

Measuring the Sustainability of the Impact Gen Program at Mission Graduates



Measuring the Sustainability of the Impact Gen Program at Mission Graduates

by

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Dedications

Ryan

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Chad

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Isadora

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Abstract

For over 50 years, Mission Graduates has been a cornerstone in San Francisco's community by providing crucial services for students and their families. The organization, spanning from elementary to college-level support, has impacted over 5,000 students and families with a mission to empower youth towards higher education and fulfilling careers. However, the Impact Gen program, designed for first-generation college students and young professionals, faces challenges in evaluation and enrollment effectiveness, hindering its envisioned impact.

This Capstone project investigates the factors affecting Impact Gen within Mission Graduates. The questions that guided this project were:

- What are current practices that either facilitate or hinder Impact Gen in achieving its program goals?
- In designing an evaluation platform for Impact Gen, what measurable outcomes should Mission Graduates focus upon?
- How can Mission Graduates leverage a feedback and data collection system in their strategic planning?

The study employed a cross-sectional research method and utilized surveys, focus groups, and empathy interviews to address the project questions. After analyzing the data for our project, the following findings emerged: mentoring emerges as a vital program component, requiring continuous training, engagement opportunities, and improved communication channels. Workforce development emerges as a crucial area, suggesting an early focus during the Mission Graduates journey. Limited resources necessitate strategic partnerships and resource optimization for program expansion. Clear communication emphasizing the program's importance proves pivotal in recruitment and commitment. Importantly, a lack of a consistent evaluation system is identified, pointing to the need for robust outcome measurement.

Recommendations center on enhancing Impact Gen's structure: continuous training and engagement for mentors, establishing College Connect as a strategic pipeline, strengthening Impact Gen through comprehensive support, communicating the essential nature of Impact Gen, and developing a comprehensive program evaluation system. These recommendations aim to address identified weaknesses, fortify program strengths, and align Impact Gen more closely with Mission Graduates' overarching goals.

Key Terms: First-Generation College Students or Young Professionals, Workforce Development, Career/Work Readiness, Mentorship, Stakeholders, Strategic Planning, Program Evaluation

Executive Summary

Organizational Context

Founded in 1972, Mission Graduates has served the San Francisco community for over 50 years with services for low-income, Latinx, Black, and immigrant youth and their families. Mission Graduates offers a wide range of after-school, in-school, summer, and virtual programs to support over 5,000 students and their families on their education journey from elementary school through college, ages 4-25. Mission Graduates aims to empower youth and their families on the path to higher education, equipping them for fulfilling careers that will strengthen future generations.

The Impact Gen program provides first-generation college students, recent college graduates, and young professionals with the network, professional skills, and confidence they need to pursue their desired careers. Impact Gen cultivates and bridges local talent to San Francisco employers by creating a community where young professionals get the support they need to prepare for and connect to internship-to-job pipelines.

Problem of Practice

Despite Mission Graduates' broader successes, the organization does not have a method for effectively evaluating and fully enrolling their Impact Gen program. Impact Gen has struggled to become the robust program it was envisioned to be for Mission Graduates participants. This Capstone project aims to identify what factors, processes, or structures need further examination in Mission Graduates for the Impact Gen program. This project will also explore Impact Gen's potential role in Mission Graduates' organizational mission.

Project Questions

The questions that guided this project were:

- What are current practices that either facilitate or hinder Impact Gen in achieving its program goals?
- In designing an evaluation platform for Impact Gen, what measurable outcomes should Mission Graduates focus upon?
- How can Mission Graduates leverage a feedback and data collection system in their strategic planning?

Methods

The project design aimed to evaluate Impact Gen's effect on participants and determine the strengths and weaknesses of the program to create recommendations and suggest interventions to be implemented. This capstone applied a cross-sectional research method using surveys, focus groups, and empathy interviews for data collection. The units of analysis were participants of the Impact Gen program (past and current), program staff, and mentors. The qualitative study evaluated the program across engagement, satisfaction, and impact dimensions.

Findings

We identified five findings after analyzing the qualitative data for our project:

- Mentoring is a key component of Impact Gen that has greatly benefited all participants. Mentors want training for their roles, methods for feedback, engagement opportunities with fellow mentors, and increased communication from program staff. This finding addressed Project Question 1.
- Emphasis on workforce development is needed and should occur early in the Mission Graduates journey (during College Connect). This finding addressed Project Question 2.
- As a non-profit, Mission Graduates has limited resources (budget and staff capacity). Mission Graduates staff indicated that there is a need to fill those gaps, leverage internal assets, and foster external partnerships to support their strategic planning and expand the Impact Gen program. This finding addressed Project Questions 2 and 3.
- Recognizing Impact Gen as essential, not an extra commitment for participants, is crucial. Clear communication of the program's importance enhances recruitment, perception, and commitment to Impact Gen. Additionally, Mission Graduates staff sharing their first-gen identity with participants can help foster connections. This finding addressed Project Questions 1 and 2.
- The Impact Gen program does not have a robust and consistent evaluation system that focuses on measuring the outcomes of the program. This finding addressed Project Questions 2 and 3.

Recommendations

Our findings revealed opportunities to improve Impact Gen's current structure and enhance the program's ability to meet stakeholders' needs. Our recommendations include:

- Recommendation 1: Continuous Training and Engagement for Mentors
- Recommendation 2: Establish College Connect as a Strategic Pipeline for Impact Gen and Workforce Development
- Recommendation 3: Strengthening Impact Gen through Comprehensive Support
- Recommendation 4: Communicate the Essential Nature of Impact Gen and Foster Connections Through Shared First-Gen Experiences
- Recommendation 5: Develop a Comprehensive Program Evaluation System

Introduction

Area of Inquiry

Mission Graduates, a non-profit organization based in San Francisco, California, stands as a beacon of hope and opportunity for hundreds of students and their families. This esteemed organization has committed itself to the noble cause of increasing college attendance and graduation rates among low-income, Latinx, Black, and immigrant youth. With a comprehensive array of educational programs spanning from early childhood to young adulthood, Mission Graduates serves individuals aged 4 through 25, offering day and extended day programs, scholarship opportunities, and parent engagement initiatives.

Despite its admirable mission and longstanding presence in the community, Mission Graduates faces numerous challenges, particularly in the realm of program evaluation and impact assessment. With only one staff member responsible for overseeing evaluation, data tracking, and analysis for nine programs, including the struggling Impact Gen initiative, the organization is stretched thin in its capacity to ensure program effectiveness and efficiency.

Our team embarked on a critical inquiry into Mission Graduates' Impact Gen program, seeking to evaluate its design and current execution. As part of our capstone project, we aimed to identify factors, processes, or structures within Mission Graduates that required further examination, particularly within the Impact Gen program. We hoped to shed light on Impact Gen's potential role in fulfilling Mission Graduates' overarching mission by conducting thorough program and impact evaluations.

Recognizing the urgency of addressing issues within Impact Gen, our project involved the development of evaluation plans, including the creation of a logic model, priority list, and timeline. With the support of stakeholders such as Mission Graduates employees, the Board, partners, donors, and, most importantly, the students and families served, we are committed to ensuring the integrity, effectiveness, and expansion of the Impact Gen program.

This paper will outline our approach to this inquiry, beginning with an exploration of our area of inquiry and a comprehensive research synthesis. We will then delve into the conceptual framing of our project, outline our project questions, and provide details of our data collection and analysis methods. Subsequently, we will present our findings, acknowledging any limitations encountered throughout our research. Finally, we will offer recommendations for Mission Graduates based on our findings and conclude with a reflection on the significance of our work.

Through our collaboration with Mission Graduates, we aspire to empower the organization to execute the Impact Gen program with integrity, secure additional funding, and effectively communicate its impact to stakeholders. Together, we aim to propel Mission Graduates towards its goal of becoming a transformative force that expands programs and services to more students across San Francisco, thereby enriching countless lives and fostering a brighter future for generations to come.

Organizational Context

Mission Graduates is a non-profit organization founded in 1972 and based in San Francisco, California, serving several public schools and hundreds of students and their families. Mission Graduates was formerly called St. John's Educational Threshold Center and filled the need and desire of the Church of St. John the Evangelist to serve the local San Francisco neighborhood of the North Mission. Mission Graduates now has a much larger scope, encompassing much of San Francisco. Mission Graduates provides various educational programs for the community to increase the number of low-income, Latinx, Black, and immigrant youth who attend and graduate from college. Mission Graduates provides day and extended day programs to high school students, supporting them in school and the college application process. Mission Graduates also provides scholarship opportunities and parent engagement programs. Their program offerings support students from the ages of 4 through 25. See McKinsey 7S Framework (**Appendix 1**) for more information.

The problems facing Mission Graduates related to our area of inquiry are numerous. Mission Graduates currently has one person on staff, the Director of Program Impact, in charge of evaluation and tracking data patterns. When we embarked on this project, she had been in this new role for one year. The Director of Program Impact oversees data analysis aimed at enhancing Mission Graduates' nine programs, with a specific focus on program improvement. One critical program, Impact Gen, has struggled to gain traction since its inception two years ago, and is administered by only one person on staff. Our team's main area of inquiry focused on the design and current execution of the Impact Gen program.

The Impact Gen program provides college students, recent graduates, and young professionals who identify as first-generation (referred to as first-gen) , with workshops, career panels, mock interviews, and professional mentoring to guide and give participants the confidence to pursue their desired careers. Despite Mission Graduates' broader successes, the organization does not have a method for effectively evaluating and fully enrolling their Impact Gen program. Impact Gen has struggled to become the robust program it was envisioned to be for Mission Graduates participants.

Problem of Practice

Our team's main area of inquiry focused on the design and current execution of the Impact Gen program. We aimed to identify what factors, processes, or structures need further examination for the Impact Gen program. This project also explored Impact Gen's potential role in Mission Graduates' mission. We conducted a program evaluation and impact evaluation for Impact Gen as the Director of Program Impact had drafted evaluation plans for the College Connect and High School Extended Day Programs but not for Impact Gen. These preliminary plans, which she shared with us, included a logic model, a list of priorities, and a timeline. Additionally, she provided us with relevant literature pertaining to problem validation and, more generally, the services offered by Mission Graduates.

Mission Graduates hopes to become a robust program that shares transformative results that encourage the expansion of programs and services to more students across San Francisco. Mission Graduates has moved the needle for student success in secondary and postsecondary institutions over the past 50 years, but recognizes that more work is needed. Not addressing the problems within Impact Gen would withhold Mission Graduates resources from immeasurable students in need. The stakeholders for the project findings and recommendations include Mission Graduates employees, the Board of Directors, partners, donors, and most importantly, the students and families of Mission Graduates.

Through our partnership with Mission Graduates, there was a desire that our help would allow them to execute the Impact Gen program with integrity. From there, they plan to seek additional funding support and resources that will allow them to continue expanding. To do this, they know they need to communicate their impact on the populations and communities they serve and share the story of their successes, while focusing their attention on program improvement based on their analysis of survey responses. Ideally, the Director of Program Impact would also like to make a case for expanding her team.

Literature Review

As part of our project design, we examined existing research on the topics of programs that support students in postsecondary and career success, experiences of first-generation college students, and non-profit feedback needs. Three key trends emerged through this literature review, each of which are outlined in more detail in the description that follows:

1. Evidence shows that after-school programs effectively support students' academic and social well-being.
2. Research shows the importance of understanding first-generation college students' unique challenges and the necessity of creating pathways for their academic success and retention.
3. Literature highlights the unique challenges faced by non-profit organizations when allocating resources, and why feedback loops are fundamental to supporting a culture of continuous improvement.

After-School Programs

Effectiveness of After-School Programs

After-school programs serve as vital resources for students across the nation, offering a diverse range of services encompassing academics, athletics, and visual and performing arts. The potential for out-of-school time (OST) education to empower students and families with academically relevant skills and resources enriches the conceptualization of contemporary education and promotes educational justice (Yin, 2020). Studies employing various methodologies have shed light on the positive impact of OST programs like GEAR UP, revealing improved college attendance and persistence among students, particularly those from low-socioeconomic backgrounds (Knaggs et al., 2015; Yampolskaya et al., 2006). Additionally, research underscores the critical role of after-school programs in low-income communities, demonstrating their necessity for enhancing children's and youth's academic, emotional, and physical well-being (Kugler, 2001).

Increased engagement in academic support services correlates with higher graduation rates, with cumulative GPA mediating the relationship, emphasizing the significance of such OST interventions in fostering academic success (Grillo & Leist, 2013). However, ensuring that these programs do not impose financial burdens on students is essential, as this could render them inaccessible to those who need them the most. For programs that work with students in higher education, institutions must also be mindful of students who work while attending college, as their restricted time availability may hinder their ability to fully benefit from these programs (Thiem & Dasgupta, 2022).

Motivation and Participation

Research indicates that students' motivation to pursue postsecondary opportunities is a significant factor in achieving academic and career goals, aligning with previous findings highlighting motivation as a central theme in educational success (Medvide & Blustein, 2010). Extracurricular activities and school engagement have been shown to correlate with resilience against risk factors and are associated with higher educational

attainment levels (Medvide & Blustein, 2010). When the diversity of program staff mirrors that of the community, they can serve as effective mentors and role models for student participants, enhancing program efficacy (Huang, 2001, Vandell & Shumow, 1999, as cited in Huang et al., 2014).

While many grade 6-12 programs offer academic enrichment and counseling, fewer provide critical elements such as personal enrichment, social integration, mentoring, parental involvement, or scholarships (Harvill et al., 2012). Additionally, measures of completed coursework have been identified as the most reliable predictors of college graduation, suggesting their inclusion in evaluations of college access programs (Adelman, 2006, Rose & Betts, 2001, as cited in Harvill et al., 2012). Recognizing the importance of comprehensive support initiatives, Linda Darling-Hammond emphasizes California's investments in critical initiatives like high-dose tutoring, teacher professional development, expanded learning time, and mental health and wellness programs, which play pivotal roles in enhancing academic performance and supporting student well-being (Fensterwald & Willis, 2022).

First-Generation College Students

Unique Challenges

First-generation college students have emphasized the importance of collaborative partnerships involving themselves, their families, school counselors, and teachers in facilitating successful transitions to college (Brookover et al., 2021). The landscape of higher education has evolved over the past decades, with a recent focus on the diverse population of first-generation college students (FGCS). While federal TRIO programs have long served high school and college students identified as FGCS, broader attention to this demographic has emerged in the last 15 years (Ardoin, 2021, as cited in Broadhurst et al., 2023). However, defining FGCS remains challenging, as various definitions may lack inclusivity and inadvertently conflate first-generation status with other social identities (Ardoin, 2021, as cited in Broadhurst et al., 2023). Despite these challenges, it is estimated that FGCS constitute at least one-third of college students in the United States, prompting increased attention to their needs across institutional types (Whitley et al., 2018, as cited in Broadhurst et al., 2023).

Research highlights a concerning disparity in college graduation rates between low-income and first-generation students compared to their peers, attributed partly to limited access to information about the college process (Glass, 2022). First-gen students often need more social networks to help them navigate the complexities of college applications and enrollment (Glass, 2022). Financial concerns also weigh heavily on FGCS, who have lower family incomes and consequently higher expectations of maintaining employment throughout college impacting their engagement in college-related activities (Startz, 2022; Pratt et al., 2019).

Moreover, first-gen students often grapple with confidence in their academic preparedness, and struggle to find a sense of belonging on campus, compounding the challenges they face (Pratt et al., 2019). These barriers are further exacerbated by systemic challenges encountered by historically marginalized groups, which intersect to create multifaceted obstacles to success in higher education (Thiem & Dasgupta, 2022). FGCS encounter various hurdles, including navigating unfamiliar institutional systems, managing mental health stigmas, and addressing academic distress (Le Rovitto, 2021, Whitley et al., 2018, as cited in Broadhurst et al., 2023).

To address these challenges, institutions must adopt proactive and holistic approaches to supporting FGCS. Programs and resources should encompass a broad spectrum of assistance, addressing basic needs like housing and food security, facilitating peer connections, and providing career advising (Broadhurst et al., 2023). Additionally, it is crucial to shift the focus from expecting FGCS to be solely college-ready to holding institutions accountable for providing proactive support tailored to their unique needs (Broadhurst et al., 2023). Understanding the influence of socioeconomic status on postsecondary choices further underscores the importance of equitable access to higher education opportunities (National Center for Education Statistics, 2019). By acknowledging and addressing the multifaceted challenges faced by FGCS, institutions can work towards creating more inclusive and supportive environments for all students.

Pathways for Success and Retention

Support programs for first-generation college students must encompass networking, mentoring, and career guidance to address the unique challenges these students face. Access to information and services is crucial in enhancing opportunities for post-secondary education. Parikh's (2013) interviews with participants in similar programs revealed that navigating the college system, career expansion, counseling relationships, personal insight, and future orientation are major issues emphasizing the multifaceted support needed for success.

Research, such as that by Knaggs et al. (2015), demonstrates that programs like GEAR UP significantly improve college attendance and persistence outcomes, particularly among students from low-socioeconomic backgrounds. Similarly, studies like Lauer et al. (2006) highlight the positive impact of out-of-school time (OST) programs on student achievement, particularly in reading, underscoring the effectiveness of targeted interventions.

Mentoring emerges as a critical component in supporting first-generation students, offering guidance in critical thinking, career exploration, and navigating the complexities of the college process (Glass, 2022). College mentoring programs have proven successful in improving college persistence rates, as evidenced by the high graduation rates among participants (Stringer, 2017). Moreover, networking opportunities provided by programs facilitate connections with professionals from various fields, offer valuable support, and open doors

for participants (Broadhurst et al., 2023). Incorporating former program participants into peer mentorship roles further enriches the support network, enhancing the program's effectiveness in guiding current students toward academic and career success. By integrating networking, mentoring, and career guidance into support programs, institutions can better equip first-generation college students to overcome barriers and thrive in higher education.

Workforce Development

While many high school reform efforts focus on promoting college attendance and completion, there is a growing recognition of the importance of integrating training and work experience into high school curricula (Quint, 2006; Holzer, 2009). The evolving nature of the work environment necessitates universities to demonstrate their graduates' preparedness for the workforce (Short & Keller-Bell, 2021). Work readiness skills, encompassing cognitive and non-cognitive abilities, are essential for success in diverse job settings (Short & Keller-Bell, 2021). Services like one-on-one tutoring, test preparation, and career planning have proven effective in supporting students' career aspirations (Bowman, 2018).

