

Evaluation of the Jones-Zimmerman Academic Mentoring Program (JZAMP)

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Introduction

Over the past three years, I mentored a student named Arianna through a program called the Jones-Zimmerman Academic Mentoring Program (JZAMP). Twice a week, I would make the fifteen-minute walk to Wexler-Grant Community School from Yale's campus to help her with her homework, lead and participate in enrichment activities for the group of kids as a whole, hang out with her during gym time, and plan field trips among other tasks. I had high expectations for Arianna right away. I expected her to make tangible progress academically, on both her reading and math skills. I also wanted her to see me as someone she could trust and come to with any problems or questions. At the time, I didn't realize how idealistic it was to place these expectations on young adolescents as an outsider who wasn't yet entirely familiar with the school and the New Haven community. I set my expectations based on the quality of my educational experience, which I quickly realized was vastly different compared to what I observed at Wexler. I frequently wondered whether the broad goals I had for Arianna were attainable and how I could measure our progress in a balanced way, as well as measure the impact of JZAMP as a whole process.

This research is my attempt to gain insight into these initial musings. To date, the Marie and John Zimmerman Foundation has not collected comprehensive data regarding the efficacy of JZAMP at Yale aside from simple attendance data for mentors and students. For this reason, the current research seeks to fill the dearth of qualitative and quantitative information by gathering data on the program in order to identify successful components and areas for improvement. This research has the added benefit of informing funders of the extent to which their grants have impacted our students and proves valuable for future directions of JZAMP and similar after-school mentoring programs. The primary focus of the case study is to analyze and evaluate the

efficacy of JZAMP through the lens of the mentors' perspectives working with their students. Moreover, perspectives from administrators at the two schools as well as from Dwight Hall are included to provide a more holistic view of the program. These accounts will situate JZAMP within the larger context of after-school mentoring programs across the United States. Politically, after-school programs continue to exist in a setting of diminished resource availability. Evaluating their efficacy will help to optimize the allocation of resources in the education sphere. The aggregate of these diverse contexts and perspectives will illuminate the answers to the following major research questions:

1. How effective has JZAMP as a process been over the past three years, in terms of students' academic achievement and social-emotional development?
2. How do mentors evaluate the effectiveness of the process of JZAMP in terms of their personal experiences and observations of student outcomes, and are these metrics aligned with best practices from the educational literature?
3. How does the context of the program, as one situated in New Haven and implemented through Yale, impact its efficacy?
4. What should be the future directions of JZAMP and similar programs with regard to funding, curriculum, and leadership?

Because of my history of involvement with JZAMP, I am a member of the very group that I seek to examine. My experience with the program and education studies background positions me such that I can analyze the program from both an internal and external perspective, and it is this added internal perspective that I hope will give the project more depth, insight, and meaning. However, because of my personal involvement with the program, I cannot avoid all bias to draw fully objective conclusions. This bias may take the form of selectivity in terms of

what data I choose to present and how I interpret mentor responses. My experiences may cast either a more positive or negative light on various aspects of the program. Because of this, I have drawn data from a variety of sources in order to present a balanced account of JZAMP.

Research Methodology

The primary methodology consisted of interviews with mentors and other JZAMP stakeholders. In total, 18 mentor interviews were conducted with equal samples from mentors at Celentano and Wexler-Grant (9 each). On average, the duration of mentor interviews was 35 minutes. Questions spanned two broad categories detailing mentors' relationships with their mentees and mentors' perceptions of various components of JZAMP, such as its successes and challenges. The principal from Wexler-Grant, the assistant principal from Celentano, and the program manager at Dwight Hall were also interviewed. The interviews with school employees were approximately twenty minutes, focusing on how each school supports after-school programs. The interview with the program manager was one hour, focusing on administrative aspects of running JZAMP. Formal, written consent was obtained before interviews occurred to ensure confidentiality of responses and to protect the rights of interviewed subjects. Mentor data was then coded by question to reveal main themes. Though direct observation was not a formal component of data collection, my observations and experiences as a mentor in the program contributed to data analysis and interpretation.

Background on After-School Mentoring Programs

After-school programs gained increasing attention from both the research and policy spheres of education starting in the late 1990s. These programs were borne in the same context of standards and accountability that witnessed the passage of No Child Left Behind from the federal government, leading to challenges in defining the purposes and parameters of after-

school programs broadly. Indeed, the educational literature continues to struggle to define the role of after school programs, with some researchers defining these programs as providing a “protected space for play and exploration” and others asserting that they are “supervised activities intentionally designed to encourage learning and development outside of the typical school day” (Halpern, 1999; Little, Wimer, & Weiss, 2008). The latter believe that after-school programs should supplement in-school learning to compensate for the lack of quality instruction in failing schools and districts, with an emphasis on improving literacy and school performance (Halpern, 1999). The debate over whether after-school programs should be held accountable to in-school standards remains unresolved. Despite a lack of consensus on the pedagogical benefit of after-school programs, action from the policy and funding sides ascended rapidly, culminating at a peak investment of \$3.6 billion from the federal government in 2002 (Durlak & Weissberg, 2007). State, local, and philanthropic funding of after-school programs did not follow the same pattern and remained constant. Despite heavy federal investment, most of the funding for high-quality after-school programs continues to stem from parent tuition payments (Earle, 2009). Rhodes & Dubois (2008) recognized the need for better alignment between research and practice so that policymakers did not sacrifice the quality of programs for their quantity. Research in after-school programs, particularly after-school mentoring programs, lagged and did not garner significant focus until the early 2000s, peaking in the late 2000s. Mentoring programs are distinct from typical after-school programs because of their emphasis on relationship-building, which is heightened compared to that of ordinary child care. Mentoring can be defined as the active, deliberate cultivation of skills that occurs in a trusted relationship.

Organized mentoring programs have a history dating to the early 1900s when reform-oriented initiatives regarding juvenile justice led to the founding of Big Brothers Big Sisters of

America (BBBSA), which remains one of the largest organizations providing mentoring services today (Rhodes & Dubois, 2008). It is particularly noteworthy that mentoring programs first emerged to serve 'at-risk' youth, or at the time those caught in the juvenile justice system with the potential to be rehabilitated. However, mentoring programs also emerged in the context of a growing need for after-school child care related to demographic and parent employment changes. Participation continued to grow because of a social and economic need for after-school care. After-school programs, often with separate staff, were viewed as a solution when schools and teachers themselves did not take on the challenge of extending their regular hours due to political constraints. Since then, similar programs have grown rapidly due to federal imperatives and widespread strong support, including those combining mentoring with academic tutoring, though these hybrid programs remain proportionally few. In 2006, roughly three million students participated in after-school programs with the federal government funding \$100 million annually since 2004. Funding flows primarily to schools and private nonprofits, who are the largest providers of after-school and mentoring programs (Halpern, 1999).

