
Title: Weekend in the Classic City

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Summary: College and career preparation and readiness continue to be critical areas of concern for young people across the nation. As the land-grant and flagship institution of the state, the University of Georgia, through Cooperative Extension, works to provide outreach and education to high school students in each of Georgia's 159 counties. This outreach and education regarding the college application process, financial aid, the transition to college, and exposure to the 33 institutions of higher education in the University System of Georgia occurs through the Georgia 4-H event, Weekend in the Classic City. After participating in this event, youth are able to (1) recognize the current opportunities, challenges, and pathways to higher education, (2) identify the step to planning, assembling, and submitting a successful college application, (3) identify how to apply for financial aid to help with the cost of higher education; and (4) assess aspects of campus life including transportation, residence halls, and campus housing. Evaluation data following the Weekend in the Classic City event demonstrates an increase in the participants' (1) knowledge surrounding aspects of campus life, (2) confidence in their ability to be a successful college student, and (3) identification and future plans to prepare and submit an application to a higher education institution.

Situation: College and career preparation and readiness continue to be critical areas of concern for young people across the nation. As the land-grant and flagship institution of the state, the University of Georgia, through Cooperative Extension, works to provide outreach and education to high school students in each of Georgia's 159 counties regarding the college application process, financial aid, the transition to college, and exposure to the 33 institutions of higher education in the University System of Georgia. As a broad and diverse public service network of the University of Georgia, County Extension Offices across the state are excellent conduits for high quality information regarding the college application process, selection of an academic path, and broadly, the transition to higher education for youth.

Response: Conceptualized over almost 20 years ago, the UGA Collegiate 4-H chapter began a weekend long program, Weekend in the Classic City (WICC) that gave youth from across the state, a firsthand experience of attending college, while simultaneously providing knowledge that situated them to make a crucial decision for higher education. This event was created with the understanding that higher education decisions and pathways are unique to each youth, and works to provide broad and diverse seminars, speakers, and show youth a comprehensive picture of the career options and paths that are provided in the state of Georgia.

Continuing to this day, UGA Collegiate 4-H, in conjunction with other Georgia Collegiate 4-H chapters, work to actively showcase the University of Georgia in Athens, otherwise known as the Classic City, and the University System of Georgia, at the annual conference.

During the weekend long visit to the University of Georgia campus for high school aged 4-H'ers, youth tour campus, a residence hall, and eat lunch in a campus dining hall, garnering the full collegiate experience. Additionally, youth participated in an admissions

workshop and financial aid workshop to help gain information about impending deadlines, forms, and benchmarks that will better situate them for a successful application.

Serving as team leaders, firsthand narratives, and sounding boards, Collegiate 4-H'ers play a critical role in the success of this event for youth and adult participants alike. They work to provide a relatable theme for the event, solicit grants to reduce event costs, and provide workshop sessions for youth as well. These sessions cover topics like seeking academic support, job opportunities in college, the importance of networking, and transitioning from leadership roles in 4-H to leadership roles in collegiate activities and clubs. These collegiate members represent a range of University System of Georgia technical schools and universities, bring a multitude of experiences to the event, and increase morale of youth.

In partnership with the University of Georgia, Georgia 4-H, through the Weekend in the Classic City event, engages 4-H'ers, through program outcomes, to:

1. Recognize the current opportunities, challenges, and routes to higher education,
2. Identify the steps to planning, assembling, and submitting a successful college application,
3. Identify how to apply for financial aid to help with the cost of college; and

Assess the aspects of campus life including transportation, residence halls, and on-campus transportation.

Results/Impacts: During September 2019, 76 high school 4-H'ers from across the state of Georgia participated in the Weekend in the Classic City program. The three-day, two-night event took place in Athens, the Classic City, and worked to inform youth about decisions and opportunities that would better prepare them to be equipped for higher education. Following the event, youth were provided a post-then-pre event evaluation that consisted of 19 Likert scaled items, and 3 open-ended questions. Evaluation data following the Weekend in the Classic City event demonstrates an increase in the participants' (1) knowledge surrounding aspects of campus life, (2) confidence in their ability to be a successful college student, and (3) identification and future plans to prepare and submit an application to a higher education institution.

Elaborating on these outcomes, one youth shared, *"Weekend in the Classic City really prepared me and showed me my college options as a homeschooled 4-H'ers. It was one of the most helpful 4-H trips I've ever been on".* Additionally, one military youth participant traveling from Maryland shared, *"Thank you so much for allowing me to join in on the Weekend in the Classic City and helping me with my travel plans. I had such an amazing time touring the University of Georgia's campus! It was one of my favorite weekends of the year. I learned a lot about college during the informational sessions and listening to advice from the college students that were there. Hopefully the next time I return to Georgia I will be moving into college! Again, thank you for all the work you put into setting up this weekend."*

Weekend in the Classic City continues to be an excellent resource for high school 4-H'ers throughout Georgia who are preparing for the transition from high school to higher education.



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