The significance of postsecondary education in the labor market cannot be overstated. While a college degree, regardless of the major, enhances earnings potential, certificates also positively impact earnings and employment prospects (Broady & Hershbein, 2020; Xu & Trimble, 2016). However, the value of postsecondary education is contingent upon various factors, including field of study, occupation, and individual skills and experience (Carnevale et al., 2022). As the landscape of postsecondary education continues to expand, students would benefit from professional guidance to navigate the myriad academic and career options available, helping them make informed decisions about their educational and career pathways (Carnevale et al., 2022). Institutions can better prepare students for success in the dynamic labor market of the future by integrating workforce development early and providing comprehensive guidance on postsecondary options.

Non-Profit/Nonprofit Organizations

Nonprofit Challenges

In addressing service needs, nonprofits often prioritize reducing administrative expenses and allocating more resources to programs rather than relying on borrowing or reserves (Cheng & Yang, 2019). However, to ensure the effectiveness of these programs, policymakers, private funders, and researchers must recognize and evaluate the value of experiences offered in out-of-school time (OST) programs. These programs play a critical role in bridging the opportunity gap between youth from low-income and higher-income families, potentially impacting high school and college graduation rates and future employment outcomes (McCombs et al., 2017). Policymakers and funders can further support this endeavor by incentivizing intentional, quality programming and prioritizing funding for programs that demonstrate the intentionality of design and quality characteristics.

Creating a positive working environment within these programs is paramount to their success. Strategies such as establishing clear expectations for staff performance, providing job orientation, offering continuous feedback, and fostering a collaborative decision-making process can promote staff morale, self-efficacy, and overall program quality (Beckett et al., 2001, as cited in Huang et al., 2014). Moreover, having evidence of program outcomes is crucial for securing continued or increased funding and support (Scott-Little et al., 2002, Wright et al., 2006, as cited in Huang et al., 2014). Engaging with local community members, leaders, and organizations also plays a vital role in program planning and funding, facilitating meaningful partnerships that enhance program quality and sustainability (Birmingham et al., 2005, Harvard Family Research Project, 2005, Owens & Vallercomp, 2003, Wright, 2005, as cited in Huang et al., 2014). OST programs can maximize their impact and effectively address the communities' needs by implementing these strategies and fostering collaborative efforts.

Feedback Loops and Evaluations

Continuous improvement is a cornerstone of effective afterschool programs, requiring a systematic approach to evaluation and feedback. According to Langley et al. (2009), understanding the need for improvement and establishing a feedback loop are fundamental. Feedback loops are fundamental for successful programs, enabling continuous improvement by gathering insights from stakeholders to assess effectiveness, foster transparency, and drive data-driven decision-making. By establishing robust feedback mechanisms, programs can adapt swiftly, enhance quality, and better meet the diverse needs of students and communities. Periodic evaluations, as highlighted by Huang (2001, as cited in Huang et al., 2014), also serve as crucial instruments for informing continuous self-improvement and ensuring the sustainability of afterschool initiatives. These evaluations should encompass various stakeholders, including staff, students, and families, to assess overall satisfaction and ensure that program expectations and needs are met (Fashola, 1998, as cited in Huang et al., 2014). Furthermore, evaluation findings should be consistently reviewed and made readily available to track program progress effectively (Huang et al., 2014).

As changes are implemented, maintaining them as part of the routine operation requires supporting processes such as feedback and measurement systems, job descriptions, and employee training (Langley et al., 2009). These processes, coupled with measurement and feedback systems, facilitate continuous monitoring of program effectiveness and ease the adoption of necessary changes (Langley et al., 2009). By integrating these principles and practices, afterschool programs can enhance their capacity for improvement and better meet the evolving needs of their participants and communities.

Conceptual Framing

Theory of Change

Mission Graduates' strategy is anchored in a central belief that is continually confirmed by research: accessing higher education is vital for breaking generational cycles of poverty (N. Bess, personal communication, April 21, 2023). The organization has developed its own theory of change, which is broken into five main pillars, with short-term and medium-term outcomes to help the organization realize its missions. The five pillars are:

1. Academic and Literacy Development
2. Community Engagement, Advocacy, & Support
3. Family Partnership
4. Building a Culture of Higher Education
5. Lifelong Learning, Developing a Workforce with 21st Century Skills

For this project, our capstone aligns most closely with pillars four and five.

Five key assumptions serve the framework for Mission Graduates' theory of change: 1) External institutions have the capacity and are willing to partner with Mission Graduates in supporting families' wellbeing and students' growth; 2) Students and families receive more programming benefits with more regular attendance; 3) Students and families want to give back to their communities as leaders and can convert knowledge into action to improve educational outcomes; 4) Mission Graduates has access to a pipeline of teachers, staff, and volunteers who have the resources necessary to make programming effective; and 5) Mission Graduates' efforts are sufficiently powerful to help students combat barriers to higher education imposed by systemic racism, classism, and sexism. These assumptions help to inform how Mission Graduates address inequitable outcomes through their program model within their five pillars of focus (N. Bess, personal communication, April 21, 2023).

Figure 1 is a visual depiction of the theory of change Mission Graduates provided.

Figure 1. Mission Graduates Theory of Change



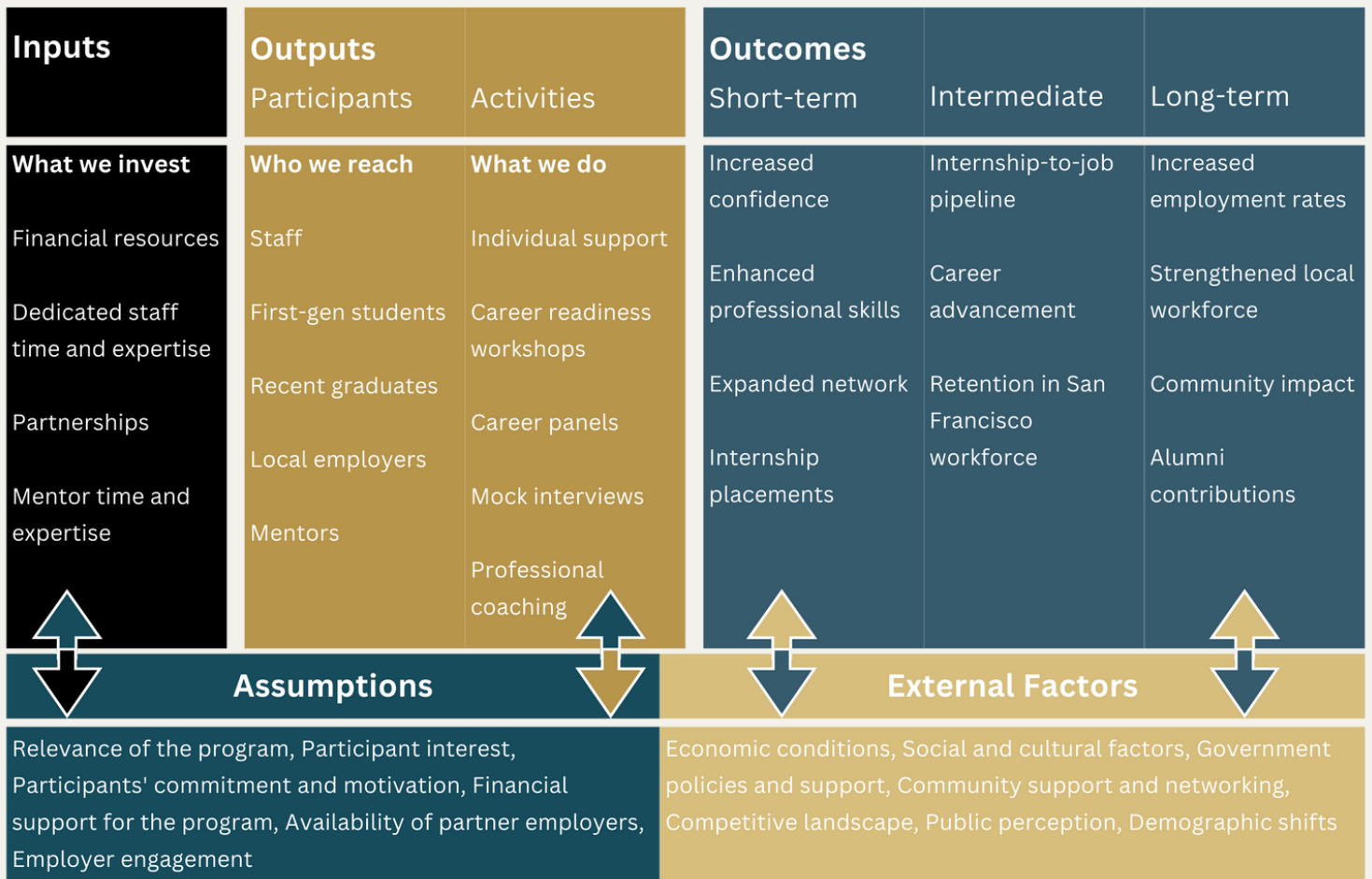
Logic Model

A logic model can visually depict how a program is supposed to operate. It is supposed to visually represent the relationship between the program's components, activities, outputs, and intended outcomes. This visualization can assist in analyzing how the current practices align with the program's theory of change and whether they contribute to or hinder the desired outcomes (Rossi et al., 2019).

Missions Graduates provided us with a logic model for the Impact Gen program's key activities, and we designed our own logic model to help us represent the program's activities and intended impacts. We decided to create our own logic model representation since the one designed by Mission Graduates is extensive and more complex. In contrast, our logic model is more straightforward and more accessible to track for those who are less familiar with the Impact Gen program. To create our logic model version, we relied on the guide developed by W.K. Kellogg Foundation (2004) and looked at examples from previous courses.

Figure 2 is the logic model we created for the Impact Gen program. This logic model is a systematic way to illustrate how Impact Gen functions and achieves its goals. Inputs are the resources invested in the program, and outputs are the immediate results of program activities. Assumptions underpin the model, linking inputs to outputs, by establishing the expected relationships between resources and activities. Outcomes represent the intended changes or benefits resulting from Impact Gen's activities and are influenced by external factors such as socio-economic conditions or policy changes. These external factors can shape the context in which Impact Gen operates, affecting its outcomes positively or negatively. Thus, inputs and outputs are guided by assumptions, while outcomes are influenced by external factors, collectively informing program planning, implementation, and evaluation.

Figure 2. Logic Model for Impact Gen



Stakeholder Theory

Stakeholder theory explores the relationships between a program and its stakeholders, such as participants, mentors, staff, etc. (Parmar et al., 2010). The term stakeholder, and broader stakeholder theory, was popularized by Edward Freeman in the 1980s, who defined a stakeholder as “any group or individual who can affect or is affected by the achievement of the organization's objective” (Freeman, 1984, p. 6). The theory has evolved to extend to how organizations and key stakeholders are interconnected and influence one another. Stakeholder theory assesses how the current practices impact the perceptions and interests of various stakeholders and whether they align with stakeholder expectations. Stakeholder theory can also help visually evaluate power dynamics. Stakeholder theory can guide the process of designing an evaluation platform, identifying measurable outcomes, and recognizing the need to balance the interests of different stakeholder groups (Rodríguez-Campos, 2012).

Utilizing stakeholder theory aligned with us conducting a focus group with current participants of the Impact Gen Program, survey alumni, and conduct empathy interviews with staff. Stakeholder theory is instrumental in understanding how the various stakeholders involved in the Impact Gen program can influence future practices. These stakeholders may have different expectations, interests, and experiences with the Impact Gen Program. By applying stakeholder theory, Mission Graduates can identify these stakeholders' varying perspectives and needs. This insight is critical for making informed decisions about which practices to maintain, modify, or eliminate. Stakeholder theory can also help assess the power dynamics among stakeholders.

Figure 3 represents an abstract representation of stakeholder theory. *Figure 4* depicts the various stakeholders involved with the Impact Gen program. It further details their varying levels of power and interest in the evaluation process and their role in leading change.

Figure 3. Representation of Stakeholder Theory

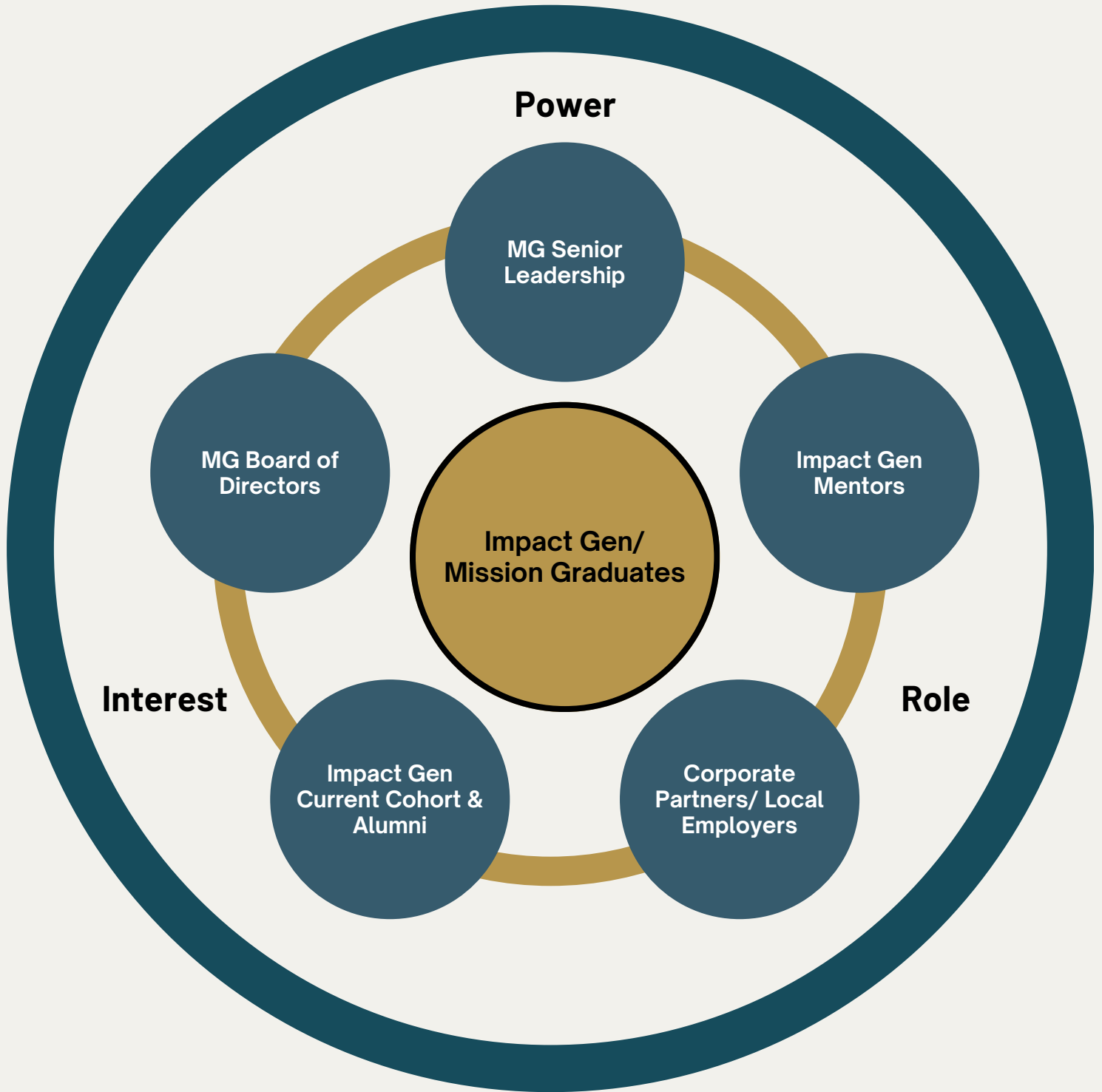


Figure 4. Stakeholders of Impact Gen

	Power	Interest	Role	Level
MG Director of Program Impact	Moderate power. Liaison between Senior Leadership/Board of Directors, program staff, and participants.	Internal accountability and ownership of metrics and outcomes. Benefit from increased student participants and proper allocation of resources with clear knowledge of program health.	Leverage their resources and relationships to drive needed change.	Primary
MG Senior Leadership	Political and financial backers of the initiatives and efforts. Positional Power over program and staff.	Benefit to properly hit goals and objectives for work, and to properly understand and allocate resources and needs of the Impact Gen program.	Champions change to other areas, and determine time and resource allocations.	Secondary
MG Board of Directors	Political and financial backers of the initiatives and efforts. Positional Power over program and staff.	Benefit to properly hit goals and objectives for work, and to properly understand and allocate resources and needs of the Impact Gen program.	Champions change to other areas, and determine time and resource allocations.	Secondary
Impact Gen Current Cohort & Alumni	Low power related to implementation, but they increase during evaluation over Impact Gen.	Interested as a consumer who benefits from improvement. Their behaviors will be measured to evaluate success.	Provide user feedback to determine if Impact Gen's program outcomes are being met.	Tertiary
Corporate Partners/ Local Employers	Low power related to implementation, but significant power related to sponsorship of Impact Gen.	External champions or detractors of the program and determine the connection to local employers.	External support for adoption of change. Determine resources from their organizations to support change.	Tertiary

Project Questions

Based on our understanding of Mission Graduates and the Impact Gen Program, along with our review of the literature and conceptual frameworks, we generated the following project questions:

- **Project Question 1:** What are current practices that either facilitate or hinder Impact Gen in achieving its program goals?
 - **Rationale:** Leadership at Mission Graduates has shared that Impact Gen is an important program in their organization and they want it to flourish. However, the program has struggled to gain traction throughout its brief existence. The above question is designed to identify the assets, barriers, and area of improvement for Impact Gen that will inform next steps for the program.
- **Project Question 2:** In designing an evaluation platform for Impact Gen, what measurable outcomes should Mission Graduates focus upon?
 - **Rationale:** This question guides us through a program evaluation of Impact Gen. Mission Graduates, as an organization, struggles to clearly define Impact Gen and identify what makes the program successful. The above questions will facilitate the discussion and eventual identification of outcomes for Impact Gen.
- **Project Question 3:** How can Mission Graduates leverage a feedback and data collection system in their strategic planning?
 - **Rationale:** This question builds upon the foundation set by our previous project questions, and will support Mission Graduates in thinking through how the organization can be strategic in its mission and, ultimately, in its sustainable impact for students in the Impact Gen program.

Figure 5 is a visual representation of our project questions and rationale. *Figure 6* represents how our capstone team visualized the various components of the project questions' focus inter-relate. The graphic was designed to show how feedback systems, current evaluations, and measured outcomes combine to inform program goals and strategic planning for the Impact Gen program.