Research from the turn of the century suggests that at-risk youth benefit most from mentoring programs (Dubois et al., 2002). At-risk youth include those demonstrating emotional or behavioral problems, a lack of connectedness with the school environment, low academic performance, and truancy. Risk factors can also include low socioeconomic status and growing up in a single parent home. While 11% of students in kindergarten through eighth grade participate in after-school programs in the U.S., data reveal that 10-30% of low-income children participate in mentoring programs and that such programs can have positive effects on achievement for at-risk of failing students. Mentoring programs facilitate building resilience and other socio-emotional characteristics important for achieving academic success (Lauer et al.,

2006). Early research found that forming positive relationships with adults outside of the family is correlated with higher resiliency in at-risk children (Rhodes, 1994). While at-risk youth may receive greater marginal gains, mentoring benefits all children by providing both child care and relationships with adult role models who teach additional skills.

Some research has also supported differential effects of mentoring by age and gender. In one evaluation of school-based mentoring serving predominantly low-income Latino students, Karcher (2008) found that elementary school boys and high school girls benefitted the most from mentoring. These two groups reported increased connectedness to peers, self-esteem, and social support from friends but not for grades or personal social skills (Karcher, 2008). Mentor gender did not significantly impact student outcomes on these measures. However, male mentors tended to provide more professional and career support while female mentors tended to provide more emotional support (Rhodes, Litchfield, & Walsh-Samp, 2008). Students across different age groups shared similar needs as well, such as the importance of spending time with their mentors and engaging in shared activities, building trust, and identifying with and seeing their mentor as a role model (Liang et al., 2008). However, the value placed on these characteristics manifests differently in practice across age, with older students valuing autonomy more and expressing a desire to balance independence with mentor connectedness and younger students expressing a desire to feel empowered by their mentors (Liang et al., 2008). Though age may impact the efficacy of mentoring, developmentally appropriate programming can ensure benefits for all age groups. With respect to gender, for girls, the longer the relationship, the more girls rated mentoring as satisfying and helpful. Long-lasting mentoring relationships may be especially protective for girls given the context that girls reported significantly lower levels of parental trust and higher levels of parental alienation than boys before the start of mentoring (Rhodes,

Litchfield, & Walsh-Samp, 2008). While after-school mentoring programs benefit all participants, they may be especially valuable for at-risk students with some possibility for varied age and gender effects.

Mentoring programs typically take place in schools, community spaces, and religious centers. Because half of all programs rely on shared spaces, the majority of mentoring programs do not have access to a playground, park, or library, or resources to engage in opportunities involving art or music (Halpern, 1999). A major challenge facing programs is coordinating the space to meet the needs of after-school and regular school activities (Scott-Little, Hamann, & Jurs, 2002). Some mentoring programs are field-based, such that mentors and mentees arrange to meet at mutually convenient times and locations. These programs allow for more flexibility. Most programs are site-based, specifically school-based. School-based programs are more likely to focus on academics or target students who are struggling academically (Karcher et al., 2006). Thus, program location and facilities play a role in the purpose and impact of mentoring programs.

As participation in after-school programs has proliferated from 3 to 10 million students in the past decade, mentoring has evolved to encompass several relational forms (NCES, 2016). For example, cross-age peer mentoring utilizes students as mentors. These relationships typically form around school-based sites and focus more on developmental achievements and developing the mentor-mentee relationship rather than on specific tasks. Both high school and college age mentors work with elementary and middle school mentees in this form of mentoring. The evidence for the advantage of using college students as mentors is mixed in that college students have more schedule commitments and less time to devote to mentoring compared to high school students (Whiting & Mallory, 2007). However, college students are positioned similarly as

middle school students in that they are also experiencing a transitional point in their lives marked by new social groups and self-concepts (Good, Aronson, & Inzlicht, 2003). While scheduling may be a challenge, the relational value of college students could make them worthy mentors. In addition, intergenerational mentoring utilizes older adults who may be from the surrounding community. This form of mentoring is advantageous in that older adults may have more time and expertise than students. Online mentoring takes place remotely and can involve one-time learning or career-related support or a more sustained relationship. Finally, group mentoring involves a mentor meeting with a group of mentees instead of individually one-on-one. Some researchers argue that this form of mentoring may benefit minorities, especially those whose cultures reflect a collectivist attitude (Karcher, 2006). In contrast, Lauer et al. (2006) found that one-on-one mentoring found larger positive outcomes over group mentoring. Various mentoring programs may utilize different relational approaches, but the program must possess a relational emphasis in order for it to be considered mentoring.

Holding the participant demographics, context, and form of mentoring programs constant, several best practices have emerged from the literature. Meta-analyses of dozens of programs have identified best practices of after-school mentoring programs spanning four categories: a defined purpose, appropriate program structure, high quality staff and supportive relationships, and parent involvement.

Evaluations have found that successful mentoring programs must have a well-articulated focus and purpose. One study determined that intentional focus on an identified desired outcome is the most important component of the program, regardless of whether that outcome is related to academics, social-emotional development, physical and mental health, or other (Little, Weimer, & Weiss, 2008). For example, in 21st Century mentoring programs, one of the most popular

after-school programs in the U.S., a focus on social-emotional development led to increased self-esteem, self-control, better communication skills, as well as decreased anxiety and depression among participants (Little, Weimer, & Weiss, 2008). Moreover, a review conducted by Gensemer (2000) on cross-age and peer mentoring programs found that the selection of key academic behaviors and skills to improve upon contributed significantly to the success of the program. Connecting program to school-day curriculum or tailoring programs to follow learning in schools has also been shown to add value (Scott-Little, Hamann, & Jurs, 2002). When a program was not aligned to schools and curriculum, its quality suffered. However, an academics-only focus may not lead to student benefit, especially if students have negative preexisting attitudes toward the school environment (Little, Weimer, & Weiss, 2008). Instead, combining academics with enrichment or other social activities that help develop relationships and social-emotional skills is more effective (Rhodes, 2004). Defining a thoughtful purpose not only assists in clarifying program structure and content but also creates a benchmark by which to measure progress.

Similarly, an appropriate program structure fosters the ability of a program to meet its goals. The program should cater to developmental needs, with metrics such as acquiring healthy habits, forming positive attitudes toward academic achievement, getting along with peers and adults, and acquiring appropriate behaviors across different contexts (Mahoney et al., 2005). At different developmental periods, these metrics enable staff and other stakeholders to measure student progress and individualize feedback as part of a whole person approach. In addition, research has found that programs for older students should be more recreational than those for younger students (Miller, 2003). Program structures should also set clear expectations, guidelines, and methods of monitoring student behavior and progress (Mahoney et al., 2005).

