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## I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

**Problem:** Over the past five years, donors have funded a GAP Scholarship Program to provide the missing dollars needed by 78 Camelback High School seniors for their first year college expenses. Donors wanted to find out if this GAP Scholarship had produced demonstrable, positive outcomes for recipients and, if so, what were the specific benefits of the GAP Scholarship? The donors needed this information in order to continue to attract previous donors, who wanted to know if their donations were making a difference in students' lives.

Donors are located and funds are raised by the Camelback High School Community Network, a group of philanthropists volunteering at Camelback High School, who discovered that many talented seniors could not attend college due to a 5% gap between their financial aid and their actual cost of college. Since then the Community Network has provided annual scholarships to cover this gap so that approximately 15 graduating seniors could begin their freshman year at a 4-year college.

**Background Information:** The Camelback Community Network noticed that small, "last dollar" scholarships were the answer to a fundamental question: *Why are low-income students not showing up for college even though they have been accepted?* According to the Hechinger Report, up to 40 percent of low-income students who are accepted to college never make it to their first day of class. Camelback High School, a school within the inner city of Phoenix, AZ, is facing the same problem of not getting students to that first day of college. Many Camelback graduating seniors who have 95% of their college costs funded fail to obtain that last 5%, and therefore miss the opportunity to go to college. The Camelback Community Network solved this problem by creating an annual GAP scholarship program administered by the Arizona Community Foundation to fund the last 5% of approximately 15 students' first year college costs.

**Solution:** To solve the Camelback Community Network's need for information about GAP scholarship recipients' college outcomes, Camelback DECA formed a team to carry out primary and secondary research. Our DECA chapter surveyed Gap Scholars on the impact of the GAP Scholarships on their academic careers. We also developed recommendations to improve donor information and to make the scholarships available to more students. The team presented these results to the Camelback Community Network participants and scholarship donors.

**Findings:** Our team found that GAP Scholars are beating the odds. After surveying over 78 GAP Scholars and receiving feedback from 38 (49% as of the time of this paper), only one student said that they are not currently attending college. The rest of our recipients are currently enrolled in college and said that their post-secondary education would not be possible, without the GAP Scholarship. By structuring survey information into statistical charts and graphs reflecting the data, we were able to show the Camelback Community Network and GAP scholarship donors that their investments had funded a successful program for Camelback High School graduating seniors. We strongly recommended that the GAP Scholarship program should be continued.

**Recommendations:**

<b><u>1.</u></b> Alumni Fundraising	<b><u>2.</u></b> Students meet donors over dinner	<b><u>3.</u></b> Update survey annually	<b><u>4.</u></b> Create mentor program	<b><u>5.</u></b> Scale program District wide
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## II. INTRODUCTION

### A. Statement of problem

Shortly after the Camelback Community Network was formed to support the school, Camelback's former principal, Dr. Chad Gestson, approached a few Camelback Community Network members and explained to them the difficulty that students were having getting the last dollars they needed for college. Dr. Gestson wondered how he and the Network might assist students in finding these funds. The Camelback Community Network took on the job of creating a scholarship fund only available to Camelback's seniors that would fund their last few dollars, thereby securing funds for their college freshman year. Over the succeeding five years, the GAP Scholarship fundraising has been championed by philanthropists Bruce Hilby, Rick West and Becky Wolf. They raised funds and enlisted the support of Arizona Community Foundation to manage and disperse scholarship funds to recipients. These leaders and their generous donors have supported the scholarships for five years hoping that their contributions would make an impact on students' lives. To find out more about the impact the scholarships were making, Mr.

Hilby, Mr. West, and Mrs. Wolf came to the Camelback DECA club to locate and survey the Scholars, many of whom we knew.