Figure 5. Project Questions

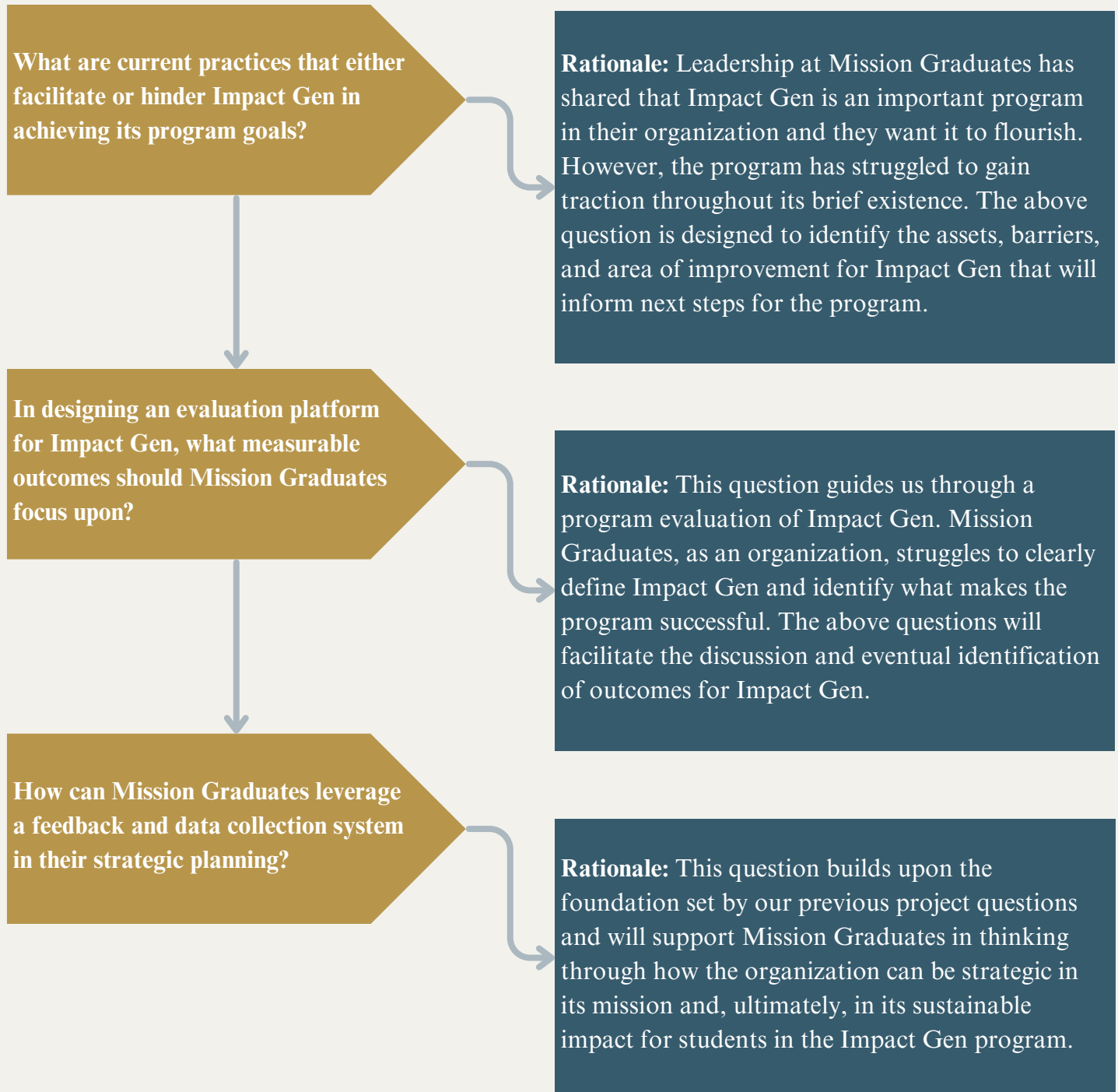
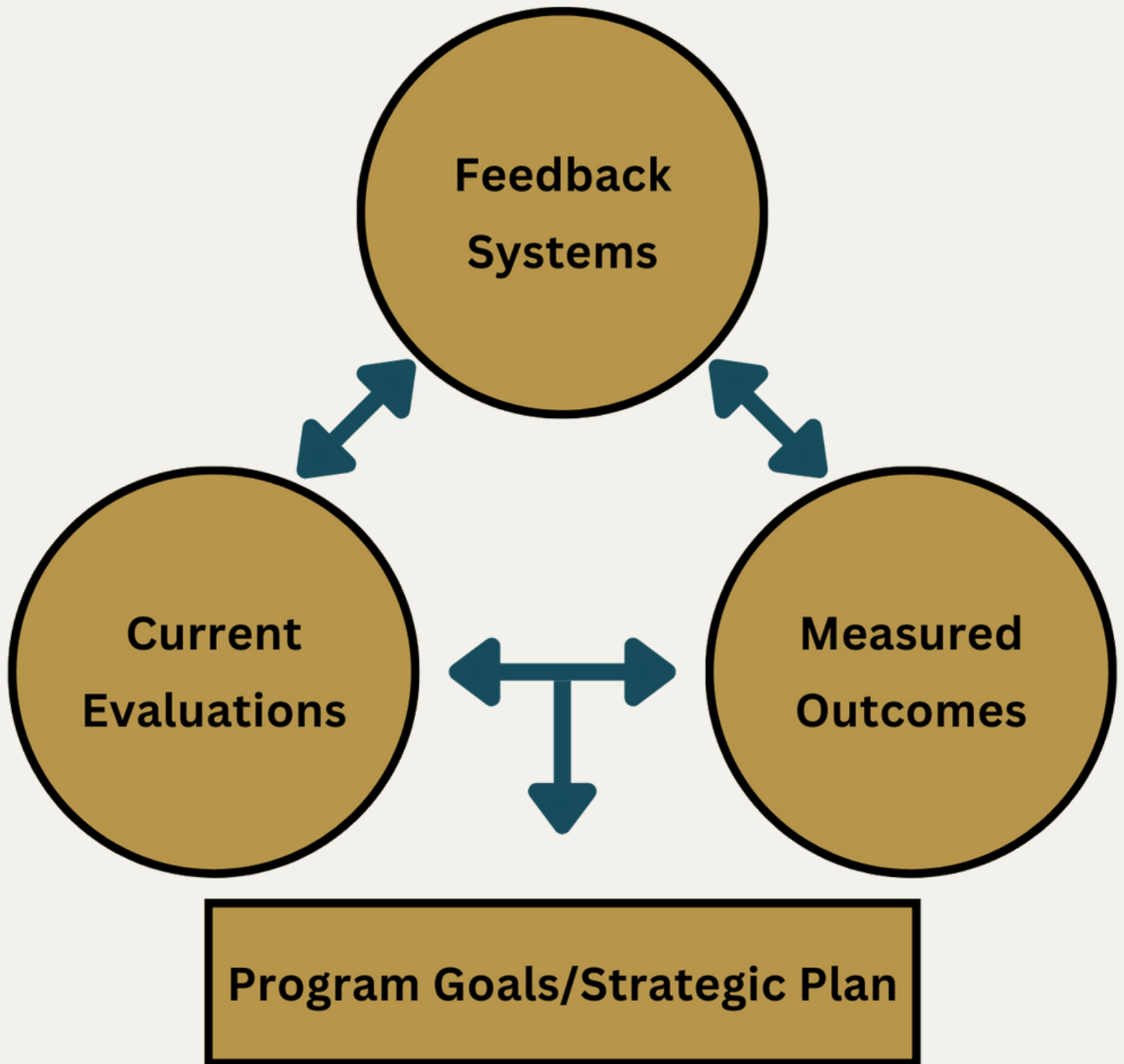


Figure 6. Interrelation of Project Questions



Methods

Project Design

The project design aimed to evaluate the Impact Gen program's effect on participants and determine its strengths and weaknesses to create recommendations and suggest interventions to be implemented based on the proposal. This capstone applied a cross-sectional research method using surveys, focus groups, and empathy interviews for data collection. The units of analysis were participants of the Impact Gen program (past and current), program staff, and mentors. The qualitative study evaluated the program across engagement, satisfaction, and impact dimensions. We define engagement in this study using de Vreede et al. (2019) three-part phenomenon of:

1. **Affective or emotional engagement:** when individuals experience a positive psychological reaction or attachment towards a specific activity or situation.
2. **Behavioral engagement:** when individuals exert observable effort and show persistence to remain involved in an activity or situation.
3. **Cognitive engagement:** when individuals are cognitively absorbed in a task or activity, reducing their awareness of their surroundings.

Satisfaction is a fluid concept seen as both a process and an outcome (Folorunso, 2015). For this study, we define satisfaction within the realm of customer satisfaction, measuring how products and services supplied by a company meet or surpass customer expectations (Folorunso, 2015). Relating to Mission Graduates, our study evaluates impact as an effect, benefit, or contribution to economic, social, cultural, and other aspects of the lives of citizens and society (Barnes, 2015).

Participant Recruitment & Sample

As described in the conceptual framework, stakeholder theory (Freeman, 1984) is instrumental in understanding how the various stakeholders involved in the Impact Gen program can influence future practices. These stakeholders may have different expectations, interests, and experiences with the Impact Gen Program. Their insight is critical for making informed decisions about which practices Mission Graduates should maintain, modify, or eliminate.

One participant group of focus was the fall 2023 participants in the Impact Gen program. We were granted access to this population through our connections with the Director of Program Impact and the Program Director of Workforce Development, who oversees the Impact Gen program. Mission Graduates provided data they collected from a pre-program diagnostic survey of Impact Gen program participants. We were also provided with the results of an Impact Gen survey administered to corporate partners who interacted with the summer boot camp cohort. We evaluated the efficacy of the Impact Gen surveys and provided support revising and administering the post-program diagnostic survey. Additionally, we conducted a focus group with seven of the Impact Gen cohort fall 2023 participants.

We had access to other key stakeholder groups to support our evaluation plan. Our sampling plan extended to conducting surveys and interviews with staff and mentors to allow for a holistic review of the Impact Gen program to support our recommendations for program improvement. *Figure 7* crosswalks our project questions with our data sources.

Figure 7. Data Matrix Table

Project Questions	Data Source	Data Collection Method(s)	Data Analysis Procedures
<p>Project Question 1: What current practices facilitate or hinder Impact Gen in achieving its program goals?</p>	<p>Primary tools used during the September - December cycle are a pre and post-survey for current Impact Gen participants.</p> <p>Interviews with those who participated in the prior two cycles to learn more about their experience. Focus groups could serve as a replacement for these interviews.</p>	<p>Diagnostic survey results from Mission Graduates (already created) - surveys sent to Mission Graduates alumni. Mission Graduates will share all surveys with our Capstone team.</p> <p>Interview and focus groups conducted by our Capstone team and Mission Graduates.</p>	<p>Survey results will help determine if Impact Gen has influenced the knowledge and confidence in students' ability to complete activities related to Impact Gen's short-term outcomes of finding and securing a job, navigating professional challenges, managing finances, and building generational wealth.</p>

Figure 7. Data Matrix Table

Project Questions	Data Source	Data Collection Method(s)	Data Analysis Procedures
<p>Project Question 2: In designing an evaluation platform for Impact Gen, what measurable outcomes should Mission Graduates focus upon?</p>	<p>Interviews/focus groups with stakeholders that evaluate how Impact Gen contributes to the Mission Graduates mission by providing first-gen young professionals with career mentoring and networking opportunities and professional development workshops to help them launch a career in their desired field and build generational wealth.</p> <p>Review of descriptive statistics from past Mission Graduate surveys and integration of the Capstone team’s survey instruments collected descriptive statistics.</p>	<p>The data from interviews and focus groups needs to be generated by Mission Graduates and our Capstone team. Interviews with the current cohort of Impact Gen participants and Impact Gen Mentors.</p>	<p>Survey data will involve student satisfaction in their career path and internships, informing if Impact Gen has positively influenced its participants.</p> <p>Interviews will include reflections on the key outcomes of the program and the mentorship experience.</p>

Figure 7. Data Matrix Table

Project Questions	Data Source	Data Collection Method(s)	Data Analysis Procedures
<p>Project Question 3: How can Mission Graduates leverage a feedback and data collection system in their strategic planning?</p>	<p>Communication from Mission Graduates staff, logistics management of Mission Graduates staff.</p> <p>Attendance and engagement of Mission Graduates students in programming.</p> <p>Numbers from partners in individual volunteering, group volunteering, and donating.</p> <p>Exit tickets/feedback surveys and attendance data in professional mentorship, development, and networking opportunities for students, alumni and staff.</p>	<p>Access to the necessary data will be provided directly from Mission Graduates.</p>	<p>To ensure Impact Gen provides a high-quality experience for their supporting partners, a survey will determine their efficacy.</p>

Data Collection

We drew on a range of data, including pre-and post-survey responses from the fall 2023 cohort, focus groups with these participants, interviews with stakeholders, including staff and board members, and focus groups with mentors in the Impact Gen program.

While developing our project design, and as we progressed through our data collection phase, we met on Zoom with the Director of Program Impact for Mission Graduates and the Workforce Development Director who runs the Impact Gen program. They provided program context and helped us with outreach to participants. We requested key performance indicators, workshop schedules, and past survey data – pre-diagnostic and post-diagnostic – for each prior Impact Gen cohort and the Mission Graduates Theory of Change from them.

Surveys From Past and Current Participants

We first asked the Director of Program Impact for Mission Graduates to provide us with pre- and post-diagnostic survey results from previous Impact Gen cohorts. Prior to the beginning of the role of the Director of Program Impact, pre- and post-program surveys were not consistently administered to participants and results were not centrally maintained.

Prior to our project launch, the Director of Program Impact administered a pre-diagnostic survey to current participants and shared the survey tool and results with us (**Appendix 2**). We evaluated the Impact Gen pre-diagnostic survey to provide recommendations for future survey tools. With this survey data, we created our questions for the post-diagnostic survey (**Appendix 3**) as a means for understanding participant perspectives on how Impact Gen is currently functioning and aligned the survey to evaluate program outcomes to help determine whether the program is delivering on its stated goals. The survey took between 15-20 minutes to complete.

Focus Group with Current Participants

We coordinated with the Impact Gen Workforce Development Director to arrange a focus group on Zoom during a scheduled Impact Gen evening meeting in December 2023, allowing us to identify themes related to stakeholder perception of program satisfaction and impact. The focus group method was chosen because, in program planning and evaluation, research has demonstrated that focus groups are an effective way to obtain a diverse range of information for effective, meaningful, and relevant program design (Drexel University, 2015).

Current participants were informed before the focus group and given the option to participate. We introduced ourselves to the cohort a week before the focus group and described our project to them, centering their voices as critical. The virtual meeting included seven current program participants from a total of 11 in the cohort. We divided the group into two breakout rooms on Zoom to elicit voices from all participants.

We created an Impact Gen Participant focus group protocol and question guide (**Appendix 4**) and sought input from the Director of Program Impact and the Program Director of Workforce Development. We asked Impact Gen participants about their reasons for joining the program, as well as their perspectives on the impact of the Mission Graduates community. We designed all questions in the context of this study's conceptual framework to elicit answers to the three project questions. We used the CASEL Framework (2023) to organize the focus group structure with a grounding activity, participant engagement, and optimistic closure. The focus group lasted approximately an hour and a half – even though initially scheduled for one hour – and participants engaged fully throughout the session. We audio-video-recorded the focus group for transcription and analysis purposes.

Empathy Interviews with Stakeholders

Empathy interviews with Impact Gen stakeholders (Mission Graduate staff and board members) occurred in December 2023 and January 2024. Empathy interviews were used to help identify issues that need to be addressed by the system, unpack the root causes of a problem from a community and stakeholder perspective, and gather information that inspires new, human-centered change ideas (Nelsestuen & Smith, 2020).

Individual interviews took approximately an hour to complete, with some going over the allotted time. A complete list of interview questions is available in **Appendix 7**. We audio-video-recorded the interviews for transcription and analysis purposes.

Focus Group with Mentors

We coordinated outreach with support from the Workforce Development Director to mentors who served in the Impact Gen Program to understand their experiences better and triangulate their responses with the other stakeholder demographics. We created an Impact Gen Mentor focus group protocol and question guide (**Appendix 5**) and sought input from the Director of Program Impact and the Program Director of Workforce Development. Some of the questions asked of participants, staff, and board members were also asked of the mentors. However, additional questions about their specific role and involvement in the program were incorporated into the focus group guide.

We aimed to yield an 85% response rate of the total sample of seven mentors contacted to participate in the focus group. The focus group took place in January 2024 and lasted approximately an hour and a half with four mentors, a yield of 57%. Mentors engaged fully throughout the session. We audio-video-recorded the focus group for transcription and analysis purposes.

Instruments

The Director of Program Impact at Mission Graduates created the pre-program survey instrument to evaluate participants' career goals and background knowledge (**Appendix 2**). Impact Gen uses the pre-program survey to help design workshops for the cohort, match participants with a mentor, and assess what areas of growth are for participants.

Our team evaluated this survey and then created a post-program survey using relevant theory, literature reviews, and measurements corresponding to the previously outlined conceptual model. The post-program survey evaluates perceptions of metrics relevant to Impact Gen's outcomes (**Appendix 3**).

We designed our post-program survey and administered it to each stakeholder group. The engagement measure contains 31 questions. The findings measured stakeholder perception of program outcomes. All variables are interval measures rated on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 to 5 (i.e., strongly disagree to strongly agree, not at all confident to extremely confident, very unsatisfied to very satisfied). In addition to the measurement survey questions, we collected stakeholder demographic data as self-reported information, including gender identity, stakeholder role, and age.

The Impact Gen Participants focus group followed a protocol (**Appendix 4**) when meeting with participants online. The focus group occurred during a regularly scheduled Impact Gen meeting on Zoom with seven participants present, divided into two breakout groups.

Data Analysis

Following data collection, we scrutinized the data from the surveys, focus groups, and interviews for the purpose of sharing the analysis with the Mission Graduate team to implement ideas, practices, and initiatives to improve the Impact Gen's program's overall success.

Interview and Focus Group Data

We conducted interviews and our focus group on Zoom with auto-transcribing through Zoom's transcription software. During each interview and focus group, we took detailed notes paying particular attention to answers that addressed the project questions. Most often, these included answers that spoke to reasons for the success and impact of Impact Gen. We synthesized interview notes immediately following each interview to recognize potential patterns within each interview and codify the most pronounced/recurrent ideas (**Appendix 6**).

We revised each transcript to ensure that the final transcripts accurately reflected the words of each participant. A demographic profile of respondents for gender identity, tenure, regional location, and age was created across all data collection methods. These demographics can be key explanatory indicators for the phenomena under investigation. We developed a codebook based on the focus group protocol and created a guide to list the overarching themes that emerged (**Appendix 7**). We then further broke down these themes into sub-themes that corresponded to the main ideas shared by participants. The codebook was updated further to reflect program goals and outcomes for Impact Gen. This deductive strategy, or “top-down” approach to data analysis, helped us to sort data into organizational categories, such as data type, participant, or time period, organize the data into categories to maintain alignment with research questions, and apply theoretical and conceptual frameworks to our research (Bingham & Witkowsky, 2022).