Programs should maintain a routine schedule and provide opportunities for one-on-one tutoring. In an evaluation of a mentoring program called Project RAISE, researchers discovered that strongly implemented one-on-one mentoring increased the likelihood of program success especially on student attendance, with students attending one more week of school on average than non-RAISE students (McPartland & Nettles, 1991). Sustained attendance and participation is critical to program success because benefits to students' academic performance appeared to dissipate after students stopped attending in an After School Matters program in Chicago (Little, Wimer, & Weiss, 2008). In addition, Lauer et al. (2006) found benefits in their meta-analysis that one of the strongest effects of one-on-one tutoring was improved reading ability, predominantly in elementary school students. Finally, program monitoring is necessary for continual improvement and for individualizing the experience to address student needs. Poorly implemented programs that do not have a clear structure or consistent monitoring have the potential to produce adverse effects on students' developmental outcomes (DuBois et al., 2002). For example, insufficient planning and follow-up can lead to failed relationships, such as those lacking open communication, that result in disappointment (Rhodes, 1994). When program structures are well-implemented, programs can focus on other key components such as developing supportive relationships.

The success of after-school mentoring programs relies on the quality of relationships formed from participation in the program. Ideal mentoring relationships are characterized by strong connections centered on mutuality, trust, and empathy. Mentees must trust that their mentors will refrain from judgement and feel comfortable making joint decisions (Herrera et al., 2000). Relationships should be student-centered, and mentors and mentees must spend time together consistently over a significant period of time. The expectation of frequent contact with a

mentor is a key component of success, and it was this expectation that moderated positive student effects in dozens of after-school mentoring programs (Dubois et al., 2002). Supportive relationships were a significant factor in the retention and sustained participation of students, which has been proven to lead to greater benefits. Correspondingly, mentors must also sustain participation. The absence or inconsistent attendance of mentors can lead to a decline in mentees' self-esteem and produce negative effects (Karcher, 2005). Other features of supportive relationships include the feeling of physical and psychological safety, positive social norms, and opportunities for belonging (Mahoney et al., 2005). Mentoring relationships through Boys and Girls Clubs exhibiting these features have been strongly correlated with higher aspirations for career goals, positive body images, enhanced conflict resolution, and an avoidance of drugs and pregnancy. Critically, these relationships could form because of a clear program structure and thoughtful implementation involving staff stability and scheduled time for mentors and mentees to interact informally (Rhodes, 2004). In another case, mentoring relationships in the Healthy Kid Mentoring Program led fourth grade mentees to develop higher self-esteem and increased feelings of connectedness with their school, peers, and community, both of which are protective factors against risky behavior (King et al., 2002; Karcher, 2005). The program utilized techniques such as having students keep dialogue journals with their mentors and creating happiness booklets. Similar work by Converse & Lignugaris (2009) found that students in mentoring programs significantly reduced their number of office referrals and improved their attitudes toward school. Rhodes (2004) posits that supportive relationships lead to positive student outcomes through mechanisms such as enhancing students' social skills and emotional well-being, improving cognition through instruction and conversation, and providing role models. These skills improve students' relationships with their communities and peers, the best

early predictor of positive adult adaptation (Hartup, 1993). Lastly, parental involvement and support is a key factor in the success of mentoring programs so that what is learned both in and after school can be built upon at home (Rhodes & DuBois, 2008). Best practices related to program purpose, structure, relationship quality, and parental involvement are clearly linked to positive student outcomes in after-school mentoring programs.

On the other hand, mentoring programs continue to face unresolved challenges. A lack of planning for program structure and activities and a lack of quality staffing pose problems for program implementation (Halpern, 1999). The latter also impacts the quality of relationships that staff can develop with mentees. Untrained mentors typically exhibit “random episodes of discipline mixed in with general warmth and caring” which set inconsistent expectations for student behavior (Halpern, 1999). If mentors lack the expertise to individualize feedback for students and create developmentally appropriate activities, then students will not emerge with as enriching an experience as otherwise. Indeed, mentors with a teaching background or those who received ongoing training had increased positive impacts on students (DuBois et al., 2002). A lack of staff quality also points to issues in the quality of training for mentors across programs. Aside from mentor quality, mentor quantity and turnover is a significant challenge. Across mentoring matches, as many as half of matches terminate in the first or second month (Karcher, Nakkula, & Harris, 2005). This in turn leads to difficulties in sustaining student participation in the program, which may feed back into an inability to sustain mentor participation as well. Because attendance and participation are key factors in developing the close and supportive relationships that produce positive student outcomes, retaining both mentors and students is an important focus for the field. Lastly, transportation to and from the program location and financing has been a consistent challenge facing after-school mentoring programs. Karcher

(2009) advocates for the use of volunteer mentors such as high school and college students as a potential for lower cost, though the task would be labor-intensive for both groups. Funding has remained a problem despite heavy federal investment, leading to questions of resource efficacy in after-school mentoring programs and whether funds can be more efficiently targeted toward other educational spheres or services.

Broadly, research evaluating the efficacy of after-school mentoring programs has found significant, positive but small effect sizes on participating students. This result has been consistent across a number of meta-analyses and individual program evaluations. Evaluation metrics are typically based on the identified best practices and their effects on a range of student outcomes, the most commonly studied of which are self-esteem, attitudes toward school and achievement, social connectedness, frequency of risky behavior, attendance, and academic performance. In addition, the programs most frequently studied are those composed of low-income and minority students (Scott-Little, Hamann, & Jurs, 2002). Evaluations can be both formative, or ongoing, or summative, undertaken at concluding or final program time periods. An evaluation of the evaluation methodologies of after-school programs found that most evaluations were conducted by external evaluators and published outside peer reviewed journals, most experimental studies reported problems with design or data collection, and most evaluation measures were not standardized. Direct observation was also underrepresented as an evaluation procedure (Scott-Little, Hamann, & Jurs, 2002). On the other hand, most programs were implemented consistently with outlined program goals, with most programs reporting gains in students' levels of self-esteem, attendance, and rates in which they turned in homework, along with lower levels of anxiety and depression (Scott-Little, Hamann, & Jurs, 2002). These findings are optimistic and suggest that while program evaluation needs more robust experimental designs

and reliable or standardized measures, after-school programs show promising results especially with respect to social-developmental growth. Future directions of research should also focus on cost-benefit analyses of after-school mentoring programs in effort to optimize resource allocation in a political context of diminished resource availability. DuBois et al. (2002) found that the degree of impact of mentoring programs is smaller compared to other youth educational or mental health services. However, this difference could be due to preexisting funding differences between program types and illuminates the need for more substantive research into costs and benefits. The relative additive value of after-school mentoring programs remains an open question.

With regard to future directions of after-school mentoring programs, strengthening programs through licensing, accreditation, and professional development are important steps. Licensing is a major tool for influencing program quality (Halpern, 1999). However, each of these possibilities requires expanded funding. Because the effect size of mentoring programs is small, it will be an important policy decision to determine whether increased investment in this area is optimal. Finally, as the federal government continues to emphasize the use of standards, for example through its implementation of the Common Core, articulating a purpose for after-school programs broadly becomes increasingly necessary. Otherwise, programs will continue to diverge in choosing to emphasize social-emotional or academic dimensions, each with different outcomes. As a hybrid model, JZAMP may be unique in its scope and outcomes. The following study seeks to contribute to the conversation on the efficacy of after-school mentoring programs and clarify future directions for both policy and research.

