, academic and postsecondary opportunities. With the support of adults, students develop the awareness, knowledge, attitudes, and skills to create their own meaningful and powerful pathways to be career and college ready. For more information visit: <http://www.cde.state.co.us/postsecondary/icap>

Leadership activities and events were designed to explore personal beliefs and values and provide opportunities to collaborate and share experiences with peers, mentors, and instructors. High school juniors and seniors participated in CSU's experimental Foundations of Leadership and Effective Communication course. The purpose of the course was to prepare migrant students from multicultural backgrounds to serve as leaders in their communities and to engage as leaders in the community-at-large in the interest of achieving a more equitable society. Café Cultura provided context on the importance of sharing one's own migrant or immigrant voice and personal cultural experiences in a positive manner. Students were encouraged to showcase their stories and talents with each other, as well as the whole group.

The last key focus area of SMYLI was Life Skills. Activities for this broad category instilled confidence in caring and standing up for oneself and included how to create and maintain healthy habits, identify consequences of behavior, define priorities, and set and uphold healthy boundaries in relationships. Students developed a personal wellness goal and experienced the benefit of daily exercise. They learned about emotional, behavioral, and social topics that impact 21st century adolescents and practiced skills necessary for making informed choices. Students also wrote a personal care manifesto in their journals. The first evening of SMYLI included an etiquette reception where students had the opportunity to practice business etiquette skills. They were encouraged to engage in meaningful conversation in a variety of settings and build social and professional capacity.

## Implementation

Activities and events were aligned to the goals and objectives of the major focus areas. The institute schedule and agenda were planned to reinforce and build upon skills needed to participate effectively and contribute in subsequent activities.

Not only were classes offered to improve skills in the various focus areas, but the schedule also included numerous opportunities to practice lessons learned. For example, the dinner and dance allowed students to practice etiquette (taught by the Cotillion Academy) and how to meet and greet fellow participants and instructors, and established appropriate social expectations for the conference. Activities such as the board-breaking ceremony were scheduled early in the conference to establish and build relationships. Following the board breaking, participants engaged in exploration of values, beliefs and identity to reinforce feelings of safety and belonging between and among students and their mentors. This exploration of individual identity provided a solid foundation upon which to build rapport, thereby increasing participants' self-confidence and ability to share personal stories.

When possible, role models and mentors shared their stories and experiences to provide real-life examples and empower students. Presentations on embracing and understanding the migrant lifestyle and sharing migrant experiences, in a very positive and accepting climate, allowed presenters and students to relate to each other's experiences and those of their families. Finding common ground and understanding of where their families have been in the past, where they are currently, and the potential and possibilities of the future, while acknowledging those who have "been there, done that" as positive role models, was a unifying factor and inspiration to all.

Prior to starting academic classes, students underwent a series of exercises to build organizational and study skills. Academic classes were scheduled in the morning to capitalize on students' energy and ability to concentrate.

Students completed the ICAP online to help them develop goals, understand the skills and education needed to pursue their chosen career, and focus their time and energy during the conference. For example, during the day devoted to exploring career paths, students signed up for their top six (of 12 offered) career paths chosen the previous day. Twelve community professionals, many of them Latino and former migrant students who are first-generation professionals, met

*"I really enjoyed SMYLI because it brought so much color to my life, it opened me up. I'm not afraid to be myself around everyone here."*

*- Participant feedback*

*"What I really liked about SMYLI is that we had a mentor we could talk to whenever we need someone. Also, the fact that we had a group that was there to always support us. They honestly became like my family because I knew I could always count on them."*

*- Participant feedback*

with SMYLI participants in career booths to provide opportunities for students to network with role models within their careers of interest. This served not only as a venue to understand what the careers entail, but also a chance to learn what barriers the mentors had encountered and how they overcame them along their respective career paths. Students rotated among the booths to hear these personal stories and ask questions.

One or two staff members from the CDE MEP were onsite 24 hours per day. A mentor was always with the students, taking turns so that there would be full coverage and availability. When the group convened in Fort Collins, males and females slept on separate levels of the same dorm, with a mentor on each floor watching the hallway throughout the night.

Additional activity and relationship support was provided by adult chaperones based on the relationships they had built with families in their regions. The SMYLI budget covered housing and meal expenditures for up to two chaperones from each region at any given time, depending on the number of attendees from that region. Regions had discretion in how chaperones were selected and scheduled. Some regions sent two chaperones who attended the entire conference; other regions had a number of selected chaperones who were rotated in and out during the conference.