We used the same codebook as the basis for the interviews we conducted. However, the codebook needed alterations for interviews based on the stakeholder group. Based on the themes identified from the interview transcripts, we classified them into the following categories:

1. Program Development and Evolution:

- **Purpose and Vision of Impact Gen:** Centered around the idea that Impact Gen is a community-driven program focusing on the disruption of traditional professional norms.
- **Goals and Objectives of the Program:** Discusses the program's initial confusion and evolution to focus on alumni and current college students, along with a shift towards bridging the gap between soft and technical skills.
- **Development and Improvement of the Program:** Describes the challenges faced during the program's development, highlighting the importance of feedback from participants and stakeholders in shaping program improvements.

2. Challenges and Sustainability:

- **Recruitment and Sustainability:** Highlights challenges faced in recruitment and program sustainability, with the number of students typically lower than desired and maintaining participation numbers.
- **Impact of the Pandemic:** Discusses the challenges of transitioning the program to a virtual format during the pandemic and unexpected benefits such as the ability to reach students outside of the local area.

3. Engagement with Stakeholders:

- **Engagement with Stakeholders:** Notes challenges in engaging with Mission Graduate's board and suggests that this is an area where more support could be helpful. Discusses efforts to engage alumni as volunteers and workshop presenters.
- **Utilization of Feedback for Program Improvement:** Stresses the importance of feedback mechanisms to evaluate the Impact Gen program. Describes how feedback from the first cohort led to program improvements.

4. Desire for Program Expansion and Improvement:

- **Desire for Program Expansion and Improvement:** Expresses a desire to expand and improve the program, particularly in terms of offering more workshops and technical skills training.

5. Passion and Commitment to the Program:

- **Passion and Commitment to the Program:** Expresses deep passion and commitment to the Impact Gen program and to Mission Graduates as an organization.

6. Personal Experience and Professional Identity:

- **Personal Experience and Professional Identity:** Mentions personal experiences as a first-generation immigrant from the Mission District. Highlights the role of the professional identity as part of Mission Grads.

7. Success Stories and Achievements:

- **Success Stories and Achievements:** Shares several success stories from participants in the Impact Gen program.

Focus group data themes showed a positive association with mentors and mentorship. Specifically, the focus group data strongly emphasized the importance of developing a mentorship relationship as fundamental to achieving stated Impact Gen goals. Similarly, the focus group data showed an emerging trend towards ideas of employment and what we coded as workforce. These workforce themes included the need to develop skills related to identifying careers and the importance of transferable skills developed through the Impact Gen program, which could lead to finding and securing future employment. Finally, the focus groups showed an emphasis on the importance of understanding the college and workforce development process for first-generation college students. There was consideration that first-generation students experience college and career readiness differently, and it was important to have systems and structures in place to support these students. Through understanding and connecting first-generation identity with the staff at Impact Gen, the focus groups highlighted how this contributed to the themes identified in workforce development and mentorship. Images showing sentiment and frequency for these themes can be found in **Appendix 9**.

Survey Data

Surveys were used in our research to provide a standardized and systematic method for obtaining information about the Impact Gen participants by using a questionnaire to measure elements sampled from that population (Rasinski, 2005). We performed a descriptive analysis of the survey data to identify emerging trends and patterns. This analysis also enabled us to gauge participant growth by comparing pre- and post-program diagnostic survey responses using repeated measures. The pre-diagnostic survey data aligned with the participants' beliefs and confidence levels on three Impact Gen program inquiries, namely, confidence indicators for categories related to “Finding & Securing a Job,” “Navigating Professional Challenges,” and “Managing Finances & Building Generational Wealth.” The subcategories related to program workshops are listed below:

- Finding & Securing a Job
 - Writing a professional email to a boss or professional contact
 - Making a Strong LinkedIn profile
 - Writing an effective resume
 - Writing a compelling cover letter
 - Standing out and impressing a prospective employer in a job interview
 - Building network of professionals in my field/industry of interest
 - Leveraging my network for professional support
 - Negotiating a job offer

- Navigating Professional Challenges
 - Advocating for the unique traits and skills I bring to a professional setting
 - Overcoming feelings of imposter syndrome
 - Adhering to professional etiquette standards
 - Building a relationship with a professional mentor
 - Advocating for myself and negotiating with my boss for a raise or promotion

- Managing Finances & Building Generational Wealth
 - How to budget and engage in long-term financial planning
 - How to maintain a strong credit score
 - How to file taxes
 - How to plan and prepare for homeownership
 - How to invest money wisely

For each subcategory, the null hypothesis was that there was no difference between the students' self-reported confidence values before they participated in Impact Gen and their reported scores after participation in the Impact Gen workshops. We conducted related sample t-tests across these values to determine the significance and effect size for the program activities and outcomes.

Table 1 shows areas of significant change in participants' reported confidence in completing tasks related to the area of Finding & Securing a Job where $t(4) = 2.132$ and $p < .05$:

Table 1
Participant Self-Reported Change in Perceived Confidence for Finding & Securing a Job

	Pre-test Mean	Pre-test SD	Post-test Mean	Post-test SD	Cohen's d
Making a Strong LinkedIn Profile	2.20	0.837	3.80	1.10	1.06
Writing a compelling cover letter	2.20	0.45	3.80	0.84	1.40
Standing out and impressing a prospective employer in a job interview	2.80	0.84	4.00	1.00	1.10
Building a network of professionals in my field/industry of interest	2.20	0.45	3.80	1.10	1.19
Negotiating a job offer	2.00	0.00	3.40	0.89	1.57

Note. Subcategories not listed did not show significant differences in pre-post assessment of student perceived confidence in addressing the stated areas.

Table 2 shows the areas of significant change in participants' reported confidence in completing tasks related to the area of Managing Finances & Building Generational Wealth where $t(4) = 2.132$ and $p < .05$:

Table 2
Participant Self-Reported Change in Perceived Confidence for Managing Finances & Building Generational Wealth

	Pre-test Mean	Pre-test SD	Post-test Mean	Post-test SD	Cohen's d
How to budget and engage in long-term financial planning	3.00	0.71	3.60	0.89	1.10
How to maintain a strong credit score	2.60	1.14	3.60	1.14	1.41

Note. Subcategories not listed did not show significant differences in pre-post assessment of student perceived confidence in addressing the stated areas.

The analysis of categories related to Navigating Professional Challenges did not show significant differences from the pre-post means analysis.

In combination with the pre-post survey and related means analysis, the post-diagnostic survey results were helpful to Mission Graduates in demonstrating growth across these areas. While the statistical data provided insights related to specific workshop effectiveness, they were limited in demonstrating the program's overall effectiveness. Following data collection, the trends in descriptive statistics and qualitative responses obtained during the post-survey aided the Capstone team in identifying trends aligned with qualitative data gathered during empathy interviews and focus group sessions. A full review of our data collection timeline is available in **Appendix 8**.

Findings

After analyzing all qualitative data for the project, five key findings emerged. These findings collectively provide valuable insights into the strengths, challenges, and areas for improvement within the Impact Gen program, offering a foundation for strategic planning and program development.

- Finding 1: Mentoring is a key component of Impact Gen that has greatly benefited all participants. Mentors want training for their roles, methods for feedback, engagement opportunities with fellow mentors, and increased communication from program staff. This finding addressed Project Question 1.
- Finding 2: Emphasis on workforce development is needed and should occur early in the Mission Graduates journey (during College Connect). This finding addressed Project Question 2.
- Finding 3: As a non-profit, Mission Graduates has limited resources (budget and staff capacity). Mission Graduates staff indicated that there is a need to fill those gaps, leverage internal assets, and foster external partnerships to support their strategic planning and expand the Impact Gen program. This finding addressed Project Questions 2 and 3.
- Finding 4: Recognizing Impact Gen as essential, not an extra commitment for participants, is crucial. Clear communication of the program's importance enhances recruitment, perception, and commitment to Impact Gen. Additionally, Mission Graduates staff sharing their first-gen identity with participants can help foster connections. This finding addressed Project Questions 1 and 2.
- Finding 5: The Impact Gen program does not have a robust and consistent evaluation system that focuses on measuring the outcomes of the program. This finding addressed Project Questions 2 and 3.

Figure 8 represents our findings in relation to the project questions. Each finding connected to at least one of our three project questions.

Finding 1: Mentoring is a key component of Impact Gen that has greatly benefited all participants. Mentors want training for their role, methods for feedback, engagement opportunities with fellow mentors, and increased communication from program staff. This finding addressed Project Question 1.

Mentoring stands as a cornerstone of Impact Gen, benefiting all involved, and carries profound implications for several reasons. These advantages encompass the acquisition of invaluable insights, guidance, and support from seasoned mentors, thereby enhancing participants' overall journey and educational outcomes. As articulated by a participant, "I loved my mentor, she was great...I would say she definitely met my expectations. She was very helpful, very understanding, and she was just great. I felt like she was a friend." Research by Stringer (2017) reinforces the efficacy of college mentoring initiatives in bolstering the persistence of low-income and first-generation students through higher education.

Figure 8. Findings

	PQ1	PQ2	PQ3
Mentoring is a key component of Impact Gen that has greatly benefited all participants. Mentors want training for their role, methods for feedback, engagement opportunities with fellow mentors, and increased communication from program staff.	✓		
Emphasis on workforce development is needed and should occur early in the Mission Graduates journey (during College Connect).		✓	
As a non-profit, MG has limited resources (budget & staff capacity). MG staff indicated that there is a need to fill those gaps, leverage internal assets, and foster external partnerships to support their strategic planning and expand the Impact Gen program.		✓	✓
Recognizing Impact Gen as essential, not an extra commitment for participants, is crucial. Clear communication of program importance enhances recruitment, perception, and commitment to Impact Gen. Additionally, Mission Graduates staff sharing their first-gen identity with participants can help foster connections.	✓	✓	
The Impact Gen program does not have a robust and consistent evaluation system that focuses on measuring the outcomes of the program.		✓	✓

Acknowledging mentors' eagerness for training underscores the importance of nurturing mentors. A mentor from Impact Gen expressed, "I feel like it would have been nice to know at the very end what their experience was so I could be a better mentor." Effective mentoring necessitates specific competencies and knowledge, and providing avenues for training can empower mentors to perform their duties more proficiently. The desire for feedback mechanisms, collaborative engagement among mentors, and heightened communication from program administrators signifies a collective aspiration for continual enhancement and optimization of the program. For instance, one mentor noted, "I build off of feedback, and it was really hard not to have any feedback from the program." Addressing these needs can lead to a more robust and effective mentoring framework within Impact Gen.

This finding underscores the critical role of mentoring within the Impact Gen program, highlighting its benefits for participants and mentors alike. It also emphasizes the importance of continually evaluating and refining mentoring practices to ensure the program's ongoing success and effectiveness.

Finding 2: Emphasis on workforce development is needed and should occur early in the Mission Graduates journey (during College Connect). This finding addressed Project Question 2.

This finding emphasizes the need for early workforce development within the initial stages of the Mission Graduates journey, notably within College Connect. It emphasizes the criticality of not deferring career readiness until later stages but seamlessly integrating it from the program's outset. Mission Graduates can then adeptly equip participants with the requisite skills and knowledge to thrive in the competitive job market post-graduation. A staff member of Mission Graduates articulated, "We have to tie workforce development with higher education. Otherwise, what we're doing is we're supporting young people, particularly young people of color, to continue to be in low-wage jobs that don't have career advancement."

This strategic alignment extends the program's focus beyond academic support to encompass robust career preparation and professional skill cultivation. This shift is warranted, given the contemporary emphasis on universities demonstrating their graduates' readiness for the dynamic professional landscape (Short & Keller-Bell, 2021). Recognizing the demand for early workforce development acknowledges that many participants harbor aspirations of swiftly entering the job market upon completing their education. As one interviewee noted, "When first-gen students are going to college, they're feeling a lot of that imposter syndrome, and they're feeling that when they go into the workforce, too." By proactively addressing this need, Mission Graduates can better cater to the aspirations and interests of their participants.

Finding 3: As a non-profit, Mission Graduates has limited resources (budget and staff capacity). Mission Graduates staff indicated that there is a need to fill those gaps, leverage internal assets, and foster external partnerships to support their strategic planning and expand the Impact Gen program. This finding addressed Project Questions 2 and 3.

Recognizing the constraints of budget and staff capacity is paramount for the allocation of resources within Mission Graduates. This awareness empowers the organization to prioritize initiatives and interventions that align closely with its strategic objectives, all while navigating these limitations adeptly. By understanding these constraints, Mission Graduates can develop targeted strategies to bridge gaps effectively, thereby ensuring the sustainability and scalability of their programs, such as Impact Gen.

Expanding initiatives like Impact Gen necessitates a robust infusion of resources. Acknowledging the need to leverage internal assets and foster external partnerships suggests a proactive approach to securing the necessary support for program expansion. As articulated by one interviewee, “Mission Graduates continues to look for more financial support and how to expand the program.” Another interviewee concurred, expressing, “If we had more funding and we had more opportunity to take chances we could do bigger things.”

Research underscores the value of nonprofit programs engaging consistently with local community stakeholders, leaders, and organizations to cultivate impactful partnerships in both planning and funding endeavors (Birmingham et al., 2005, Harvard Family Research Project, 2005, Owens & Vallercamp, 2003, Wright, 2005, as cited in Huang et al., 2014). Sustainable funding and operational capacity are foundational pillars upon which nonprofit organizations can advance their missions. Mission Graduates can optimize the efficiency and efficacy of their program delivery by proactively addressing resource gaps and leveraging internal strengths. This approach enables Mission Graduates to capitalize on existing resources and capabilities while actively seeking additional support where needed, ultimately maximizing the transformative impact of their endeavors.

Finding 4: Recognizing Impact Gen as essential, not an extra commitment for participants is crucial. Clear communication of program importance enhances recruitment, perception, and commitment to Impact Gen. Additionally, Mission Graduates staff sharing their first-gen identity with participants can help foster connections. This finding addressed Project Questions 1 and 2.

When participants view Impact Gen as indispensable rather than optional, they are more inclined to engage actively and commit fully to the program's objectives. Clear and transparent communication regarding the program's significance establishes expectations and serves as a powerful motivator, encouraging participants to prioritize their involvement, ultimately leading to more meaningful outcomes. Currently, participants are

expressing concerns about the perceived time commitment, with one remarking, “Twice a week for an hour and a half is like a really big commitment.”

When participants, staff, and stakeholders grasp and appreciate the intrinsic value of Impact Gen, it not only bolsters the program's credibility but also cultivates positive perceptions, thereby attracting greater support and resources. For instance, a mentor reflected on the personal career steps of their experience, noting, “myself being first generation and remembering what you’re supposed to wear for an interview or how to hold yourself.” Such testimonials effectively bridge the gap between program outcomes and practical applications for students, highlighting the tangible benefits of Impact Gen participation.

Mission Graduates' staff openly sharing their first-generation identity with participants can foster deeper connections and underscore the pivotal role of relatability and empathy in mentorship and support initiatives. Shared experiences engender a sense of belonging and trust, fortifying the mentor-mentee relationship and amplifying participant engagement and support. Given that first-generation students commonly feel disconnected from the social structure and have more difficulty finding a sense of belonging on their campuses (Pratt et al., 2019), leveraging staff identities for connection-building represents a strategic avenue for enhancing Impact Gen's efficacy and relevance.

Finding 5: The Impact Gen program does not have a robust and consistent evaluation system that focuses on measuring the outcomes of the program. This finding addressed Project Questions 2 and 3.

Establishing an evaluation system is imperative for ensuring the program's accountability toward its goals and objectives. Implementing a feedback loop allows Mission Graduates to gauge whether their improvement efforts effectively steer results toward the desired organizational aims (Langley et al., 2009). Mission Graduates would struggle to make evidence-based decisions regarding the program's direction, resource allocation, and strategic planning without such an evaluation mechanism. This necessity is underscored by a poignant remark from one staff member, “having people feel good about a program is not sufficient. It’s important. It’s critical... it’s necessary but not sufficient. And so, we have to also really get clear on having measurable goals.”

The absence of an evaluation framework impedes Mission Graduates' ability to justify programmatic decisions. It hampers their capacity to demonstrate the program's impact to stakeholders, funders, and the community. Therefore, Impact Gen must develop a robust evaluation system to provide tangible evidence of the program’s effectiveness in achieving its intended outcomes. Mission Graduates can instill greater confidence and garner increased support for the program, thereby solidifying its standing within the community.

Recommendations

Our findings revealed opportunities to improve Impact Gen’s current structure and enhance the program's ability to meet stakeholder needs. Our recommendations include:

- Recommendation 1: Continuous Training and Engagement for Mentors
- Recommendation 2: Establish College Connect as a Strategic Pipeline for Impact Gen and Workforce Development
- Recommendation 3: Strengthening Impact Gen through Comprehensive Support
- Recommendation 4: Communicate the Essential Nature of Impact Gen and Foster Connections Through Shared First-Gen Experiences
- Recommendation 5: Develop a Comprehensive Program Evaluation System

These recommendations are consistent with our project questions, findings, conceptual framework, and literature reviewed. Our recommendations are all aimed at supporting Mission Graduates in making Impact Gen into the robust program it had envisioned by creating a clear roadmap of steps the organization can take to enhance the visibility, support, and ultimately, the sustainability of the program. We wrote recommendations using the following format of recommendation rationale with literature integration, implementation steps, and expected outcomes.

Figure 9 represents the five findings and their connection to our recommendations.

Recommendation 1: Continuous Training and Engagement for Mentors

Rationale with Literature Integration

During our focus group with mentors, we gathered valuable insights into the types of professional development opportunities, engagement platforms, and communication structures they believe would enrich their role. For instance, one of the mentors shared: "I wish there were other ways for me to just like see if I could talk to other people in the program to see how they're doing maybe talk about like strategies that they're how they're doing with like the other like mentees that they're working with..."