JZAMP Design and Evaluation

The evaluation of JZAMP follows the four categories of mentoring program best practices identified in the literature: clear, defined goals and purpose, appropriate program structure, high-quality mentor relationships, and stakeholder involvement. Alignment with all four categories of best practices is a strong predictor of a successful program.

Overview

The Jones-Zimmerman Academic Mentoring Program (JZAMP) is a three-year after-school program based in two New Haven middle schools, Wexler-Grant Community School and Celentano Biotech, Health, and Medical Magnet School. Wexler-Grant and Celentano run parallel but distinct programs. Though independently sponsored by the Marie and John Zimmerman Foundation, the program is coordinated through Dwight Hall at Yale, an independent non-profit that focuses on community outreach and increasing student participation in service. The foundation also supports the program at a small number of other universities in Connecticut. The current cohort of JZAMP is the fourth of its kind in both schools, and upon completion of its third year this spring, JZAMP will have run for a total of twelve years. Through the program, Yale students are recruited in their sophomore year to begin mentoring a group of sixth grade students and continue with them through their completion of middle school. Mentor recruitment entails an application and interview with current mentors. On the middle school side, students enter the program voluntarily by completing a brief application. In practice, every student who applies is admitted. Because of the voluntary nature of the selection process, some students who do not traditionally fit the criteria of ‘academically at-risk’ also participate. Nonetheless, the majority of JZAMP students qualify for free and reduced lunch and are predominantly black or Hispanic, which is representative of the wider school demographics. At

Wexler-Grant, 94% of the student body identify as black or Hispanic. Comparatively, 87% of Celentano students identify as black or Hispanic. In both schools, 70% qualify for free and reduced lunch. According to the JZAMP structure, each mentor is paired with two mentees whom they work with consistently on academic skills. For the purpose of this study, a mentor is defined as a trusted adult role model who supports students with social-emotional and academic development. The mentoring relationship is elevated compared to those in typical after-school programs. The foundation believes that such a triangular structure allows students to learn how to teach and support each other while retaining individualized attention from the mentor. In practice, mentors typically work with mentees one-on-one during academic time. Participation in JZAMP involves students meeting with their mentors at least twice a week for three hours. The program runs Monday through Thursday during the period of overlap between the Yale and New Haven Public School System calendar years. Typically, this period is late September to early December, followed by a winter recess and resuming from late January to early May.

JZAMP Purpose and Goals

JZAMP's declared goal is to "dramatically improve graduation rates among academically at-risk students" (JZ Foundation, 2012). The foundation emphasizes the development of academic skills, particularly in reading and writing in order to increase graduation rates. The program manager at Dwight Hall articulated, "the foundation only really wants to know if people are graduating from high school after being a part of the program." However, fulfilling the overarching goal not only involves improving academic skills but also necessitates improving the non-cognitive skills crucial to academic success, such as persistence, a strong work ethic, and self-advocacy. Though these ancillary goals play an important role in determining JZAMP's scope and activities in practice, neither Dwight Hall nor the foundation states these goals

officially. The program manager agrees with the goal of the foundation, but believes that successful after-school programs should “keep kids safe, inspire life-long learning, and help working families.” He further admits that the “immediate goals of JZAMP aren’t clearly defined by Dwight Hall— [if so] we would be developing stronger systems for measuring those things.” Certainly, a lack of more specific, concrete goals that facilitate meeting the declared goal inhibits the ability to measure progress. The inherent nature of attempting to improve high school graduation rates while students are in middle school is also nebulous because the skills that current middle school students need to succeed in high school are fluid and developmentally-dependent. The program manager is more curious not only about mentee development but also about how participation as a mentor influences their decisions made at Yale and in the future. On the school side, both the principal at Wexler-Grant and the assistant principal at Celentano agree that the purpose of after-school programs and JZAMP is to give students additional time and support for academics, especially as the Wexler-Grant principal states, “those students with deficits in reading and math.”

Aside from the declared goal, of which thirteen of the eighteen current mentors (72%) were able to identify without explicit prompting, many mentors either believed that there existed an actual goal of the program in practice that was distinct from the stated, or that the overarching goal of JZAMP had evolved over time. Common themes for other identified goals included building strong relationships with mentees, exposing mentees to activities, opportunities, and places they would not have otherwise experienced, and providing mentees with role models who were adults but also young enough to relate to them. Mentors believed that college students made for positive role models because they could tangibly demonstrate to students what college was like and give students a concrete idea to work toward. Moreover, mentors expressed a desire to

promote a different value system within the two schools and teach their mentees the importance of education, curiosity, and the pursuit of knowledge for its own sake.

In order to achieve the overarching goals of JZAMP, both stated and implicit, mentors have set short term goals with their mentees throughout the three years. Typical short term academic goals have included memorizing the multiplication table, finishing a book for pleasure in a defined period of time and discussing it with the student's mentor, and reading a current event article for the week. Typical short term social and behavioral goals have included turning in all homework, learning to approach teachers for additional support on assignments when they need it, and recognizing and removing distractions during academic work time. These goals are discussed individually among mentor-mentee pairs. Mentors aim for the goals to be student-driven. While mentors frequently provide suggestions for appropriate academic goals, the goals are ultimately mutually agreed upon with their mentees. The student-driven nature of goal setting among individual pairs aligns with literature-based mentoring best practices.

It is evident from different accounts by the program manager, school administrators, and mentors that while the majority recognize the declared goal of JZAMP bestowed by the foundation, the range of individual other goals is wide. Thus, although JZAMP satisfies the best practice of having a clear, defined purpose at surface, the program must improve upon defining its core values, or the ancillary goals most crucial to fulfilling the declared goal. Agreement upon core values will give all stakeholders of the program a purpose to work toward and enhance collaboration. Alternatively, JZAMP could consider changing its declared goal to fit with what occurs in practice. One Celentano mentor said "I don't think [increasing graduation rates] should be the goal; I think the best part of JZAMP is not academic but having a steady, somewhat-authority figure who's constant in their life and cares about them." Indeed, twelve of eighteen

mentors reported that building relationships was the most successful component of JZAMP. Furthermore, past mentors who chose to discontinue their involvement with the program stated that “I felt like the program didn’t accomplish its goals.” More compellingly, the goal in question was not academically-oriented but rather relational. One past mentor summarized his frustration as, “I did not have a consistent mentee and therefore was unable to develop a strong relationship with any of the students.” Mentor perspectives clearly demonstrate that building relationships with mentees or being a role model is the lens through which they consider their impact on students. Until all parties can agree upon an overarching goal that everyone works toward in practice and define its core values, JZAMP cannot fully satisfy the best practice of having a clear, defined purpose.