In 2016, two counselors participated in SMYLI (no counselors participated in prior years). There was no official application for these positions; rather, they were hand-selected by CDE MEP staff. Both were licensed counselors and social workers who had previously worked with the MEP and were themselves former migrant students. The counselors coordinated their schedules so that at least one was on call at any given time. One counselor slept in the dorm with students, while the other lived nearby. While at the YMCA in Estes Park, both counselors were available.

*“A mí lo que me gustó de SMYLI fue que pude conocer a demasiada gente y conocí demasiadas carreras que me encantaron.” (“What I liked about SMYLI was that I could get to know a lot of people and learn about a lot of careers that I was really into.”)*

- Participant feedback

*“Para mí SMYLI es una gran experiencia porque te dan ánimo que asistes a un colegio. Me gustó mucho porque te dan más o menos como ideas como para ir a un colegio y hacer alguien en la vida.” (“For me, SMYLI is a great experience because they give you motivation to attend college. I liked it a lot because they more or less give you ideas like how to go to college and make something of yourself in life.”)*

- Participant feedback

## **2016 EVALUATION**

### **Purpose**

The purpose of the 2016 SMYLI evaluation was to identify which strategies were most significant. Results of this evaluation will be used in planning future events and provide insight into the effectiveness of conference activities in meeting program objectives and outcomes.

### **Program Reach**

The SMYLI student count cap was increased from 60 in 2015 to 80 in 2016. Of the 100 students who applied for SMYLI in 2016, 86 were accepted. The 14 applicants who were not accepted either did not complete the full application (were missing community service or other elements) or had previously attended SMYLI and were not designated as priority for service (PFS); all who completed the application and were identified as Priority for Services (PFS) were accepted. Because SMYLI offers high school and/or college credit and is intended to move students into higher education and leadership roles, all application elements must be completed with fidelity. All students who completed the application



and had previously attended SMYLI but were PFS were accepted. Of the 86 accepted applicants, 81 began SMYLI; three<sup>5</sup> left SMYLI before the end. Therefore, 78 students completed the full SMYLI conference.

Out of the 19 former migrant students that applied to be student mentors, 12 were chosen, three of whom were encouraged to apply as mentor leaders. These three underwent a second application process, which included a phone interview, and two were selected. A third mentor leader was selected based on his work with AmeriCorps and CDE's MEP. The mentor leader role was added in 2016 as a result of increased participation. Mentors received \$2,000 stipends, and mentor leaders received \$2,500 for their additional responsibilities and for coordinating activities.

## Methodology

Evaluation questions included determining the impact of SMYLI activities and events on participants in each of the focus areas. A 28-item survey was designed to pre- and post-test students' knowledge and confidence levels in each focus area. The survey included seven items on Civic Duties and Responsibilities, five on College and Career Readiness, five on Communication, five on Leadership Skills, and six on Life Skills. Respondents rated each statement on a 5-point scale from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree." Students completed the pre-SMYLI survey on the first day of SMYLI, and they completed the post-SMYLI survey on the last day of SMYLI.

*"Todo este programa me gustó. Al principio recuerdo que tenía miedo en que me iba a pasar, en que iba a hacer, y todas esas cosas pero todo estuvo super divertido. Mi mentor fue una de mis favoritas cosas que me pasó." ("I liked everything about this program. At first I remember that I was afraid about what would happen, about what I would do, and everything like that, but everything was really fun. My mentor was one of my favorite things that happened to me.")*

- Participant feedback

The pre-survey was administered as soon as students arrived and the post-survey was administered on the last day. Responses to introductory questions allowed evaluators to match pre- and post-tests for each participant, without asking participants to identify themselves. Students were asked to provide the day of the month that they were born, their favorite color, their favorite food, and the country they would most like to visit. Students also provided their age, grade, and whether or not they speak a language other than English at home. These separate pieces of information allowed matching of pre- and post-tests while protecting the personal identity of respondents.