Mentoring has emerged as a powerful intervention for aiding post-secondary navigation among underserved populations, particularly low-income and first-generation students (Glass, 2022; Stringer, 2017). The efficacy of mentoring programs in bolstering college persistence rates underscores the significance of integrating mentorship components within initiatives like Impact Gen. Broadening the scope to include peer mentorship, leveraging former Mission Graduates and Impact Gen students, could further enrich student support, as suggested by Broadhurst et al. (2023). By implementing ongoing training sessions for mentors, Mission Graduates can ensure the vibrancy and alignment of the mentorship component with best practices, ultimately fostering positive outcomes for both mentors and participants. This fusion of evidence-based strategies and

Figure 9. Recommendations

Findings	Recommendations
<p>Mentoring is a key component of Impact Gen that has greatly benefited all participants. Mentors want training for their role, methods for feedback, engagement opportunities with fellow mentors, and increased communication from program staff.</p>	<p>Continuous Training and Engagement for Mentors</p>
<p>Emphasis on workforce development is needed and should occur early in the Mission Graduates journey (during College Connect).</p>	<p>Establish College Connect as a Strategic Pipeline for Impact Gen and Workforce Development</p>
<p>As a non-profit, MG has limited resources (budget & staff capacity). MG staff indicated that there is a need to fill those gaps, leverage internal assets, and foster external partnerships to support their strategic planning and expand the Impact Gen program.</p>	<p>Strengthening Impact Gen through Comprehensive Support</p>
<p>Recognizing Impact Gen as essential, not an extra commitment for participants, is crucial. Clear communication of program importance enhances recruitment, perception, and commitment to Impact Gen. Additionally, Mission Graduates staff sharing their first-gen identity with participants can help foster connections.</p>	<p>Communicate the Essential Nature of Impact Gen and Foster Connections Through Shared First-Gen Experiences</p>
<p>The Impact Gen program does not have a robust and consistent evaluation system that focuses on measuring the outcomes of the program.</p>	<p>Develop a Comprehensive Program Evaluation System</p>

continuous improvement mechanisms is paramount for optimizing the impact and longevity of afterschool programs like Impact Gen.

In addition, mentors express a desire for a feedback loop. In relation to a feedback system, one mentor shared that, "I think it would have been nice to know at the very end like what their experience was like so I could be a better mentor or see like, oh, it wasn't actually a good experience for them." As highlighted by Huang (2001, as cited in Huang et al., 2014), continuous evaluation is indispensable for the sustainability and enhancement of afterschool programs. Regular assessments of overall satisfaction among staff, students, and families are essential to ensure that all participants' diverse needs and expectations are being met, echoing the sentiments of Fashola (1998, as cited in Huang et al., 2014). Consistently reviewing evaluation findings is crucial for monitoring program progress and making informed decisions regarding programmatic enhancements (Huang et al., 2014).

Implementation Steps

1. Conduct Training Needs Assessment:

- Conduct a thorough assessment of the training needs of mentors. Identify areas where additional training or professional development is required, considering mentor feedback, program goals, and best practices in mentoring. During the focus group, mentors specifically asked for training on what it means to be a mentor and training around supporting mentees with mental health concerns. One mentor shared: "I had mentor trainings through another program, but again, I don't know what type of trainings other mentors in this space would have and I feel like it would be nice even if it's like, a preliminary like a one hour two hours like training session before we even meet the students." During the focus group, mentors also expressed interest and a need for specific training around mental health support for their advisees.

2. Develop a Mentor Training Handbook & Resource Library:

- Design a comprehensive mentor training handbook that covers key areas such as effective communication, goal setting, cultural competence, mental health resources, and best practices in mentorship. The program should be structured to accommodate both new and experienced mentors.
- Develop a comprehensive mentor resource library with articles, videos, and guides on effective mentorship, cultural competency, and relevant industry trends. Encourage mentors to access these resources for continuous self-directed learning, especially around supporting mentees with mental wellness and social-emotional support.

3. Utilize External Resources:

- Leverage external resources, including experts in mentoring, career development, and related fields, to provide specialized training sessions. This may involve bringing in guest speakers, organizing workshops, or facilitating webinars on relevant topics.

- Create partnerships with mental health organizations to support mentors in their mentees mental wellness as well as their own over the course of sessions.
4. Regular Training and Peer Learning Sessions:
- Implement a schedule of regular training sessions for mentors. These sessions can be conducted in-person or virtually, ensuring accessibility for all mentors. Consider different formats, such as workshops, seminars, and online modules, to accommodate varying learning preferences.
 - Foster a culture of peer learning among mentors. Encourage sharing of best practices, success stories, and challenges among mentors, creating a supportive community where they can learn from each other's experiences.
5. Feedback Mechanism:
- Implement a structured feedback mechanism from mentees to mentors and vice versa. Regularly collect feedback on the mentorship experience, including areas of strength and improvement. Use this feedback to tailor ongoing training sessions to address specific needs.
6. Monthly Mentor Check-Ins:
- Implement monthly check-in sessions with mentors to provide a forum for sharing experiences, addressing challenges, and discussing successes. These sessions can be facilitated virtually or in-person, allowing mentors to connect with program coordinators and fellow mentors.
7. Establish Ongoing Communication Channels:
- Set up regular communication channels, such as mentor newsletters, virtual meetings, or online forums, to inform mentors about program updates, best practices, and relevant resources. This fosters a sense of community, ensures that mentors stay engaged and connected, and provides mentors with an avenue to seek support from each other.
 - Align mentor training with any changes or enhancements to the Impact Gen program. Ensure mentors are well-informed about program updates and equipped with the knowledge to support participants effectively in light of these changes.

Expected Outcomes

- Mentors equipped with updated knowledge and skills to provide practical support to participants.
- Consistent and high-quality mentorship experiences for Impact Gen participants.
- Enhanced mentor satisfaction and engagement resulting from ongoing professional development opportunities.
- Strengthened mentor community with shared expertise and a collective commitment to program goals.

Recommendation 2: Establish College Connect as a Strategic Pipeline for Impact Gen and Workforce Development

Rationale with Literature Integration

Early attention to workforce development, particularly during the College Connect phase, is important in the Mission Graduates journey. Leveraging Mission Graduates' College Connect program as a deliberate pipeline into Impact Gen can establish a seamless and purpose-driven pathway for participants. This integrated approach ensures a continuous and supportive connection from higher education to workforce development.

Recent literature underscores a paradigm shift in education, where traditional high school reforms to foster academic achievement for college attendance are evolving. Quint (2006) and Holzer (2009) note this transition. Universities are increasingly tasked with demonstrating graduates' preparedness for the rapidly evolving workforce, emphasizing cognitive and non-cognitive skills (Short & Keller-Bell, 2021). These skills encompass foundational cognitive abilities such as problem-solving, critical thinking, and additional soft skills like communication and teamwork (Short & Keller-Bell, 2019). Effective support services, including personalized assistance such as tutoring and career planning, have effectively facilitated students' academic and career success (Bowman, 2018). The significance of postsecondary education in augmenting earning potential is highlighted by Broady & Hershbein (2020), while Xu & Trimble (2016) underscore the positive impact of certificates on earnings and employment prospects. However, the value of postsecondary education is influenced by various factors, including field of study, occupation, and demographic considerations (Carnevale et al., 2021). Given the intricate nature of educational and career pathways, students stand to benefit greatly from comprehensive guidance to navigate the diverse array of options available to them (Carnevale et al., 2021).

Mission Graduates can establish a cohesive support system that seamlessly guides participants from college experiences to successful entry into the workforce by strategically positioning College Connect as a pathway for Impact Gen and workforce development. This approach aligns with the evolving needs of the modern job market. It ensures that Mission Graduates remain at the forefront of empowering individuals to achieve their educational and career aspirations.

Implementation Steps

1. Design Integrated Programming:

- Align the outcomes and achievements within College Connect with the goals of the Impact Gen program. Establish clear pathways for participants to transition into Impact Gen based on their academic accomplishments and expressed career aspirations.
- Develop a seamless transition plan that integrates College Connect and Impact Gen programming. Design workshops and sessions that bridge the gap between academic success, career exploration, and professional development.

- Establish a mentorship program that bridges College Connect participants with mentors from the Impact Gen program. This inter-program mentorship provides valuable insights into the career landscape while fostering a sense of community.
2. Promote Early Engagement:
 - Encourage early engagement with College Connect, introducing participants to the broader Mission Graduates ecosystem. Clearly articulate the pathways from College Connect to Impact Gen, emphasizing the continuum of support available to participants.
 3. Host Joint Networking and Information Events:
 - Organize networking events that bring together participants from both College Connect and Impact Gen programs. These events provide opportunities for mentorship, peer connections, and exposure to professionals in participants' fields of interest.
 - Conduct information sessions that outline the benefits of progressing from College Connect to Impact Gen. Illustrate success stories of individuals who have navigated this journey, emphasizing the value of the comprehensive Mission Graduates support model.
 4. Offer Career & Specialized Workshops:
 - Embed career exploration components within the College Connect curriculum. Introduce participants to workforce development concepts, industry insights, and professional skill-building early in their academic journeys.
 - Provide specialized workshops within College Connect that focus on workforce development essentials. Topics may include resume building, internship preparation, and cultivating professional networks.
 5. Create a College-to-Career Roadmap:
 - Develop a roadmap that illustrates the trajectory from college success to career readiness. This visual guide should be shared with participants, mentors, and program staff, outlining key milestones and opportunities within the broader Mission Graduates framework.
 6. Measure and Celebrate Transitions:
 - Implement a tracking system to measure the success of participants transitioning from College Connect to Impact Gen. Celebrate these milestones, recognizing achievements and highlighting the impact of the continuum of support.

Expected Outcomes

- Increased participant enrollment in Impact Gen through intentional pathways from College Connect.
- Strengthened connections between academic achievements and career readiness.
- Enhanced participant engagement in workforce development from the early stages of their academic journey.
- A well-defined and celebrated pipeline that showcases the success of participants progressing through Mission Graduates programs.

Recommendation 3: Strengthening Impact Gen through Comprehensive Support

Rationale with Literature Integration

Mission Graduates must adopt a comprehensive strategy to strengthen the Impact Gen program and ensure its enduring success. This entails allocating resources to address staffing needs and cultivating strategic partnerships with educational institutions and national organizations. Mission Graduates can enhance program efficiency, responsiveness, and impact by bolstering internal capabilities and external collaborations.

Literature underscores the importance of nurturing staff belonging, self-efficacy, and program impact through various means, including setting clear performance expectations, providing thorough job orientation, establishing feedback mechanisms, and fostering collaboration opportunities (Beckett et al., 2001, as cited in Huang et al., 2014). Demonstrating tangible outcomes is essential for program sustainability, as it helps secure ongoing funding and support from diverse stakeholders (Scott-Little et al., 2002, Wright et al., 2006, as cited in Huang et al., 2014). Actively engaging with local communities and establishing meaningful partnerships enriches program quality and effectiveness, underlining the significance of community involvement in program planning and implementation (Birmingham et al., 2005; Harvard Family Research Project, 2005, Owens & Vallercomp, 2003, Wright, 2005, as cited in Huang et al., 2014).

High-quality out-of-school time (OST) programs, when thoughtfully designed, serve as invaluable tools in addressing opportunity gaps among youth, necessitating support from policymakers and funders (McCombs et al., 2017). Impact Gen recognizes the common barriers faced by first-generation college students, such as challenges in navigating institutional bureaucracy, systemic barriers to access, familial uncertainty with navigating higher educational lexicons and structures, and inequitable support for networking opportunities. These challenges highlight the importance of systemic support and proactive interventions to ensure their academic and professional success (Le Rovitto, 2021, Whitley et al., 2018, as cited in Broadhurst et al., 2023). This understanding of their unique lived experiences is represented in this quote from a Mission Graduates staff member we interviewed: “many of our parents don't have retirement plans or Roth IRAs that you know, will help them down the line. And so when I think of impact and in connection with the broader mission graduates is that not only that you get your education, support your family, but you also come back to the community and there's something that I will share with students, too, is that being economically stable and thriving, it's the goal for me, and I think for most young graduates, too.”

Additionally, targeted investments in initiatives like high-dose tutoring and mental health support are critical for enhancing academic performance and student well-being, emphasizing the need for comprehensive support structures within educational systems (Fensterwald & Willis, 2022). These findings collectively show the multifaceted nature of effective program implementation and the importance of holistic support mechanisms in

fostering positive outcomes for both Impact Gen staff and participants.

Implementation Steps

1. Comprehensive Staffing and Partnership System:

- Conduct a thorough assessment of staffing levels and identify partnership opportunities aligned with Impact Gen's goals. Evaluate the needs for both internal capacity and external support. Additionally, explore the possibility of seeking graduate assistant support from local colleges to enhance staffing resources.
- Clearly define roles for existing staff, addressing any gaps identified during the assessment. Align these roles with the requirements of planned partnership activities to ensure seamless collaboration.
- Ensure skill set alignment and shared learning so new hires possess skills consistent with Impact Gen's goals. Encourage shared learning by engaging staff in joint training sessions with external partners to foster a collaborative approach.
- Regularly monitor staff workload, redistributing tasks as needed. Simultaneously, collaborate with partners to develop joint initiatives, maximizing the impact of shared resources.

2. Seek Grant Funding and Explore Funding Opportunities:

- Develop grant applications targeting staffing needs and partnership initiatives. Explore funding opportunities offered by national organizations that support both internal staffing and collaborative projects.

3. Recruitment Process and Collaborative Outreach:

- Initiate a recruitment process to fill staffing gaps, considering the evolving needs of Impact Gen. Simultaneously, outreach efforts to local colleges and national organizations should commence to establish collaborative relationships. Assess the potential for collaboration with academic institutions to leverage graduate assistant expertise in areas such as research, program development, and administrative support, aligning their contributions with the objectives of the Impact Gen program.

4. Professional Development, Workshops, and Conferences:

- Allocate resources for professional development, covering both internal staff and partners. Encourage attendance at conferences organized by national organizations, promoting shared learning and staying informed about best practices, the latest trends and research in supporting first-generation college students.
- Plan and co-host workshops, seminars, and events with local colleges. Collaborative initiatives can cover career development, financial literacy, and academic success. This fosters a community approach to supporting first-generation students.

5. Local Colleges Outreach:

- Initiate conversations with local colleges and universities in the San Francisco area to explore potential partnerships. Discuss opportunities for joint workshops, shared resources, and collaborative initiatives

that benefit first-generation college students across institutions.

- Explore the possibility of shared mentorship programs with local colleges. This could involve mentor exchanges, joint mentorship training sessions, or collaborative efforts to connect students with mentors from different institutions.
6. Engage with National Organizations:
- Establish connections with national organizations supporting first-generation college students, such as the Center for First-generation Student Success. Leverage their expertise, resources, and best practices to enhance the Impact Gen program.
7. Technology and Tools Implementation:
- Provide necessary technology and tools for internal staff, facilitating efficient workflows. Additionally, coordinate with partners to implement shared tools that enhance collaboration and communication.
8. Budget Allocation for Staffing and Program Expansion:
- Allocate a portion of the budget specifically for staffing needs, ensuring financial resources cover salaries, benefits, and costs associated with both internal enhancements and collaborative projects.

Expected Outcomes

- Improved program efficiency through increased staffing support.
- Expanded program resources and offerings through collaborations with local colleges and national organizations.
- Higher satisfaction and well-being among staff as workload is effectively managed.
- Increased visibility and recognition of the Impact Gen program within the broader educational community.
- Enhanced capacity to implement changes, innovations, and improvements within Impact Gen.

Recommendation 4: Communicate the Essential Nature of Impact Gen and Foster Connections Through Shared First-Gen Experiences

Rationale with Literature Integration

Mission Graduates should adopt a holistic approach that combines strategic communication of the program's essential nature with the leveraging of first-gen experiences within the staff to ensure the enduring success and impact of the Impact Gen program. By intertwining these recommendations, Mission Graduates can effectively convey the program's significance and build trust through the relatability of shared experiences, resulting in increased participant commitment and a stronger sense of community.

Out-of-School-Time (OST) education serves as a critical avenue for equipping students with academically relevant skills and capital, thereby enhancing educational justice (Yin, 2020). Particularly in low-income communities, after-school programs like Mission Graduates play a vital role in fostering academic, emotional, and physical well-being (Kugler, 2001). Engagement in academic support services has consistently been linked

to higher graduation rates, with initiatives like GEAR UP not only improving GPA but also reducing disciplinary issues (Grillo & Leist, 2013; Yampolskaya et al., 2006). The motivation to pursue postsecondary opportunities emerges as a significant factor in students' academic journeys, highlighting the need for diverse offerings in after-school programs beyond mere academic enrichment and counseling (Medvide & Blustein, 2010; Harvill et al., 2012).

Completion of coursework has been identified as a robust predictor of college graduation, underscoring the importance of supportive networks like Impact Gen for first-generation college students who face unique challenges (Adelman, 2006, Rose & Betts, 2001, as cited in Harvill et al., 2012; Ardoin, 2021, Whitley et al., 2018, as cited in Broadhurst et al., 2023). Programs staffed with a diverse team better cater to the needs of their communities, while collaborative partnerships significantly contribute to the success of first-gen students in college (Huang, 2001, Vandell & Shumow, 1999, as cited in Huang et al., 2014; Brookover et al., 2021). However, financial constraints and work obligations often serve as formidable barriers to access for first-gen students, emphasizing the necessity for institutions to provide comprehensive support that addresses both basic needs and academic and career success (Pratt et al., 2019; Thiem & Dasgupta, 2022; Broadhurst et al., 2023). Socioeconomic status significantly influences postsecondary education choices, highlighting disparities in access and opportunities (National Center for Education Statistics, 2019).

Implementation Steps

1. Strategic Messaging and First-Gen Narratives:

- Develop strategic messaging that emphasizes the essential nature of Impact Gen and integrates personal narratives from staff and board members who are first-generation college graduates. Highlight key challenges, successes, and insights gained through their educational journeys and what they wish they had known. Incorporate these narratives into program brochures, websites, and other marketing materials. This dual approach ensures participants understand the program's importance and feel a connection through shared experiences.
- Communicate program expectations, including time commitments, from the outset. Provide participants with a detailed overview of the benefits they can expect to gain, reinforcing the idea that active participation in Impact Gen is integral to their success. Reinforce the connection between stated outcomes and critical skills related to career and workforce development. Additionally, produce video testimonials featuring past participants, creating a powerful and authentic narrative that showcases the program's essential nature.
- Feature Staff Profiles with Video Testimonials by developing staff profiles that prominently showcase their first-gen status. Include information about their educational backgrounds, career paths, and roles in the Impact Gen program or Mission Graduates. Videos are powerful tools for conveying authenticity and emotion. These testimonials can be shared on the program's website, social media, during

informational sessions, and in engagement campaigns. This humanizes the staff and board members and establishes a connection with participants.

2. Program Info Sessions & Engagement Campaigns:

- Conduct informational sessions explicitly highlighting the central role of Impact Gen in participants' development. Clearly outline the unique benefits and opportunities that the program provides for career growth and professional networking. Focus on skills development and learning outcomes for each session and how these connect to the short, medium, and long-term goals of the Impact Gen Program.
- Host First-Gen Alumni Panels by organizing panels or virtual discussions with first-gen alumni who are now part of the staff or serve as mentors in the program. These events provide a platform for alumni to share their experiences directly with current participants, offering insights into their challenges and how the Impact Gen program contributed to their success.
- Launch engagement campaigns that emphasize the unique aspects of Impact Gen. Utilize various communication channels, including social media, newsletters, and direct communication, to consistently reinforce the program's importance. Collect and showcase testimonials and success stories from Impact Gen alumni who have experienced tangible career benefits. Personal narratives can effectively convey the program's impact, underscore its essential nature, and fortify the engagement campaigns.