Program Structure

At each session, mentors and mentees begin with a period of gym time lasting roughly twenty-five minutes. Typically, mentors and mentees play basketball together. Often, the girls gather around the gym seats to talk about their days with some of the mentors who are not playing basketball. Others may throw a Frisbee together or engage in a tag game. This gym session was not included in the JZAMP program for the first year. Rather, after learning from experience that students had difficulty focusing in a classroom after a full school day, a longer gym session at the end of the day was split in order to give students the opportunity to get active, socialize, and re-energize. Afterward, mentees receive snacks. During this time, the whole group returns to the classroom and each person reports on their day, either informally or through an icebreaker such as “Rose, Bud, Thorn,” where individuals report a positive event from the day, one thing they are looking forward to in the future, and a negative event from the day. Specific mentor and mentee pairings take time to catch up on their days.

Then, mentors work with their assigned mentees on academic objectives for one hour by providing homework help and re-teaching objectives that students have not yet mastered. If students do not have homework assigned that day, they are encouraged to engage in some other academic pursuit. For example, mentees may read a book they have with them or to borrow one of the available books in the classroom, free write, or explore a supplementary academic concept with their mentors, such as what their mentor is currently learning in a class. In any given session, mentors from both Wexler-Grant and Celentano report a range of what they are able to accomplish with students academically. Mentors work on what the students deem to be most important. These objectives range from math and science to history and reading. For example, mentors have worked with students on topics such as slope, integers, laws of motion, cellular structure, poetry, and reading comprehension. Some mentors are able to complete all of their mentee's assigned homework with them, even going beyond assigned material to develop a deeper understanding of the objective, while others struggle to finish single assignments as simple as completing a worksheet with four multiple choice questions on a short passage. One Wexler-Grant mentor said, "I don't think it's feasible with the amount of time we have to meet JZAMP's stated goal." Because students only work on academics for two hours a week, eight of eighteen mentors identified academic improvement as the greatest challenge throughout their participation in JZAMP. Thus, JZAMP's program structure does not effectively enable academic progress as much as it enables relationship building. However, this does not necessarily reflect the learning that occurs. One Wexler-Grant mentor states, "even though we were never able to complete the homework at any session, he was able to apply [a conceptual understanding] in classwork, from looking at work he had in his folder and talking to his teachers." Other mentors found that a main impediment is time spent motivating students to accomplish their work. On

average, the completion of academic work ranges widely and is often dependent on the specific mentor-mentee pair. Similar to goal-setting, the student-driven nature of the focus of academic time demonstrates a mentoring best practice.

Following academic time, mentors lead whole-group enrichment activities focusing on skills or team-building. These activities have encompassed a diverse range of topics, from designing an egg drop and learning how to give a business pitch with a firm handshake to conducting research on and sharing food from countries around the world. The duration of enrichment activities is approximately half an hour. Enrichment time at both schools has proved challenging, with mentors struggling to strike a balance in planning activities that are both engaging and educational. One mentor summarized enrichment as: “Few mask the intellect well enough to make [students] want to do it and learn, so we resort to fun or cool enrichment that may not have too much intellectual content or enriching value but just something we do to pass time.” Often, different students are drawn to different activities, to an extent where planning something to please the entire group is rare. Some students prefer presentations from guest speakers; for example, both schools have brought in student poets, a reptile man, and a chemist to give an interactive demonstration to the groups. Others prefer conversations about current events, history, or politics, and still others prefer activities centered on crafts and culture. Mentors agree that enrichment has evolved to focus on bonding with mentees instead of strictly promoting the development of specific skills. This perspective reinforces the idea that building relationships is the actual goal of JZAMP in practice, instead of academic achievement and increasing graduation rates.

Students end the sessions with another period of gym time lasting half an hour. Celentano mentors in particular view gym and other free time as some of the most valuable moments in the

program, a time for building relationships organically. Half of Celentano mentors identified field trips and unstructured time that fostered relationship building as the most successful component of JZAMP.

JZAMP's program structure is routine, and there are clear expectations for student behavior at each point in the schedule. There are also copious opportunities for one-on-one tutoring, a feature of an effective program structure. Four of eighteen mentors identified the program structure as the most successful component of JZAMP. Program monitoring occurs in the form of weekly mentor meetings to both plan ahead and troubleshoot incidents from the week. This forum allows for continual improvement when working with mentees. Mentors have observed progress across the three years, although some remain skeptical. One mentor describes, "I don't have to work as hard to get my mentee to do her work, and I have seen her grades improving, but I'm not convinced that the progress is because of me. I think it could be natural maturity." Other mentors are more certain: "I heard the teachers discussing their kids' [standardized] test scores, and all the kids did worse throughout the year except JZAMP kids whose scores went up or stayed the same," and "While [the kids] are not at the level of your average eighth grader at a really successful school, I can tell by the responses of their teachers that they're doing better than the average kid at Wexler. For example, all JZAMP kids had their essays posted on the wall, and my mentee's teacher told me that her grades are improving." Aside from academics, some mentors notice that, "people follow each other on Snapchat and Instagram, which allows them to be more accessible and form long-term, lasting relationships." The program structure has contributed to the social-emotional growth that has occurred through these relationships. Moreover, the stability of the program as a three-year commitment and the consistent presence of mentors enhances JZAMP's ability to sustain student attendance and

participation, which is highly correlated with the ability of a program to produce both academic and social-emotional improvement. JZAMP data on student attendance reveal that students attended on average 76% of all mentoring sessions throughout the three years, with half of students attending nearly every session. While JZAMP satisfies the literature-identified best practices for appropriate program structure, it can continue to improve on measuring progress on desired outcomes that the program structure is meant to produce, such as acquiring appropriate skills and behaviors across contexts and developing positive attitudes toward academic achievement.

Training

Full-cohort training occurs once a year at the beginning of each academic year in September. The student coordinators organize one full-day training session that brings in guests including Mark Fopeano, the program manager at Dwight Hall, and a local education practitioner to teach goal-setting for the year, proactive management of common student behavioral issues, and guidelines for best tutoring practices. Mentors who have had experience in an educational capacity may also contribute to teaching best practices during training. While training is mandatory, the student coordinators make exceptions for schedule conflicts.

Of the Celentano mentors, one hundred percent reported having received no training or finding the training they had received to be ineffective. Of Wexler-Grant mentors, half of the mentors reported ineffective training, while the other half reported that the training was “better than nothing” and that “it definitely didn’t hurt, but I don’t remember what we learned.” During the second year of JZAMP, the program hired an educational consultant to provide ongoing support to mentors. Weekly, mentors would write e-mail reports to the consultant detailing goals they had set with their mentees that week and what they had accomplished, and the consultant

would respond with feedback or guidance to any questions posed. Interestingly, eight of the twelve current mentors employed that year independently reported that the consultant was ineffective because of her lack of understanding of both schools and the students in the program because of her continual absence. Even the program manager at Dwight Hall who hired her concluded that “it was difficult because [the consultant] didn’t have a working knowledge of New Haven schools.” One mentor stated that the consultant was “the biggest waste of money in the program because she was never there.”