## OUTCOMES

### Survey Respondents

Of the 81 students who attended the first day of SMYLI, 77 completed all or part of the pre-survey. Of the 78 students who attended the last day of SMYLI, 77 completed the post-survey (not necessarily the same 77 students). In total, 64 pre- and post-surveys were matched on information discussed above and careful examination of handwriting. One student who only completed the first half of the pre-survey was eliminated from all construct-level analyses (those combining items into key focus areas) except Leadership; leadership items were retained because all were included in the first half of the pre-survey. Students who completed the pre- or post-surveys (as described below) ranged in age from 13 to 19 (grades 9-12), and the vast majority (94% of pre-surveys and 96% of post-surveys) reported speaking a language other than English at home.

*"Before I came here I used to be afraid talking in front of others and sharing my opinions, but now I am changed. I'm not afraid to talk in front of others."*

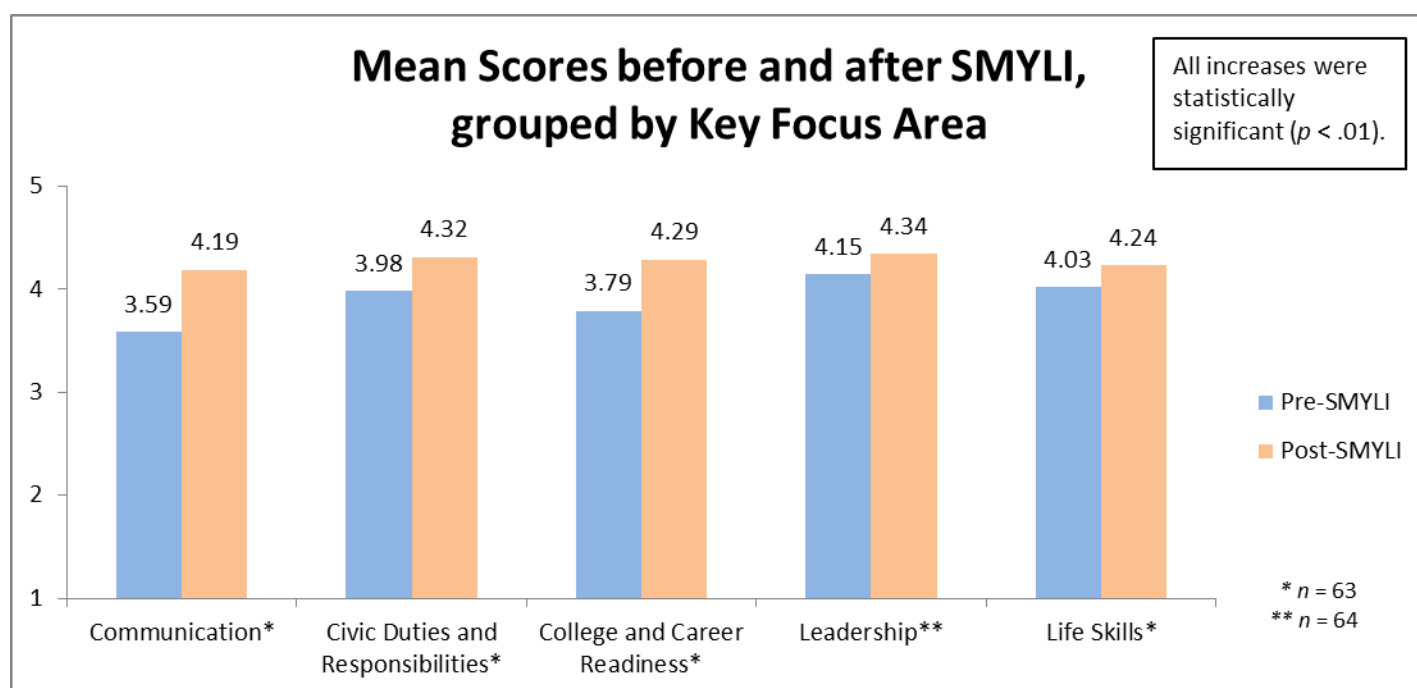
- Participant feedback

<sup>5</sup> Two of the students who left were siblings who were pulled out by a family member, and one student had to leave SMYLI early due to illness but still completed the work and received credit.