3. Engagement with College Connect:

- Collaborate with College Connect program administrators to ensure seamless integration and messaging alignment. Communicate the transition from College Connect to Impact Gen as a natural progression in participants' professional development.

4. Regular Check-ins and Progress Tracking:

- Implement regular check-ins with participants to gauge their engagement and address any concerns. Track participants' progress and celebrate milestones to reinforce the program's essential nature.

5. Collaborate with First-Gen Advocacy Groups:

- Collaborate with external first-gen advocacy groups and organizations to amplify the program's impact. Participate in events, conferences, and initiatives that support first-gen students' educational and career journeys.

Expected Outcomes

- Increased participant interest and commitment due to strategic messaging and relatable narratives.
- Strengthened sense of community among first-gen participants, fostering a supportive network.
- Improved program appeal, attracting a diverse range of first-gen college students.
- Enhanced program retention rates and a stronger sense of community among participants.
- Participants will clearly understand how Impact Gen contributes to their long-term career goals.

Recommendation 5: Develop a Comprehensive Program Evaluation System

Rationale with Literature Integration

The Impact Gen program should establish a robust framework that captures participant feedback and defines measurable outcomes for comprehensive program evaluation to enhance its effectiveness and responsiveness. Periodic evaluations play a crucial role in the continuous self-improvement of afterschool programs, offering valuable insights into their sustainability and effectiveness (Huang, 2001, as cited in Huang et al., 2014). Mission Graduates can gain valuable insights, measure impact, and continuously improve the program based on participant experiences by integrating a systematic feedback and data collection system. This unified approach ensures continuous improvement, aligning program goals with participant needs and aspirations. These evaluations extend beyond programmatic assessments, incorporating overall satisfaction evaluations among staff, students, and families to fulfill all participants' expectations and needs (Fashola, 1998, as cited in Huang et al., 2014). The consistent review and dissemination of evaluation findings for Impact Gen are vital for effectively gauging program progress and identifying areas for enhancement (Huang et al., 2014).

In alignment with the principles of improvement, establishing a feedback loop is essential for understanding the rationale behind the need for improvement and monitoring progress (Langley et al., 2009). Additionally, effectively implementing changes necessitates developing supporting processes to seamlessly integrate these changes into the program's operations, including feedback and measurement systems, job descriptions, and employee training (Langley et al., 2009). Continuously monitoring and managing feedback and knowledge through measurement and feedback systems are integral to disseminating effective practices within the program, ultimately contributing to its sustained improvement and success (Langley et al., 2009).

Implementation Steps

1. Develop a Comprehensive Feedback Mechanism:

- Implement a formal feedback mechanism that captures insights from participants, mentors, and program staff. Include surveys, focus group sessions, and one-on-one interviews to gather qualitative and quantitative data on program experiences, challenges, and successes.
- Establish and implement an iterative feedback loop where insights from evaluations and participant feedback feed into ongoing program planning. Use the collected data to identify trends, strengths, and areas for improvement, allowing for real-time adjustments that enhance the participant experience.
- Regularly revisit program strategies, adapting them based on the evolving needs and aspirations of Impact Gen participants.
- In coordination with the Director of Program Impact, provide training to program staff on effective feedback implementation. Ensure that staff members are equipped to facilitate feedback sessions, analyze data, and translate insights into actionable improvements for the program.

2. Define Clear Measurable Outcomes & Evaluation Benchmarks:

- Work collaboratively with stakeholders to define specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound (SMART) outcomes for the Impact Gen program. These outcomes should align with the program's goals and contribute to its overall success and should be assessed through the evaluation framework.
- Develop benchmarks for program evaluation, outlining key performance indicators and success metrics. Regularly assess the program's progress against these benchmarks to gauge effectiveness and identify areas for enhancement.
- Conduct periodic impact assessments that delve into the achievement of defined measurable outcomes. These assessments should involve both quantitative data analysis and qualitative assessments to provide a holistic understanding of program impact.

3. Integrate Data Collection into Program Activities:

- Infuse data collection activities seamlessly into the fabric of program initiatives. Ensure that feedback collection is a continuous and integrated part of workshops, mentoring sessions, and events, creating a dynamic loop of real-time information gathering.

4. Utilize Technology for Data Management:

- Invest in and leverage technology to streamline data collection, management, and analysis processes. Implement user-friendly platforms for surveys and feedback submissions and establish a centralized database for efficient data tracking.

5. Share Evaluation Findings Transparently:

- Share evaluation findings with stakeholders to foster a culture of transparency. Communicate successes, challenges, and improvements to foster shared understanding.

Expected Outcomes

- Comprehensive insights from participants, mentors, and stakeholders.
- Well-defined and measurable outcomes aligning with program goals.
- Streamlined data management processes for efficient program evaluation.
- Improved program responsiveness and continuous enhancement based on feedback.
- Tailored program enhancements driven by participant needs and aspirations.

By adopting this integrated approach, Mission Graduates can establish a dynamic and responsive framework that ensures the ongoing success and impact of the Impact Gen program.

Future Considerations

Insights gained from participant focus groups and surveys highlight specific areas for enhancement, including networking opportunities, diversified career pathways, time management, participant well-being, and sustained post-program connections. Below are future considerations to strategically incorporate participant-driven feedback for a more tailored and impactful experience in the future.

1. Expand Networking Opportunities:

- Introduce a variety of networking events, including industry-specific mixers, mentorship meet-ups, and panel discussions with professionals. Provide participants with ample occasions to connect with peers and professionals in their chosen fields.

2. Diversify Career Pathways:

- Broaden the program's scope to include diverse trades, industries, and career pathways. Collaborate with professionals from various fields to conduct workshops and presentations, ensuring participants gain insights into a wide array of potential career trajectories.

3. Implement Time Management Workshops:

- Integrate time management workshops into the program curriculum. Equip participants with essential skills to effectively balance academic, professional, and personal commitments, fostering habits that contribute to long-term success.

4. Incorporate Break Opportunities:

- Recognize the importance of participant well-being by incorporating scheduled break opportunities into the program. These breaks provide participants with moments to recharge, reducing stress and promoting a healthier and more sustainable learning experience.

5. Facilitate Post-Program Connections:

- Establish informal channels for participants to stay connected after the program concludes. This may include alumni networks, social media groups, or periodic meet-ups to encourage ongoing support, networking, and the exchange of experiences among program graduates.

6. Create a Resource Hub:

- Develop an online resource hub that participants can access after the program. This hub can include job postings, industry insights, and resources to support ongoing professional development, reinforcing the program's impact beyond its duration.

7. Host Reunion Events:

- Organize periodic reunion events for program participants. These events serve as opportunities for networking, sharing achievements, and fostering a sense of community among Impact Gen alumni.

8. Offer Alumni Mentoring:

- Establish an alumni mentoring program where program graduates can serve as mentors for current participants. This not only provides ongoing support for current participants but also fosters a sense of mentorship and community among Impact Gen alumni.

Limitations

Despite the findings indicating opportunities for enhancing the Impact Gen program, several limitations were encountered in our study:

1. **Connections with Impact Gen Alumni:** While the study delved into current participants' and program staff's experiences and perspectives, we lacked comprehensive insights from Impact Gen alumni. Alumni perspectives could offer valuable longitudinal data on the program's long-term impact, challenges faced post-program completion, and suggestions for improvement. The absence of alumni perspectives limits the depth of understanding regarding the program's effectiveness beyond the immediate participant cohort from fall 2023.
2. **Limited Data from One Cohort:** The study's scope was constrained by the availability of data from only one cohort of Impact Gen participants. As a result, the findings may not fully capture the variability and nuances present across different cohorts or over time. A multi-cohort analysis could provide a more comprehensive understanding of how the program evolves and adapts to diverse participant demographics, changing needs, and external factors.

Addressing these limitations in future research endeavors could enrich our understanding of the Impact Gen program's effectiveness, sustainability, and potential for broader impact. Additionally, efforts to establish ongoing connections with program alumni and expand data collection across multiple cohorts could enhance the depth and reliability of findings, facilitating more informed decision-making and continuous program improvement.

Conclusion

In summary, our analysis of the available quantitative data and our team's generated qualitative data, yielded five significant findings regarding Impact Gen's program efficacy and areas for improvement. These findings highlighted the pivotal role of mentoring in enhancing participant experiences, the necessity of early emphasis on workforce development, the challenges posed by limited resources, the importance of framing Impact Gen as an essential commitment, and the absence of a robust evaluation system. Building upon these findings, our recommendations offer a strategic roadmap for Mission Graduates to enhance the program's structure and better meet stakeholder needs. Through initiatives such as continuous training for mentors, leveraging College Connect as a strategic pipeline, strengthening program support, fostering connections through shared experiences, and developing a comprehensive evaluation system, Mission Graduates can realize their vision of Impact Gen as a robust and sustainable program.

Our recommendations align closely with our project's objectives, findings, conceptual framework, and literature review. By addressing key areas identified in our analysis, such as mentor training, early workforce development, resource allocation, communication strategies, and evaluation measures, Mission Graduates can significantly enhance the visibility, support, and effectiveness of the Impact Gen program. These recommendations provide a clear pathway for Mission Graduates to cultivate a supportive and impactful environment, ultimately empowering participants to achieve their academic and career goals while fostering a sense of community and belonging within the program.

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Appendix

Appendix 1: McKinsey 7S Framework

Strategy:

- Provide a range of after-school, in-school, and summer programs for students.
- Engage the whole family in programming.
- Create pathways to pursuing college that ultimately lead to graduation.
- Promote a culture of college-going culture among student participants.

Staff:

- Administrative Leadership
 - CEO
 - CPO
 - CDO
 - Senior Director(s)
- Financial & Administration
 - Operations
 - Accounting
 - Data
 - HR
- Development & Marketing
 - Grant Writers
 - Marketing & Comms
- Programs
 - Directors & Managers
 - Specialized area of focus
- Volunteers
 - Corporate Volunteering
 - Individual Volunteering (within programs)

Systems:

- Programs for students
 - Extended Day Programs
 - Mission Community Beacons
 - College Access & Success
 - College Connect
 - John O'Connell College & Career Center
 - ASAP at Mission High
 - High School After School Program
 - Impact Gen
- Parent Engagement
- Volunteer Opportunities
 - Individual
 - Corporate or team

Skills:

- Program management
- Gap in resources (budget & staff)

Shared Values:

- Mission Graduates increase the number of K-12 students in San Francisco who are prepared for and complete a college education.
- Create a better future for our children and community through a college-going culture.
- Support the growth and health of the whole person.
- Engage the entire family – it's at the heart of everything we do.
- Promote equity by ensuring those who have a need receive our support and encouraging those who can support others.
- Cultivate leaders of all ages through our own example.
- Encourage lifelong learning for ourselves and those around us.
- We believe that higher education is the strongest tool to level the playing field for low-income, Latinx, Black, and immigrant youth and their families.

Structure:

- Board of Directors
- Senior Leadership
- Financial & Administration
- Development & Marketing
- Programs
- Volunteers
- *Not entirely clear how all the teams coordinate with each other*

Style:

- Shared organization mission
- Programs operate separately, but feed into each other as pipelines
- Large scale decisions made or approved at the senior level
- Close office spaces to allow for easy communication and collaboration

Appendix 2: Impact Gen Pre-Diagnostic Survey

Part 1: Basic Information

- First Name
- Last Name(s) (Please include all legal last names)
- Phone number
- Email

Part 2: Career Goals & Interests

- Which of the following best describes you?
 - College freshman
 - College sophomore
 - College junior
 - College Senior
 - College Graduate
- Have you decided on a major and/or minor?
 - Yes, I have declared one major.
 - Yes, I have declared two majors.
 - Yes, I have declared one major and one minor.
 - No, I'm not sure what I want to major and/or minor in.
- (if yes) What are your MAJOR(S), MINOR(S)?
- What have been your favorite 1-3 classes in college so far?
- Which of the following are the top five priorities you consider important as you determine a future career.
 - It has stability (unlikely that you would get fired or have an industry crash).
 - It holds prestige.
 - It has a high earning potential and provides opportunities to acquire wealth.
 - It aligns with my interests and passions.
 - It aligns with my strengths and skills.
 - It allows me to make positive contributions to the world.
 - It will make my family proud.
 - It won't be too difficult or stressful.
 - It allows me flexibility in where I work and/or how I allocate my time.
 - It provides me with a professional community.
 - It allows for a strong work/life balance.
 - It allows me to travel.
 - It has many opportunities for advancement and climbing the organizational ladder.

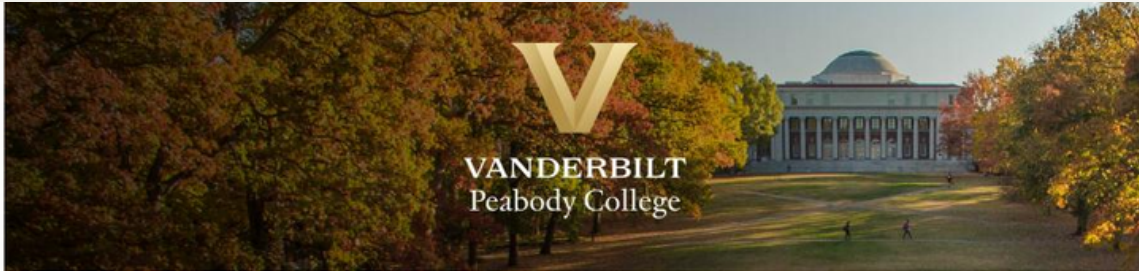
- It has good benefits (retirement, medical, etc.).
- I'm really not sure yet.
- Other (re)
- What are the top three industries that you are currently interested in working in? (if there are fewer than three, just put one or two)
 - Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting
 - Arts, entertainment, and recreation
 - Building and construction trades
 - Business & finance (consulting, accounting, banking, etc.)
 - Cosmetology
 - Education, child development, and family services
 - Energy, environment, and utilities
 - Engineering and architecture
 - Fashion and interior design
 - Government or politics
 - Healthcare, health science, and medical technology
 - Hospitality
 - Information and communication technology
 - Law and legal support
 - Marketing, sales, services
 - Public services (law enforcement, firefighting, cyber security)
 - Social services
 - Technology
 - Transportation
 - I'm really not sure yet.
- How many career paths are you currently seriously considering?
 - 0 - I'm really not sure what I want to do.
 - 1
 - 2
 - 3+
- What is the top (#1) career path you are currently considering?
- How confident are you that you could be successful finding a job in your top career path option (#1)?
- Have you had an internship?
 - Yes, I have had two or more.
 - Yes, I have had one.

- No.
- (if yes) What was the name of the company or organization for which you interned?
- (if yes) How much did you enjoy your internship?
 - I loved it.
 - I liked it very much.
 - I felt neutral about it– it was okay.
 - I didn't like it very much.
 - I had a very negative experience.

Part 3: Your Knowledge and Confidence about Professional and Financial Topics

- Please rate your knowledge about the following activities related to finding and securing a job: (very high, high, medium, low, very low):
 - Writing a professional email to a boss or professional contact
 - Making a strong LinkedIn profile
 - Writing an effective resume
 - Writing a compelling cover letter
 - Standing out and impressing a prospective employer in a job interview
 - Building a network of professionals in my field / industry of interest
 - Leveraging my network for professional support
 - Negotiating a job offer
- Please rate your confidence in your ability to complete the following activities related to navigating professional challenges (very high, high, medium, low, very low):
 - Advocating for the unique traits and skills I bring to a professional setting
 - Overcoming feelings of imposter syndrome
 - Adhering to professional etiquette standards
 - Building a relationship with a professional mentor
 - Advocate for myself & negotiate with my boss for a raise or promotion
- Please rate your knowledge about the following activities related to managing your finances and building generational wealth: (very high, high, medium, low, very low):
 - How to budget and engage in long-term financial planning
 - How to maintain a strong credit score
 - How to file your taxes
 - How to plan and prepare for homeownership
 - How to invest my money wisely

Appendix 3: Impact Gen Post-Diagnostic Survey



Informed Consent Documents and Instructions

This informed consent document applies to adults (18+) participating in the interviews or focus groups or completing surveys associated with completing Vanderbilt University's Peabody College Leadership and Learning in Organizations (LLO) doctoral coursework. The following information is being collected to assist the research group in completing their doctoral capstone project. Please read this form carefully and feel free to ask any questions about this study and the information given below. You will be allowed to ask questions, and your questions will be answered. Each member of the research team will know how you answer your questions. We will keep your personal information private and confidential. Your participation in this research study is voluntary. You are free to withdraw from this study at any time. Any information you provided before you decided to withdraw will be destroyed and will not be used as part of the analysis. If new information becomes available, that may affect the risks or benefits associated with this research study or your willingness to participate, you will be notified so that you can make an informed decision on whether or not to continue your participation in this study.

Study Details

You are being asked to participate in a research study because you are a current or past participant in the Impact Gen Program, are a staff member at Mission Graduates, or have served as a mentor in the Impact Gen Program. We want to hear from you about your experiences with the Impact Gen Program to provide Mission Graduates with recommendations to improve the program for future participants.

We ask you to spend about 15 minutes completing a survey and 60 minutes participating in a focus group or interview. Focus groups and interviews will be recorded and transcribed. The transcribed documents will not contain any information that will identify you. Everyone involved in the study will be symbolized by a code created by themes like sex, age, and race (for example, white, male 37) or by a pseudonym.

Contact Information

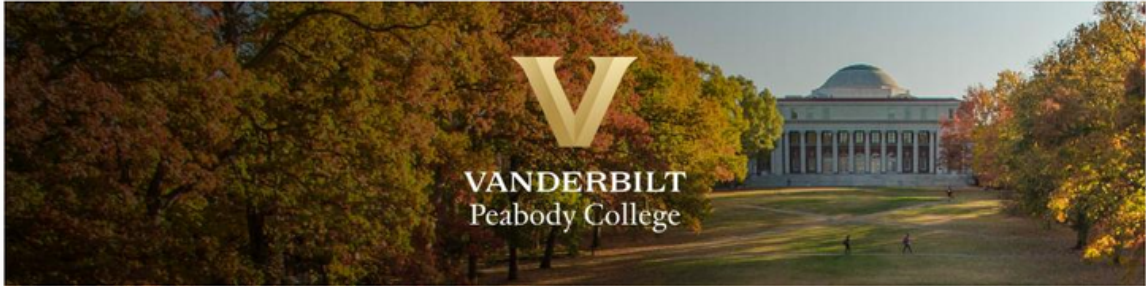
If you should have any questions about this research study or possible injury, please feel free to contact Chad Slife at chad.h.slife@vanderbilt.edu, Isadora "Izzi" Stern at isadora.r.stern@vanderbilt.edu, or Ryan Powell at ryan.powell@vanderbilt.edu.