Instead, mentors found weekly meetings run by the student coordinators to be more effective. These meetings are conducted separately by assigned school, and allow mentors the opportunity to debrief and seek advice from one another on how to address problems that occur during the week. Critically, these meetings also provided opportunities for experienced mentors to share institutional knowledge with newly hired mentors on student dynamics, interactions with the school administration, and program structure. New mentors reported that this information was extremely effective in preparation for the role because it helped them understand what to expect. In addition, weekly meetings provide a forum for planning enrichment and field trips. Each mentor takes responsibility for one week of enrichment planning, and the entire group develops ideas for field trips and shares responsibility for logistics. JZAMP field trips have included visits to the Yale Peabody Museum, the Yale Art Gallery, Yale basketball games, the Norwalk Aquarium, Sky Zone, and apple-picking. Enrichment activities are centered upon a theme, which in the past have included elections, origami, theater, and finance. Recently, Wexler-Grant has implemented a conversational theme for the week for students who choose not to participate in enrichment and instead want to spend the time discussing topics ranging from gender and children’s rights to sustainability with mentors.

Mentors also identified several supports they would have valued during the experience. These include resources for teaching materials, transparency from Dwight Hall and the foundation, institutional memory, and how to motivate students and regulate student behavior. Mentors most frequently cited that they would have liked support from teachers or educational experts in the school who knew the students well. In practice, more important than a strong understanding of pedagogical knowledge is an understanding of the context and the specific students involved in the program. JZAMP mentors have developed a functioning system of peer supervision in which they provide ongoing support for each other. Because the program manager of Dwight Hall was also new at the start of the current JZAMP cohort, the byproduct was heightened mentor autonomy and an increased necessity to support one another. The student-driven nature of the program is certainly a strength even though many mentors might consider it a limitation because every mentor has a deep understanding of the program and students. However, it is apparent from mentor accounts that support from an adult familiar with the program, either from the schools or from Dwight Hall would have been ideal. JZAMP satisfies the best practice of providing effective ongoing support, but it was established more through trial and error than through a formal system with guidance from Dwight Hall. Moving forward, Dwight Hall should collaborate with mentors to provide the ongoing support that mentors seek.

Mentor Roles and Relationships

A strong theme throughout my conversations with mentors is that it is not the academic component of JZAMP that is most valuable, but rather the relationships with mentees. Indeed, while the characteristics and trajectory of each relationship is unique to the pair, the majority of mentors spoke fondly and earnestly of their mentees and the connections that have grown over time. Some relationships developed quickly:

“Some people call us Kaquan (Kate and Raquan). We’re one of the closest pairs at Celentano and got lucky in the pairing process. Raquan is an awesome student who’s invested in the program. I’m also really invested, and we do a lot of individual stuff just me and Ray. I’ll bring him down to Yale on Mondays just the two of us because there’s no after school on Mondays. We’ll watch music videos that he thinks are funny and I pretend are funny when they’re really not that funny.”

Others took more time:

“I’ve been with her for three years, and she’s a big personality in our group—strong-willed, stubborn. Our relationship has had its ups and downs—she can be harsh and mean but she cares about me; the fact that I’ve come back every single year means a lot to her. If extra kids show up and I have to take them on, she’s like “Liza is my mentor.” She knows I’ll come back and that I’ll be there for her.”

“Our relationship was pretty slow developing. Isaiah is not someone who likes to open up about himself or speak about things. The first time I met him, he was reading a Captain Underpants book, and at one point he stopped looking at the page and started making up stories as he went along which I thought was pretty extraordinary. Little by little over the years, he became more willing to talk about himself. A few times he wouldn’t want to talk in group settings, so I’d take him to the gym and he’d tell me about being bullied about how he talked. I couldn’t imagine being about to talk about that two and a half years ago.”

Still others continue to be difficult after three years. Jasper describes his mentee as:

“She can be a lot to handle sometimes. She’s opinionated, strong-minded, strong-willed. It’s definitely interesting, there’s a playfulness in our relationship I think is good but sometimes it’s really annoying because when she doesn’t want to do work she won’t do it, when she doesn’t want to be there she won’t. Our relationship has been pretty good, but it’s on and off. It’s complicated.”

Despite their difficult experiences, mentors focused on positive attributes when describing their relationships with mentees. It is evident by students slowly opening up and sharing interests like music videos that each relationship involves a lot of care and mutual understanding. However, not every pair was an ideal match. Some described relationships with their mentees as more professional or academic. While one coordinator expressed that given three years together, any two people could develop a high-quality relationship, one mentor vehemently disagreed, lamenting that “we are not a good match—I experience the world verbally and [my mentee] has

one of the lowest levels of reading comprehension in the program, which was very tough.” No change in pairing has occurred when mentors believed they were not a good match for their mentee, a potential limitation of the program. JZAMP can improve upon ongoing mentor-mentee relationships by allowing for the possibility of switching pairings. The primary determinant of a good mentor-mentee match was the extent to which the mentor could relate to their mentee. These mentors said, “when I first came to JZAMP he was my favorite kid, and I was able to identify with him,” or “[we’re] a good match because she’s more like me.” Mentors typically reported a good match if they could relate to their mentees in terms of temperament, personality, or background, while similar specific interests were less important. One Celentano mentor characterized the relation as, “Do we have the same interests? Not really, but I’m not really sure I have the same interests as any of the kids. Out of any of the kids, I’m really pleased to have him as my mentee because we get along.”

The literature reveals that strong connections founded on mutuality, trust, and empathy are critical to developing strong mentor-mentee relationships that lead to positive student outcomes such as improved attitudes toward school and achievement and a feeling of connectedness with the community. The majority of mentor-mentee relationships through JZAMP demonstrate this level of strength. From mentor accounts, it is clear that conflict occurs frequently, witnessed in the stubbornness between Liza and her mentee and the pushback that Jasper receives from his mentee, and that the relationships continue to persist and grow after these occasions. Jasper says that despite conflict during program hours, “some of the best moments I had with Ina were [afterward] off campus when we were able to chat about whatever.” When conflict occurs, mentors take a few different approaches to discipline. Some will take a break from academics, switch tasks, or change spaces to allow their mentees to re-

focus, while others use a more emotional approach. One mentor describes her approach, “I guilt trip them honestly, [the trust in our] personal relationships allows for that. I have a real talk moment with them, “Laquan, you know I’m here because I care about spending time with you and doing your homework,” and I feel that they feel indebted to me about my time as well.” Discipline during the first year of mentoring was characterized more by the use of a stern tone and threatening the students to behave using incentives. These random acts of discipline in the context of otherwise caring tones detracted from mentoring effectiveness and have been a common challenge to running effective mentoring programs in general. Mentors have learned over time that these tactics are largely ineffective in encouraging students to change their behavior.