## Change in the Key Focus Areas

Survey items were grouped within the focus areas they addressed and responses were summed and divided by the number of items within each focus area. A series of paired samples t-tests was conducted on the differences between the pre- and post-survey responses. All five t-tests yielded statistically significant pre-post increases in mean score ( $p < .01$  for all key focus areas); therefore, in all focus areas, students' knowledge and confidence improved during SMYLI. The means for each of the key focus areas before and after SMYLI are presented in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1. Change in Mean Scores after Participation



For Communication, 51 out of 63 students showed growth (i.e., a higher mean scale score on the post-survey than on the pre-survey). For College and Career Readiness, 49 out of 63 showed growth, and 47 out of 63 showed growth for Civic Duties and Responsibilities. Although most students demonstrated growth for Leadership and Life Skills, the numbers were lower (38 out of 64 for Leadership Skills, and 36 out of 63 for Life Skills). Of the students who increased, the average change for Communication was .82 points, with .20 being the least amount of change to 1.80 being the greatest change; the average change for College and Career Readiness was .70 points, with .20 being the least amount of change to 2.60 being the greatest change; the average change for Leadership was .51 points, with .20 being the least amount of change to 1.20 being the greatest change; the average change for Life Skills was .50 points, with .17 being the least amount of change to 1.23 being the greatest change; and the average change for Civic Duties and Responsibilities was .50 points, with .14 being the least amount of change and 1.29 being the greatest change.

While the majority of students increased in the key focus areas, some decreased between pre- and post-tests. For College and Career Readiness, seven of 63 decreased; eight of 63 decreased for Civic Duties and Responsibilities. For Leadership Skills, 14 out of 64 decreased, and for Life Skills, 16 out of 63 decreased. Although the number of students whose scores decreased from pre- to post-test are few, further investigation into the cause of the decrease is warranted.

There is alignment between the outcomes and the strong focus on communication and college and career readiness (CCR). A majority of the classes and many of the activities focused on communication, and some classes solely focused on college and career readiness. Therefore, it is not surprising that communication showed the largest increase in mean scores and CCR the second highest increase from the beginning to the end of SMYLI. By the end, students reported feeling more prepared to confront the challenge of applying for college and pursuing a career. Finally, students also

showed an increase in Civic Duties and Responsibilities from the beginning to the end of SMYLI; this key focus area also was the emphasis of multiple activities during SMYLI.

As noted above, Leadership Skills did not show as much change as expected. However, Leadership Skills started as the key focus area with the highest initial mean score; this means that there was less room for an increase than there was for other key focus areas. Leadership Skills also remained the key focus area with the highest mean score post-SMYLI. In addition, leadership was an important component of the SMYLI application, suggesting that applicants chosen to attend SMYLI were already demonstrating leadership. Life Skills also did not show as much growth as the other key focus areas, but like Leadership Skills, the original mean score was close to the upper range limit (4.03 out of 5) and did not leave a lot of room for an increase. In addition, life skills is an extremely broad topic area and is difficult to cover in a few items; not all life skills that were taught at SMYLI could be addressed in the survey.

*"I loved everything about SMYLI. It made me a confident leader and made me want to make a difference in the community even though I am from a migrant family and I am a minority."*

*- Participant feedback*

## Change in Individual Items

Regarding individual survey items, the most significant areas of change occurred in presentation skills (Communication), understanding how to apply for college and financial aid (College and Career Readiness), and knowledge of how the community influences the creation of laws (Civic Duties and Responsibilities) [See Table 1 for items that showed the most change over time; all changes were statistically significant ( $p < .01$ )]. The survey item "I can comfortably present in front of a group" (Communication) showed a greater increase than all other items. Many students came with little or no presentation experience, so the multiple opportunities to refine their presentation and public speaking skills and increase their confidence were valuable. Many arrived at SMYLI without a thorough understanding of college and financial aid application processes. The change in individual items also indicated that students gained a deeper understanding of what employers look for in a resume and interview and the steps for writing a quality narrative essay such as those required in college applications (College and Career Readiness). Students returned home believing more strongly that their participation in civic matters impacts the community (Civic Duties and Responsibilities) and feeling more comfortable sharing ideas in a group discussion and encouraging others to share their stories (Communication) [See Table 1 below for the means before and after SMYLI for each of the 11 items that showed the greatest change over time, greater than 0.35 out of 5]. Although the mean of all 28 items increased from the beginning of SMYLI to the end, only 21 of the 28 had statistically significant increases.