Statement by the person agreeing to participate in this study

I have read this informed consent document, and I am aware that the materials contained in it may be explained to me verbally by contacting the researchers at the contact information provided above. I have had all of my questions about participation answered, and I am freely and voluntarily choosing to participate.

×SIGN HEREclear





Thank you for completing the informed consent form.

Before we begin our study, are you willing to provide the research team with personal demographic and contact information?

Yes

No

The researchers are requesting demographic information to understand the background of each interview or focus group participant. Data will be analyzed and described in aggregate. Contact information will be used to schedule meeting times or to conduct follow-up messaging and communication about the study.

First Name

Last Name

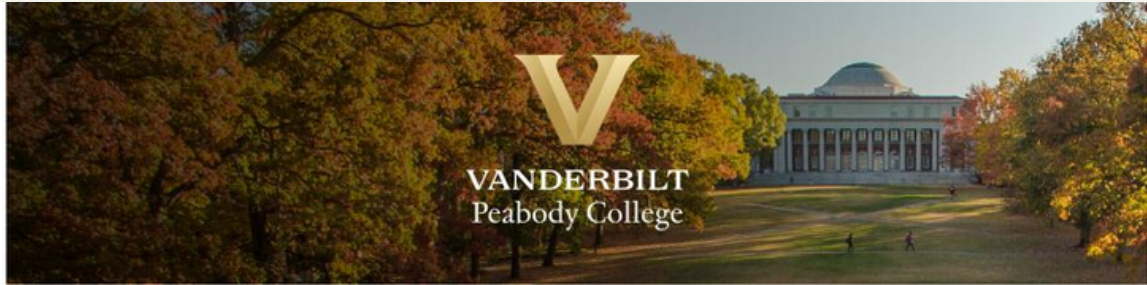
Email Address

Age

Race

- White
- Black or African American
- American Indian or Alaska Native
- Asian
- Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
- Other





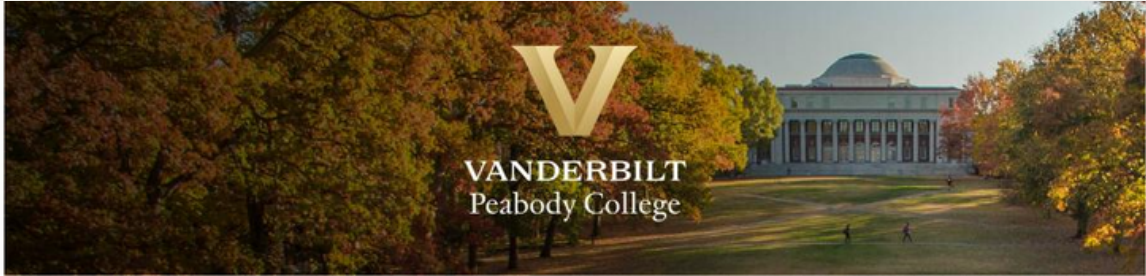
Impact Gen Program Evaluation

Please respond to each of the following statements and/or questions about your experience with the Impact Gen Program:

Reflecting on your experience with the Impact Gen program, please rate your level of agreement with each statement

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
The Impact Gen program enhanced my confidence in pursuing my desired career.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The program workshop sessions valuable for my professional development.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The mentorship program provided valuable guidance and support for my career goals.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Networking events organized by the program were beneficial for expanding my professional connections.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Career panels organized by the program were beneficial for expanding my professional connections.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Mock interviews organized by the program were beneficial for expanding my professional connections.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>





Impact Gen's Career Impact & Mentorship Opportunities Evaluation

For the following questions, please respond based on the Career Impact & Mentorship Opportunities portion of the Impact Gen program.

Reflecting on the Career Impact & Mentorship opportunities, please rate your level of agreement with each statement

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Since participating in the Impact Gen program, I have experienced progress in my career goals.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The program has contributed to my overall career advancement.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

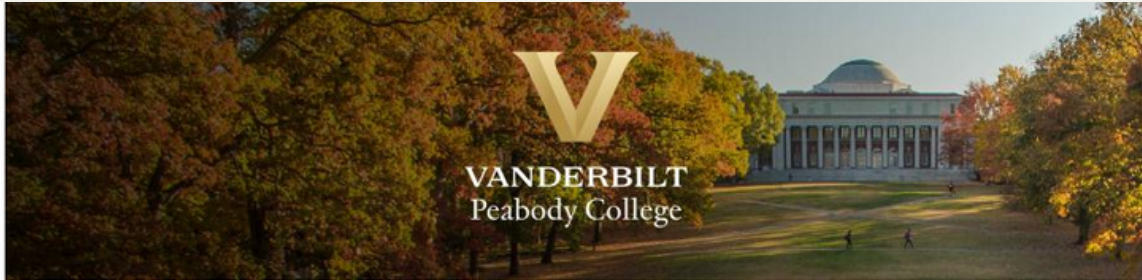
How often did you meet with your professional mentor on a one-on-one basis?

- More than once a week
- Once a week
- Twice a month
- Once a month
- On an as needed basis
- I did not request a professional mentor
- Mission Graduates was unable to pair me with a professional mentor
- Other (please explain)

Are you satisfied with how often you met with your professional mentor?

- Yes
- No, I would like to have met less frequently
- No, I would like to have met more frequently
- I did not request a professional mentor





Impact Gen Post-Program Interest & Confidence Evaluation

You were asked some of these questions at the beginning and end of the Impact Gen Program so that we can understand areas of growth and development from this year's students.

Which of the following are the **top five priorities** you consider important as you determine a future career?

	First Priority	Second Priority	Third Priority	Fourth Priority	Fifth Priority
It has stability (unlikely that you would get fired or have an industry crash).	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
It holds prestige.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
It has a high earning potential and provides opportunities to acquire wealth.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
It aligns with my interests and passions.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
It aligns with my strengths and skills.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
It allows me to make positive contributions to the world.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
It will make my family proud.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
It won't be too difficult or stressful.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
It allows me flexibility in where I work and/or how I allocate my time.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
It provides me with a professional community.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
It allows for a strong work/life balance.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
It allows me to travel.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
It has many opportunities for advancement & climbing the organizational ladder.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
It has good benefits (retirement, medical, etc.).	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I'm really not sure yet.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Which of the following are the **top three (3) industries** are you interested in working in? (if there are fewer than three, just put one or two)

	Top Industry	Second Industry	Third Industry
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Arts, entertainment, and recreation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Building and construction trades	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Business & finance (consulting, accounting, banking, etc.)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Cosmetology	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Education, child development, and family services	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Energy, environment, and utilities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Engineering and architecture	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Fashion and interior design	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Government or politics	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Healthcare, health science, and medical technology	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Hospitality	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Information and communication technology	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Law and legal support	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Marketing, sales, services	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Public services (law enforcement, fire fighting, cyber security)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Social services	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Technology	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Transportation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I'm really not sure yet	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

How many career paths are you currently seriously considering

- 0 - I'm really not sure what I want to do
- 1
- 2
- 3+

What is the top (#1) career path you are currently considering?

How confident are you that you could be successful finding a job in your top career path option (#1)?

Please rate your knowledge about the following activities related to **finding and securing a job**:

	Very Low	Low	Medium	High	Very High
Writing a professional email to a boss or professional contact	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Making a strong LinkedIn profile	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Writing an effective resume	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Writing a compelling cover letter	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Standing out and impressing a prospective employer in a job interview	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Building a network of professionals in my field/industry of interest	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Leveraging my network for professional support	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Negotiating a job offer	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

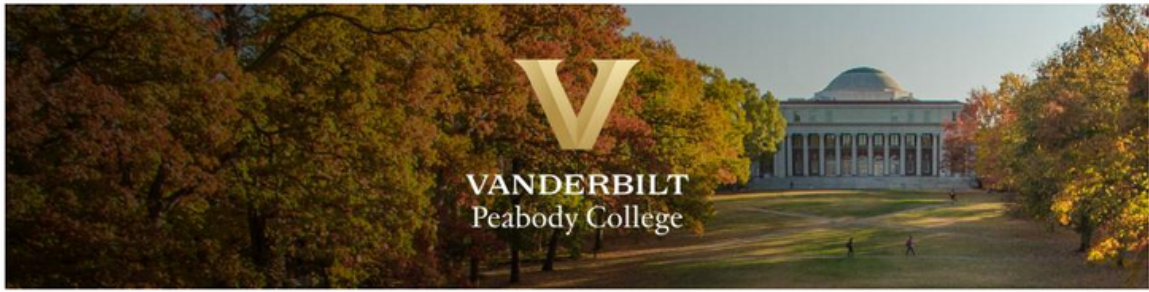
Please rate your confidence in your ability to complete the following activities related to **navigating professional challenges**:

	Very Low	Low	Medium	High	Very High
Advocating for the unique traits and skills I bring to a professional setting	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Overcoming feelings of imposter syndrome	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Adhering to professional etiquette standards	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Building a relationship with a professional mentor	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Advocate for myself & negotiate with my boss for a raise or promotion	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please rate your knowledge about the following activities related to **managing your finances and building generational wealth**:

	Very Low	Low	Medium	High	Very High
How to budget and engage in long-term financial planning	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
How to maintain a strong credit score	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
How to file your taxes	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
How to plan and prepare for homeownership	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
How to invest my money wisely	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>





Impact Gen's Workshop Sessions

For the following questions, please respond based on the Workshop Sessions portion of the Impact Gen program.

Please indicate which workshops were the most valuable and which were least (you do not need to list all workshops)

Items	Most Valuable
Imposter Syndrom	<div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 100px; width: 100%;"></div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 100px; width: 100%;"></div>
First-Gen Career Panel	
Communciation & Emotional Intelligence	
Networking & Code Switching	
Resume & Cover Letter Writing	
Interview Process & Etiquette	
Interview Content & Strategies	
Mock-Interview	
Salary Negotiation	
Financial Literacy	
Leadership Development	
Higher Education Panel	

Using the sliding scale below, indicate your satisfaction:



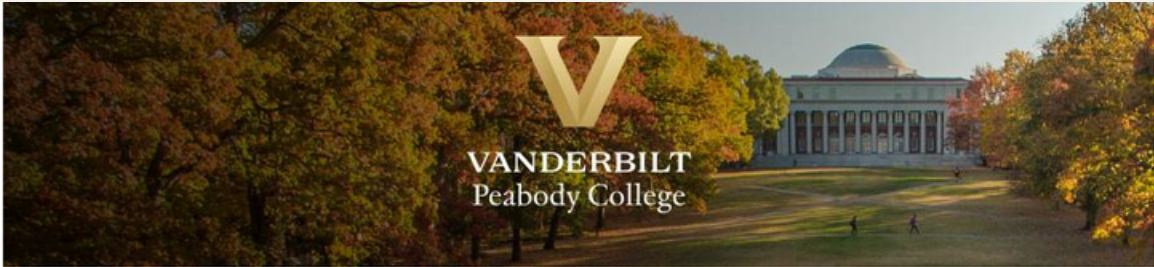
How satisfied with the number of workshop topics that were offered?

How satisfied were you with the subjects covered in the workshops?

How satisfied were you that the workshop presenters were experts on for the topic discussed?

How satisfied were you win the workshop delivery (Zoom)?





Using the sliding scale below, indicate your satisfaction:

Extremely dissatisfied 1 2 3 Somewhat dissatisfied 4 5 Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied 6 7 Somewhat satisfied 8 9 10 Extremely satisfied

How satisfied are you with your overall experience with the Impact Gen program?

Sliding scale bar for overall experience with the Impact Gen program.

How satisfied are you with the administration of the Impact Gen program?

Sliding scale bar for administration of the Impact Gen program.

How satisfied are you with the communication from the staff of Impact Gen?

Sliding scale bar for communication from the staff of Impact Gen.

How satisfied are you with the overall staff of Impact Gen?

Sliding scale bar for overall staff of Impact Gen.

How strongly would you recommend Impact Gen to others pursuing similar career goals?

Extremely Unlikely Unlikely Neutral Likely Extremely Likely

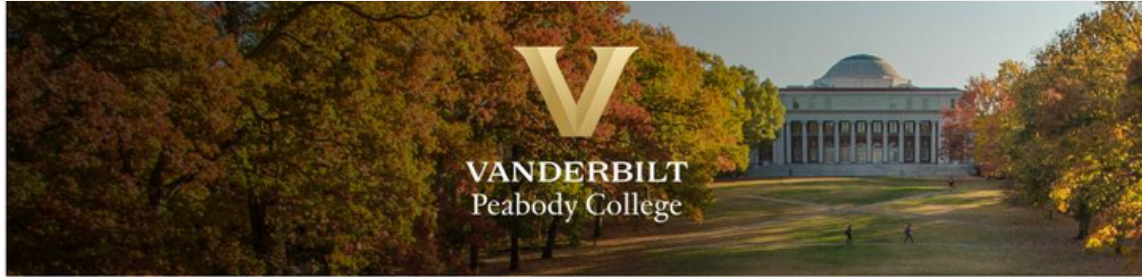
In your opinion, the length of the program was

Too short Just right Too long

In your opinion, the time commitment for this program was

Did not require enough time Required just the right amount of time Required too much time





Evaluation of Impact Gen's achievement of stated goals and outcomes

For the following questions, please respond based on how the Impact Gen accomplished the stated program goals and outcomes

Please indicate how well you felt the Impact Gen Program did at achieving its stated short term outcomes

	Not well at all	Slightly well	Moderately well	Very well	Extremely well
Impact Gen's Goal: Participants will gain increased awareness of and confidence in career pathways that align with their passions and skill sets.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Impact Gen's Goal: Participants gain stronger knowledge in how to leverage their identities in the professional world, while also feeling more confident about their unique assets and skills.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Impact Gen's Goal: Participants will gain stronger professional skills supporting job applications and feel more confident forging professional connections.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Impact Gen's Goal: Participants gain knowledge in select topic areas of professional development and early adulthood challenges.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Impact Gen's Goal: Participants will have the knowledge, tools, and resources to transition from financially stable to financially thriving.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Impact Gen's Goal: Participants will learn about graduate school application process and increase their belief that they can obtain a graduate degree/ professional certificate program.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please indicate how well you felt the Impact Gen Program did at achieving its stated medium term outcomes

	Not well at all	Slightly well	Moderately well	Very well	Extremely well
Impact Gen's Outcome: By participating in Impact Gen, the participants will identify careers about which they are passionate.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Impact Gen's Outcome: By participating in Impact Gen, the participants can advocate for themselves and the unique assets they bring to their workplace.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Impact Gen's Outcome: By participating in Impact Gen, the participants can have more job offers to choose from and cultivate more high-quality relationships with professionals in their career fields of interest.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Impact Gen's Outcome: By participating in Impact Gen, the participants will attend more workshops to further expand their knowledge in areas of professional development and the challenges of early adulthood.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Impact Gen's Outcome: By participating in Impact Gen, the participants can build and increase their generational wealth.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Impact Gen's Outcome: By participating in Impact Gen, participants show interest in attending graduate school and professional certificate programs.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please indicate how well you felt the Impact Gen Program did at achieving its stated Goal

	Not well at all	Slightly well	Moderately well	Very well	Extremely well
Impact Gen's Overall Goal: Impact Gen provides first-gen young professionals with career mentoring & networking opportunities and professional development workshops to help them launch a career in their desired field and build generational wealth.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



Appendix 4: Focus Group Protocol and Interview Guide for Impact Gen Participants

Below is a set of questions and guidelines for conducting a focus group with Impact Gen participants:

Introduction (5 minutes)

Hello, my name is ____, this is ____, and this is ____. Thank you for coming to the focus group tonight. We are here because Mission Graduates is interested in feedback about the Impact Gen program. This focus group is part of a larger effort to understand what works well about the program and what can be improved. We are interested in your frank thoughts about your experience with the Impact Gen program. There are no right or wrong answers. The results of these focus groups will be reported to Mission Graduate staff, in order to make improvements for future participants in the program. Your responses will also contribute to our doctoral capstone requirement at Vanderbilt University. Note: We are not administrators of the Impact Gen program and not are not employed by Mission Graduates.

The comments you make here will be kept confidential – we will not associate anyone’s name with the things they say. We ask that you respect each other’s confidentiality as well—that is, to not reveal what was said by anyone else. We are going to be taking notes throughout the focus group and we will also be recording this session – no one will listen to these recordings except for our capstone group. The focus group will last for about an hour and a half.

About Focus Groups

- We are interested in what everyone has to say but not consensus. The diversity of your viewpoints is important.
- We want to hear from everyone, but everyone doesn’t have to weigh in on every topic or for every question.
- Interaction is encouraged. You don’t need to raise your hand to speak or respond to one another, but please be respectful while another participant is sharing.
- Feel free to speak to your experiences and your opinions.
- We will do our best to let your views drive the conversation, but we will direct to make sure we address the questions we need to.
- Please vocalize your viewpoints. The chat should only be used if you need to elaborate on a point or if you want to share something but were not given the opportunity due to time.

Are there any questions or concerns before we get started? If you have any questions during the focus group, please do not hesitate to ask – if something is not clear, just let us know.

Grounding Activity (5 minutes):

Let's start with a brief introduction. Let's all go around and say our names and we would also like for you to share one thing you've learned or experienced in your life recently that made you proud.

Program Experience (20 minutes):

Now, we would like to dive a little deeper into the Impact Gen program. I'm going to ask you about several components of the program and your experience. For each one, I'd like you to tell me what you think of it. We will drop the questions into the chat as well so that you can refer back to them.

- Initial Impressions:
 - Can you share your initial thoughts and expectations when you joined Impact Gen?
 - *Potential follow-up: How have those expectations evolved?*
 - In what ways were the goals and outcomes of the Impact Gen program communicated to you?
 - Facilitator Note: Communication means emails from MG, opening session, grounding ahead of workshops, or other means
 - *Potential follow-up: Do you feel this communication helped form your expectations?*
- Positive Experiences:
 - What aspects of the Impact Gen program have been most valuable to you?
 - Could you share any specific success stories or achievements you've had as a result of the Impact Gen program?
- Challenges and Areas for Improvement:
 - What challenges have you encountered while participating in Impact Gen?
 - Are there any aspects of the Impact Gen program you believe could be enhanced or changed to better support your career goals?

Program Components (15 minutes):

Now, we are going to spend some time thinking about specific components of the Impact Gen program.

- Workshops:
 - Which workshop sessions were the most beneficial to you, and why?
 - Are there any workshops you think should be added or modified?
 - Which workshop sessions were the least beneficial to you, and why?