The relationships are imperfect, but the return of both mentors and mentees year after year demonstrate a commitment to the relationships and to the program. The high frequency of contact itself is a best mentoring practice that JZAMP fulfills above and beyond other programs. Even the mentors who do not believe they are a good match with their mentee support their mentees and provide a constant, reliable presence. They also engage the students in conversation with some initial prompting, but every mentor lets the student drive the conversation, talking about what the students want, ranging from sports and rap music to family, school, and homework. Student-centered conversation is a key sign of high quality relationships in mentoring contexts. After one mentor’s mentee moved in the middle of the third year, he continued to express lingering wishes he had for conversations within the relationship, representing the depth to which he thought about his mentee’s well-being.

“I wish we talked more about goals for the future—I don’t have a sense of what he envisions for himself, which has always been disappointing to me because we weren’t able to have those big picture conversations.”

The student-centered nature of informal conversations, in addition to student-centered goal-setting and academic work time reflects a more holistic student-centered program, a best practice of mentoring relationships. This style of mentoring increases student responsibility and allows students to feel comfortable making joint decisions in a judgement-free zone, which promotes the development of autonomy, self-esteem, and responsible habits both academically and socially. JZAMP's program structure has contributed to mentors' abilities to form high-quality relationships with their mentees through opportunities for informal conversations during enrichment, field trips, and gym time. JZAMP also provides students with the opportunity to form stronger relationships with each other, in a positive, inclusive space. Indeed, mentors report that their mentees have grown closer to each other over the past three years. These opportunities for belonging that flow to affect the school day represent the fulfillment of a best practice for building relationships. Additionally, this mechanism may allow students to improve attitudes toward school and achievement by providing a peer group with similar attitudes.

Moving forward, mentors hope they can continue to keep in touch with their mentees. Many expressed a curiosity about their mentees' high school progress and prospects for college. Although mentors were realistic in their inability to uphold an intimate relationship with their mentees, they expressed a will to check in every now and then, such as during holidays. Overall, JZAMP satisfies the best practice criteria of developing strong relationships with students.

Stakeholder Involvement

Aside from students and mentors, the key JZAMP stakeholders are parents, the two schools, Dwight Hall, and the JZAMP foundation. Coordination among stakeholders is crucial to achieving the program's desired goals.

Mentor contact with JZAMP parents occurs on a regular, though infrequent basis. Typically, contact occurs over the phone at the beginning of each semester to remind parents of the program's starting dates. In addition, mentors contact parents regarding key events such as field trips or end-of-semester celebratory dinners. For the majority of the group, mentors meet parents and family in person only at the end-of-semester celebration. Often, mentors have difficulty reaching parents directly over the phone and instead leave messages. Most mentors rarely contact parents to provide updates on routine program activities or their child's academic or behavioral progress. Parents also have little contact with Dwight Hall. Parental involvement is a key area of improvement in terms of best practices. Parental involvement ensures connectivity of skills learned during the program to time at home to reinforce the skill. Though the level of involvement for many parents are constrained by the work day, mentors can more actively keep in touch through phone or email by providing regular updates on their mentee's progress and aim to discuss progress in-person every semester moving forward.

Likewise, the level of involvement of school administrations at both Wexler-Grant and Celentano is low. When asked how Wexler-Grant supports JZAMP as an after-school program, the principal replied, "They're actually pretty self-sufficient. [The coordinator] sends an email every day that tells them the focus for the day, students they're working with, and things they need to keep their eye out for. We provide the space and the students. They actually purchase their own snacks." The assistant principal at Celentano responded similarly, saying, "JZAMP [mentors] pretty much run themselves. They have a space for their things and get the kids and get going." Both administrators identified the school facility as the only resource they provide to JZAMP. The administrations perceive JZAMP as a program run by competent mentors who are "positive academic role models" to the students, and both administrators believed that JZAMP

was a successful program because “the kids consistently keep going, which is big for seventh and eighth graders.” In contrast, mentors found the support from both schools to be lacking and expressed a desire for more contact with and transparency from the schools. Four of eighteen mentors specifically identified communication and collaboration with the schools as their foremost area of improvement. One mentor states, “It’s very difficult to do the sort of work we do without total buy-in from the school, for example not having dismal homework assignments. Sometimes [our] work I felt was being counteracted by effort or lack thereof from the school.” Indeed, the Celentano assistant principal said, “I haven’t had much conversation with the [coordinator] in the past year.” The disconnect between perceptions of involvement in the program between school administrators and mentors strongly suggests that a more collaborative effort between the two parties is necessary to better understand individual student needs. The coordinator at Wexler-Grant highlights that satisfying the interests of the school, Dwight Hall, and the mentors is the most challenging aspect of the job because each party has different goals and direct communication among stakeholders is currently lacking. For the skills learned in schools and mentoring programs to flourish, mentors, schools, and parents must support the child in order to further build upon them across contexts. This involves a reciprocal flow of information and communication among all parties. Alignment of goals and activities among stakeholders is a best practice upon which JZAMP must improve to maximize positive student outcomes both academically and developmentally.

Similar to both parents and schools, the level of involvement from Dwight Hall is also low. The program manager at Dwight Hall, Mark, describes his roles and responsibilities as, “overseeing institutional programs, overseeing a few fellowship programs, serving as an advisor to the executive committee, and helping to manage the eighty member groups under Dwight

Hall's umbrella." With respect to JZAMP, he describes his main duty as overseeing the budget of \$75,000 and ensuring positive experiences for mentors. Mark estimates that he spends roughly ten percent of his working time on JZAMP, with some of it dedicated to approving student employment time sheets. He acknowledges that the student coordinators make nearly all the programming decisions within the schools because most of JZAMP's institutional knowledge was lost. Mark entered his role at Dwight Hall during a transitional period of the program such that both he and all the mentors were new to JZAMP. Most of the program had to be recreated and implemented from the bottom-up by the current mentor cohort. To support mentors through their experience, Mark believes that "Dwight Hall should play an ongoing role in the management of the program. I think we are but we can certainly do more." He states that mentors write weekly reports that allow them to both track their own attendance and more importantly to reflect on how they reacted to events that occurred during the week. Dwight Hall leadership then "reads the reports and builds individually-based structures to deal with issues." In practice, mentors see the weekly reports as a barrier to receiving payment for their time and fill them out merely for the sake of doing so. Reports ask mentors to detail positive and negative experiences throughout the week. They have not led to any action or response from Dwight Hall to maintain positive experiences or mitigate negative ones. Some mentors report never having interacted with Mark. Thus, increased communication and a better reflective interface is necessary to strengthen the connection of Dwight Hall to mentors and increase Dwight Hall involvement and monitoring of JZAMP. Though Mark did not recognize the current dearth of ongoing program monitoring, he expressed a desire to improve, which demonstrates some promise for implementing better structures to involve Dwight Hall in routine JZAMP affairs.