*"I couldn't be more thankful than what I am. SMYLI has been one of the best experiences in my life. I enjoyed a lot and had a great time and the best part is that I learned many important things that will be useful in my life. I feel powerful and I love the staff. They all are great. I will always recommend SMYLI to every single migrant person I meet."*

*- Participant feedback*



Table 1. Items with the Most Change Over Time

Items with the most change over time	Pre SMYLI Mean	Post SMYLI Mean	Change	Key Focus Area
I know all the steps to applying for college and financial aid.	2.95	3.70	0.75*	College and Career Readiness
I can describe how members of the community can influence the creation of laws.	3.52	4.17	0.65*	Civic Duties and Responsibilities
I know what employers look for in a resume and in an interview.	3.75	4.38	0.63*	College and Career Readiness
My participation impacts the community (for example, religious group, cultural group, school, neighborhood, town).	3.69	4.27	0.58*	Civic Duties and Responsibilities
I feel comfortable sharing ideas in a group discussion with people I don't know.	3.52	4.06	0.54*	Communication
I encourage others to share their story.	3.77	4.30	0.53*	Communication
I understand the steps to writing a narrative essay.	3.92	4.44	0.52*	College and Career Readiness
I feel comfortable expressing my personal opinion.	3.81	4.19	0.38**	Communication
I feel comfortable interacting in professional settings.	3.79	4.16	0.37*	Life Skills
I can describe how executive, legislative and judicial decisions affect community members.	3.44	3.80	0.36**	Civic Duties and Responsibilities
* $p < .001$ ** $p < .01$				

## CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND NEXT STEPS

The 2016 SMYLI was successful in increasing participants' knowledge and skill levels in the five focus areas. Many positive trends were noted in students' perceptions of and confidence in their communication skills and understanding their civic duties and responsibilities. The survey results also support the primary objective of SMYLI, which is to empower and prepare students for applying to college and/or pursuing desired career pathways. Although more modest increases were noted in leadership and life skills, participants reported an increase in those focus areas as well. Overall, improvements between the beginning and end in all focus areas are noteworthy.

A number of recommendations can be made based on lessons learned from the 2016 SMYLI evaluation. Feedback from students indicated that they wanted more time between activities and classes to reflect on and process lessons learned before moving on to the next event. SMYLI challenges students with a very full and demanding agenda, and setting aside additional time for reflection would help ensure that students have the continued capacity for learning.

Baseline data showed that students who applied to and attended SMYLI were already high-scoring on leadership and life skills. The application process might be a potential source of bias in this regard since the application requires some level of leadership skills and community involvement. Further investigation into the leadership and life skills activities is warranted. Perhaps, given the level of skills with which students enter the program, more rigorous and higher level leadership and life skills curriculum might be warranted.

Anecdotal evidence and comments indicate an impact on the college student mentors and that having a counselor available at all times is effective. SMYLI events and activities create situations and opportunities for students to face and address challenges and obstacles, sometimes of a personal or emotional nature. Having access to a counselor helps

students deal with emotions that may surface when participating in conversations, classes, or presentations pertaining to significant life events (e.g., interruptions in school, friendships, or extracurricular activities due to the migratory lifestyle). CDE MEP staff reported that the counselors established trust and became leaders of the mentors, likely contributing to the positive trends identified in the survey results.

Some challenges were encountered at SMYLI in 2016, though these were primarily due to the vendor and logistics. For example, the distance between venues for activities and classes left students feeling rushed and short on time. At one point, students needed to access the library but found it locked when it was expected to be open. In 2017, SMYLI will move to Adams State, a smaller campus, and some of the logistical complications encountered at CSU due to the size of the campus will likely be alleviated.

Some changes planned for the 2017 SMYLI will be incorporated into the next evaluation. The conference agenda and courses will resemble those in the past; however, more emphasis on science is being built into the programming for 2017. Adams State has provided STEM supports for the Binational Program and may be able to do the same for SMYLI. MEP staff would like to include more practice in the area of personal storytelling, including presentations with Native American storytellers.

This was the first SMYLI evaluation, and several positive impacts were noted that align with the program's goals and objectives. Continuing to evaluate the program in subsequent years will help identify trends across years, and the 2016 evaluation will inform and support future events planning. Future evaluations will include other outcomes, such as long-term impacts on participants (to the extent practical given restrictions on tracking students across time), as well as analyzing the program's impact on the college-level students that participate as mentors and role models. Consideration will be given to how to analyze the impact of each individual activity, event, or class, without burdening the already-packed schedule with additional data collections throughout the two weeks.

## Report Authors

- Alexandra Tolentino, Ph.D.
- Barbara Vassis
- Nazanin Mohajeri Nelson, Ph.D.