Mentorship and Networking:

- How has your mentorship experience been so far? Has it met your expectations?
- What have you gained from networking events, and do you have suggestions for improvement?

Program Impact (15 minutes):

Next, I want to check in about the impact of participating in the Impact Gen program.

- Personal Growth and Development:
 - Has your participation in Impact Gen contributed to your personal growth and self-confidence? In what ways?
 - Are there any specific ways you've used concepts or strategies you learned from the Impact Gen Program in other spaces.
- Career Advancement:
 - Have you seen progress in your career goals since joining this Impact Gen cohort? Can you provide examples?
 - Has participating in the Impact Gen program solidified or altered your major interests? In what ways?

Suggestions for the Future (15 minutes):

Now, we would like to hear from you about what you think can be improved.

- Suggestions for Program Enhancement:
 - What recommendations do you have for making the program even more effective in helping participants achieve their career goals?
- Wrap-Up Question:
 - Is there anything else you'd hope to share but didn't have the chance to communicate? What haven't I asked about that's important to know?

Optimistic Closure (5 minutes):

Before we close out we want to ask you to respond to a “so what?” reflective question.

- What takeaways from Impact Gen do you think will be most important to you five years from now? Why?

Thank you for your valuable input and contributions tonight. We will drop into the chat our contact information in case you would like to reach out to us to share additional feedback or if you have any questions. You will receive a link to a survey in the coming days.

Appendix 5: Focus Group Protocol and Interview Guide for Impact Gen Mentors

Below is a set of questions and guidelines for conducting a focus group with Impact Gen mentors:

Introduction

Hello, my name is ____, this is ____, and this is ____. Thank you for coming to the focus group tonight. We are here because Mission Graduates is interested in feedback about the Impact Gen program. This focus group is part of a larger effort to understand what works well about the program and what can be improved. We are interested in your frank thoughts about your experience as a mentor with the Impact Gen program. There are no right or wrong answers. The results of this focus group will be reported to Mission Graduate staff, in order to make improvements for future participants and mentors in the program. Your responses will also contribute to our doctoral capstone requirement at Vanderbilt University. Note: We are not administrators of the Impact Gen program and not are not employed by Mission Graduates.

The comments you make here will be kept confidential – we will not associate anyone’s name with the things they say. We ask that you respect each other’s confidentiality as well—that is, to not reveal what was said by anyone else. We are going to be taking notes throughout the focus group and we will also be recording this session – no one will listen to these recordings except for our capstone group. The focus group will last for about an hour and a half.

About Focus Groups

- We are interested in what everyone has to say but not consensus. The diversity of your viewpoints is important.
- We want to hear from everyone, but everyone doesn’t have to weigh in on every topic or for every question.
- Interaction is encouraged. You don’t need to raise your hand to speak or respond to one another, but please be respectful while another participant is sharing.
- Feel free to speak to your experiences and your opinions.
- We will do our best to let your views drive the conversation, but we will direct to make sure we address the questions we need to.
- Please vocalize your viewpoints. The chat should only be used if you need to elaborate on a point or if you want to share something but were not given the opportunity due to time.

Are there any questions or concerns before we get started? If you have any questions during the focus group, please do not hesitate to ask – if something is not clear, just let us know.

Grounding Activity:

Let's start with a brief introduction. Let's all go around and say our names and what we do professionally.

Working with the Impact Gen Program:

Now, we would like to dive a little deeper into the Impact Gen program. I'm going to ask you about several components of the program and your experience. For each one, I'd like you to tell me what you think of it. We will drop the questions into the chat as well so that you can refer back to them.

- Initial Impressions:
 - What motivated you to become a mentor in the Impact Gen program?
 - Can you share your initial thoughts and expectations when you joined Impact Gen as a mentor?
- Building Relationships:
 - How have you approached building relationships with your mentees in the Impact Gen program?
 - Can you share any memorable experiences or successes in your mentoring relationships?
- Communication and Support from Program Administration:
 - How effective has the communication been between mentors and program administration?
 - What types of support or resources would you like to see provided by the program administration to enhance your role as a mentor?

Impact of the Mentorship Role:

Now, we are going to spend some time thinking about the benefits and challenges of being a mentor.

- Perceived Impact on Participants:
 - In your opinion, what impact does mentorship have on the participants' confidence and career development?
 - Have you observed any specific outcomes or transformations in your mentees?
- Personal Growth as a Mentor:
 - How has being a mentor in the Impact Gen program contributed to your own personal and professional growth?
 - Are there specific skills or insights you've gained through this experience?=
 - What are the most significant challenges you've faced as a mentor in the Impact Gen program?
 - How can these challenges be addressed or mitigated?

Suggestions for the Improvement & Next Steps:

Now, we would like to hear from you about what you think can be improved and future next steps.

- Suggestions for Program Improvement:

- Based on your experiences, what suggestions do you have for improving the mentorship program within Impact Gen?
- Are there additional resources or support that would enhance the effectiveness of the mentorship experience?
- Program Expansion and Future Direction:
 - In your opinion, how can the Impact Gen program expand or evolve to better serve participants and mentors?
- Closing:
 - Is there anything else you'd like to share about your experience as a mentor in the Impact Gen program?

Closure:

Before we close out we want to ask you to respond to a “so what?” reflective question.

- What takeaways from being an Impact Gen mentor do you think have been most important to you? Why?

Thank you for your valuable input and contributions tonight. We will drop into the chat our contact information in case you would like to reach out to us to share additional feedback or if you have any questions. You will receive a link to a survey in the coming days.

Appendix 6: Focus Group Code Book

Theme Area 1: Program Expectations and Initial Impressions

- Code 1: Initial Expectations
- Code 2: Evolution of Expectations
- Code 3: Program Perceptions

Theme Area 2: Positive Program Experiences

- Code 4: Valuable Program Components
- Code 5: Success Stories
- Code 6: Personal Growth

Theme Area 3: Challenges and Areas for Improvement

- Code 7: Identified Challenges
- Code 8: Suggestions for Improvement
- Code 9: Program Changes

Theme Area 4: Workshop and Training Experiences

- Code 10: Beneficial Workshops
- Code 11: Workshop Recommendations

Theme Area 5: Mentorship and Networking

- Code 12: Mentorship Experience
- Code 13: Networking Benefits
- Code 14: Networking Suggestions

Theme Area 6: Program Impact on Personal Growth

- Code 15: Personal Development
- Code 16: Confidence Boost

Theme Area 7: Program Impact on Career Advancement

- Code 17: Career Progress
- Code 18: Career Examples

Theme Area 8: Suggestions for Program Enhancement

- Code 19: Enhancement Recommendations

Appendix 7: Empathy Interview Guide and Questions

Introduction (5 minutes)

Hello, my name is ____, this is ____, and this is ____. Thank you for agreeing to participate in this interview. We are here because Mission Graduates is interested in feedback about the Impact Gen program. This interview is part of a larger effort to understand what works well about the program and what can be improved. We are interested in your thoughts about the Impact Gen program in order to make improvements for future participants in the program. The comments you make during this interview will be kept confidential – we will not associate your name with the things you say. Your responses will also contribute to our doctoral capstone requirement at Vanderbilt University. **Note: We are not administrators of the Impact Gen program and are not employed by Mission Graduates.**

We are going to be taking notes throughout the interview and we will also be recording this session – no one will listen to these recordings except for our capstone group. The interview will last for about 45 to 60 minutes.

Are there any questions or concerns before we get started? If you have any questions during the interview, please do not hesitate to ask – if something is not clear, just let us know.

Introduction:

- To start, can you please share your connection to Mission Graduates and/or the Impact Gen Program?

Understanding the Impact Gen Program:

- Background of Impact Gen:
 - For you, what is the Impact Gen program? Can you provide an overview?
 - How did the idea for the Impact Gen program come about? What was the driving force behind its establishment?
 - What was the vision for the Impact Gen program within the broader mission of Mission Graduates?
- Program Inception and Goals:
 - What were the initial goals and objectives of launching the Impact Gen program?
 - How were these goals developed? Were there specific gaps or needs identified in the community that the program aimed to address?
- Program Components and Strategies:
 - Can you describe the key components and strategies employed by the Impact Gen program to achieve its goals?
 - Were there any unique features introduced to address the specific needs of the target audience?

Program Impact and Successes:

- Assessment & Feedback:
 - How does Mission Graduates assess the impact and effectiveness of the Impact Gen program? What mechanisms does Mission Graduates have in place to gather feedback from program participants, mentors, and stakeholders?
 - How has feedback been utilized to enhance the program's effectiveness?
- Impact:
 - Can you share any success stories or notable achievements of participants attributed to the program?

Challenges and Lessons Learned:

- Challenges Encountered:
 - What challenges, if any, has the Impact Gen program encountered since its inception?
 - How has Mission Graduates addressed or navigated these challenges?
- Lessons Learned:
 - What key lessons has Mission Graduates learned from the implementation and evolution of the Impact Gen program?
 - Have there been any unexpected outcomes or insights that shaped the program's development and/or overall Mission Graduates programming?

Future Directions and Next Steps:

- Reflection on Program Goals:
 - In retrospect, how well do you think the Impact Gen program has met its initial goals?
 - Are there aspects of the program that you feel need further emphasis or improvement?
 - What recommendations do you have for making the program even more effective in achieving its goals?

Stakeholder Engagement:

- How does Mission Graduates engage with key stakeholders, including board members, in shaping the future direction of the Impact Gen program?
- What role do board members play in supporting and guiding the program?

Closing:

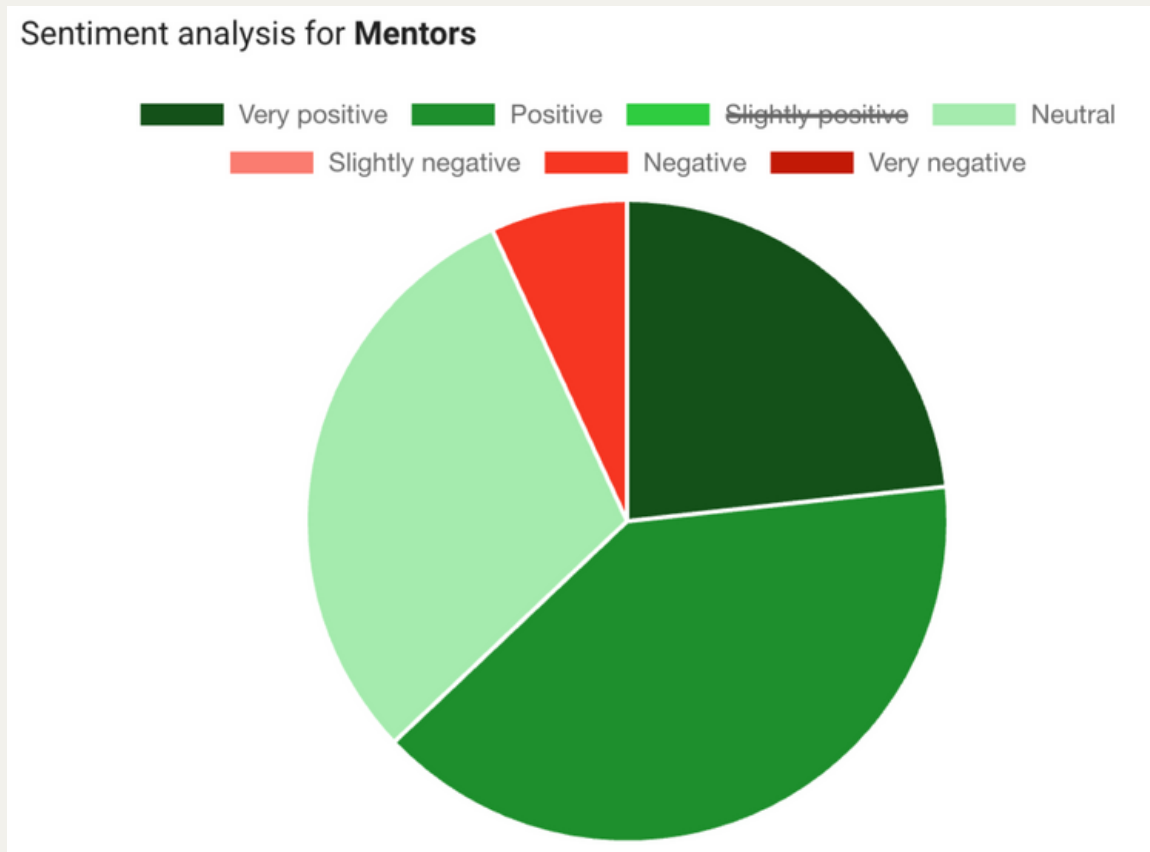
- Is there any additional information or insights you would like to share about the Impact Gen program?

Thank you for your valuable input and your time. We will drop into the chat our contact information in case you would like to reach out to us to share additional feedback or if you have any questions.

Appendix 8: Data Collection Timeline

1. Capstone and Mission Graduate teams met on September 22 to discuss updates to the Impact Gen program plans for the fall and to begin discussion of data collection plans.
2. Pre-program diagnostic survey administered on September 25 by Mission Graduates to fall 2023 participants (11 responses received)
3. Capstone and Mission Graduate teams met to review survey responses and discuss future data collection plans on September 29
4. Capstone and Mission Graduates teams met to review focus group and survey set-up and logistics on November 17
5. Capstone team met with Impact Gen participants on November 29 to introduce ourselves and describe the purpose of the program evaluation
6. Post-program diagnostic survey administered on December 4
7. Capstone team conducted focus group with Impact Gen participants on December 6
8. Thematic coding analysis of Impact Gen participants focus group transcripts completed in December 2023
9. Descriptive analysis of post-program diagnostic survey completed in December 2023
10. Stakeholder interviews conducted in December 2023 and January 2024
11. Statistical analysis of post-program diagnostic survey completed in January 2024
12. Comparison of pre-and post-program diagnostic survey completed in January 2024
13. Capstone team conducted focus group with Impact Gen mentors on January 30
14. Thematic coding analysis of stakeholder interview transcripts completed in February 2024
15. Thematic coding analysis of Impact Gen mentor focus group transcript completed in February 2024
16. In-person presentation of preliminary results given to Mission Graduates in February 2024

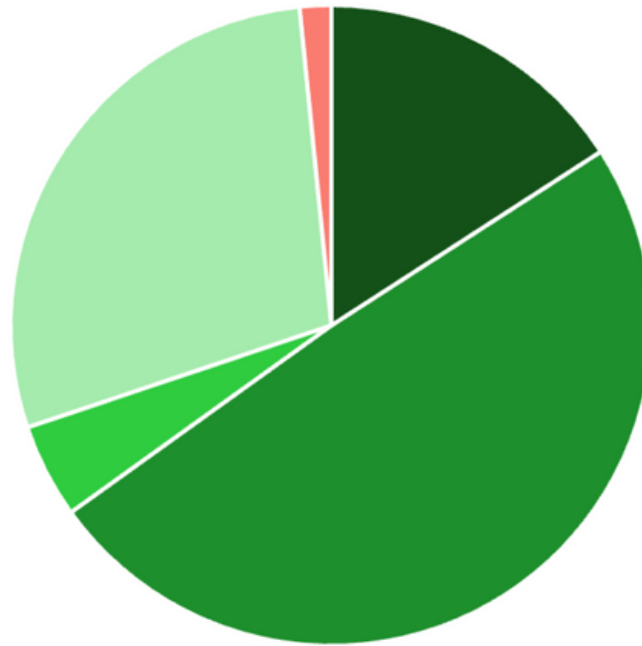
Appendix 9: Focus Group Sentiment Analysis of Themes



The mentoring experience has been generally positive, but there are a few areas that could be improved. For one, there was a lack of guidance for mentors themselves, which sometimes resulted in a lack of focus once stated goals were met. It was also noted that a more personalized connection with the mentor, particularly one who shared similar career aspirations or background, were most beneficial. The support from the mentor was appreciated, and the overall mentorship experience was valued, with some participants feeling it exceeded their expectations. Mentors and mentees indicated that they found value in the shared goals they created and the relationships that were formed.

Sentiment analysis for **Workforce**

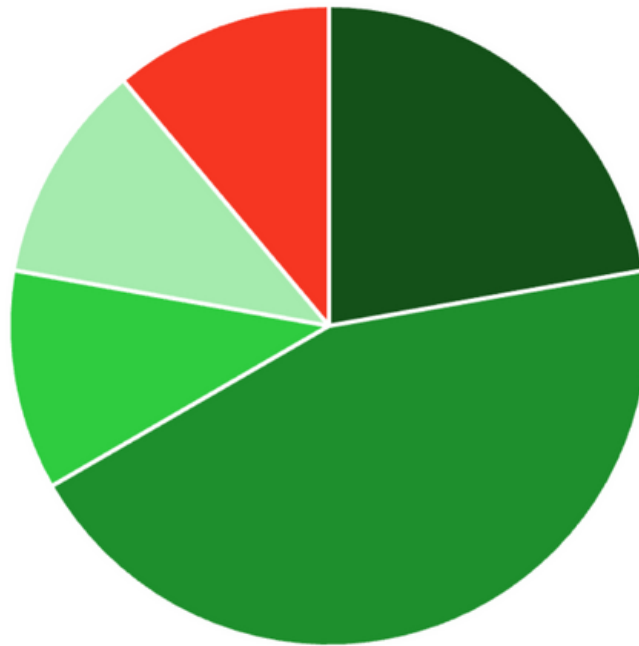
Very positive Positive Slightly positive Neutral
Slightly negative Negative Very negative



The Impact Gen program has been instrumental in fostering career and workforce development among participants. It has compelled them to engage in critical thinking regarding their career aspirations and the skills required to attain and excel in their desired roles. The mentorship component was particularly lauded for providing dedicated guidance towards their professional growth. Nevertheless, there was expressed interest in expanding the focus of sessions and group discussions to encompass a broader range of career development avenues, such as internships. Encouragingly, participants expressed a sense of being on the right path toward their career goals and remain motivated to persist in their efforts.

Sentiment analysis for **First Gen**

Very positive Positive Slightly positive Neutral
Slightly negative Negative Very negative



Being a first-generation student can be challenging, especially navigating unfamiliar terrain. It's reassuring to know that career success does not always happen immediately and that making mistakes is part of the learning process. Impact Gen provides a supportive environment where it is okay to struggle and learn from mistakes, for instance in the mock interview scenario. This program has not only helped participants to feel less in the dark about future academic activities, but also to gain confidence in expressing themselves and connecting with others. It is about more than just finding a job; it is also about building a community and having the courage to take risks. Participants indicated that Impact Gen demonstrated that the world is vast, and there are others out there in similar situations, which is comforting and motivating. Moreover, the program has given enrollees tools, like salary negotiation strategies, which can be shared with friends and family, helping all to grow as a community.

Mission Graduates



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