In addition, Mark reports that he “regularly [interfaces] with the schools so they feel like they have some buy-in” though his contacts at both schools have been different each year. However, through conversations with the school administrators, it is apparent that these interactions were superficial at best, as they either did not occur or had no significant impact on either administrator at the schools. The Celentano assistant principal stated that she had never had contact with Dwight Hall. Dwight Hall must improve upon mediating interactions between JZAMP and the school to build connections, as it is one of its key purposes and roles. Moving forward, additional involvement and support from Dwight Hall to both schools and mentors can facilitate collaboration among the three parties. This collaboration and alignment is key to better understanding student needs and improving student outcomes. As it currently stands, the role of Dwight Hall as a mediator is unnecessary and mentors can alternatively foster more direct relationships with the schools. Dwight Hall must decide the parameters of its involvement with JZAMP (for example, Dwight Hall’s role in the program could solely be that of overseeing the budget) with respect to its goals and align its actions correspondingly.

Mark also interacts with the foundation to track whether JZAMP students are graduating high school, and these interactions are minimal. The foundation appears less interested than Dwight Hall in JZAMP mentors and their success despite their heavy financial investment in the program, since they only measure mentee graduation rates without accounting for other metrics that mediate academic success and graduation. Moreover, the foundation is not interested in the mentor experience. Mark’s accountability to the foundation takes the form of an annual report consisting of a two- page word document on program anecdotes. Therefore, Dwight Hall and the foundation must align and reflect upon their values for the program. Both must invest more in

understanding the mentor experience, relationships, and other previously mentor-identified values to ensure program success.

Future Directions

Compared to reviews of after-school mentoring programs, JZAMP is not an exception: the program most likely produces positive student outcomes of small effect size. However, as JZAMP begins its fifth cohort, it can improve by reflecting upon its performance in the four categories of literature-identified best practices: clear purpose, appropriate program structure, high-quality relationships, and stakeholder involvement. Broadly, JZAMP's routine, consistent program structure and three-year commitment have promoted program attendance and allowed mentors and mentees to develop strong relationships. Each relationship among mentor-mentee pairs is unique and has had different developmental trajectories. The relationships have not been without conflict, but have grown from these moments of tension. Unstructured time during mentoring has fostered the growth of these organic and warm relationships. Moreover, the expectations of each mentoring session are clear and set repeatedly throughout the three years of the program to create familiar spaces for students to both learn and connect with their mentors. Moving forward, JZAMP should continue to make building strong, high-quality relationships a priority, as this feature is both a best practice and a mentor-identified cornerstone of the program.

JZAMP's main area for improvement is defining a clear purpose. While the JZAMP foundation and Dwight Hall have an official goal of improving student high school graduation rates, it is not the goal that mentors work toward in practice. Indeed even solely among mentors, there is a substantial range of goals at play, from exposing students to new opportunities and resources in New Haven, to providing students with college-age role models. Furthermore, the range of goals is augmented by other stakeholders, including the program manager at Dwight

Hall, the student coordinators, the administrators at both Celentano and Wexler-Grant, and parents. Stakeholder involvement is both poor and poorly aligned in large part because there is no clear purpose for parties to achieve in conjunction. It is challenging for various parties to collaborate when each already believes it is meeting expectations. Each party must first recognize that their involvement is lacking and that goals are unclear. Clarifying JZAMP's goals will better align mentors with the program structure. More importantly, it will better align stakeholders, which can facilitate more coherent and active involvement amongst them. Though redefining a clear goal should largely fall upon JZAMP leadership, particularly the student coordinators, leadership should seek input from all parties to ensure that the goals and core values are agreed-upon, concrete, and actionable. Mentor feedback will be particularly important in this endeavor.

More broadly, mentoring programs such as JZAMP have demonstrable value in terms of producing positive student outcomes even though the effect sizes are small. According to the literature, participation in mentoring programs results in a wide range of positive outcomes, including increased self-esteem, connectedness with the school and community, better attitudes toward academic achievement, and reduced behavioral and mental health problems among others. Each outcome plays a role in improving students' educational and developmental experiences. Governments and private donors should continue to support mentoring programs through funding, though continued funding should depend on the ability of the program to demonstrate implementation of best practices. This will rely on consistent program monitoring by both internal and external sources to allow programs to reflect habitually and consider how to grow and improve. JZAMP in particular can benefit from implementing a system for the continuous evaluation of program efficacy and student outcomes, aligned with their goals and

values. Without such a system, it has been challenging for JZAMP to measure any student outcome quantitatively thus far, particularly with respect to academic improvement.

Future cohorts should reflect and build upon JZAMP's history and the experiences of past mentors. As they consider how to address key challenges such as defining a clear purpose, aligning stakeholders, and constructing a system for program evaluation, it will prove valuable to refer to the best practices of mentoring programs in order to cultivate a successful program. Only with more data and metrics will it be possible to evaluate whether JZAMP's unique model is successful and worth the consideration of expanding at-scale across the United States. In general, it is beneficial to provide mentoring services to support youth in their academic development despite a resource-constrained political environment. Small, positive gains in skills accrue over time to yield a more fruitful educational experience for students.

Appendix A: Mentor Interview Protocol

Case Study: Evaluation of the Jones-Zimmerman Academic Mentoring Program (JZAMP) Principal Investigator: Cathy Zhu

1. In which school, Wexler-Grant or Celentano, do you work?
 - a. How many years at this school?
 - b. How many mentees have you worked with consistently or were assigned? Time periods?
2. Tell me about how you became involved with mentoring.
3. Tell me about your relationship with your mentee. Can you tell me an anecdote that particularly represents your relationship?
 - a. What do you typically talk about with your mentee?
 - b. What do you accomplish in each session, for academics and enrichment?
 - c. What do you do when your mentee does not follow directions?
 - d. How often do you meet outside JZAMP hours? What do you do?
 - e. Do you think you and your mentee are a good match? Why?
4. Where do you see your relationship with your mentee headed in the future?
5. What do you see as the long-term goal of JZAMP?
 - a. Tell me about the progress you have made on these goals? Do you think you're making a difference, and what evidence do you have?
6. What do you think has been the most successful component of JZAMP and why? Can you tell me an example that supports your view?
7. What has been your greatest challenge while working with JZAMP?
8. What would improve the program and why?
9. Tell me about how you think the context of JZAMP as a Yale program in New Haven schools affects its impact.
10. What training did you receive? Did it make you feel more effective as a mentor? What other supports would you have liked?
11. What is your biggest takeaway from this experience?
12. Is there anything else you would like to share that I did not ask?

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