Their fundamental question was whether the GAP Scholarship program has been

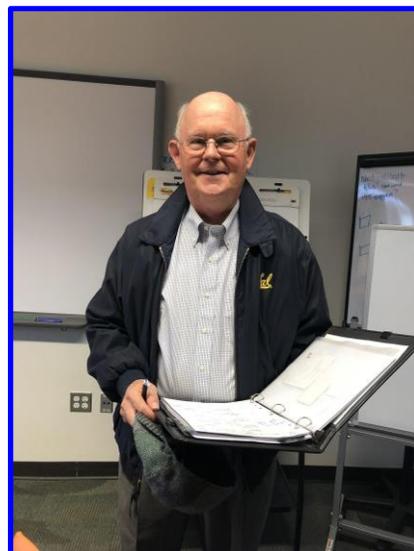


successful enough to continue. Many self-motivated students work extremely hard throughout their four years in high school with the ultimate goal of going to college funded via a full tuition scholarship. Family funding of their college education is expensive and

many times impossible to afford. Some can fund much of the cost of college via Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) and scholarships. Even for these fortunate scholarship recipients there are few to no options to fill in the gaps in their first year college funding plan. Unfortunately, many of these students come to realize that they will have a shortage of money for their college tuition, books, and other educational expenses. Funding gaps may range from \$500 to \$4,000. Given their lack of other options, it may as well be a \$100,000 gap. This lack of funding will preclude the student from attending the college of their choice and may even preclude the student from all opportunities for higher education. Camelback's GAP Scholarship program fills this critical need.

## **B. Significance of the problem studied**

Camelback Community Network member and fundraiser Bruce Hilby posed the problem to us at our first meeting with him: “One of the mysteries of our involvement at Camelback High School has been what outcomes are being achieved by the past recipients of the GAP Scholarship that our group funds and awards each year. Since 2013, we have funded and granted 78 scholarships averaging \$3,000 apiece. The max is \$4,000 for one year to each recipient.” Bruce Hilby then asked if we could gather feedback to find out whether or not the money he and his donors are investing is actually helping GAP Scholarship recipients. Specifically, the donors asked would the scholarship recipients be in college without the GAP Scholarship.



*Bruce Hilby, One of the Founders of the GAP Scholarship and the Communicator of the Camelback Community Network*

In the last five years the Community Network raised \$230,000 exclusively for 78 qualifying Camelback seniors who would have otherwise struggled to fill the tuition gaps preventing them from continuing their education. Why are the donors contributing to the Gap Scholarship program? Their goal is to change the lives of Camelback High School graduates who receive GAP Scholarship by ensuring their opportunity to go to college. This project has been funded to date with no evidence that it was beneficial. The Community Network was concerned that over time GAP Scholarship donors would move on to fund other charities and stop their contributions for GAP Scholarship due to lack of feedback. Without these donors, this tuition solution for Camelback graduates could become endangered. Keeping this program active and successful became the mission of our team. To do so, we had to identify scholarship recipients' outcomes.

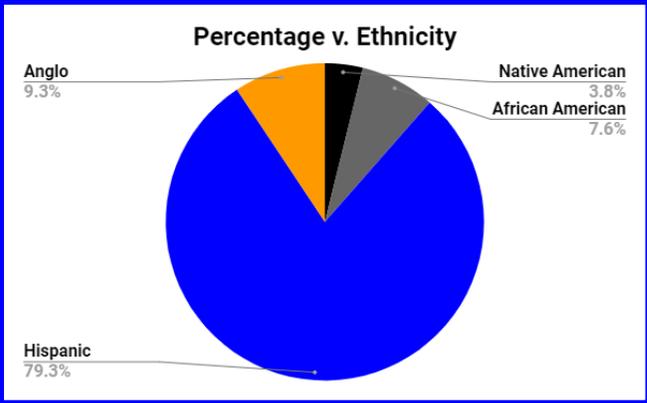
**C. Background information: description of the business, community situation or whatever is necessary to understand the value of the project**



Camelback High School (CBHS), located in the Phoenix Metropolitan area in the eastern portion of the city, in the heart of Arizona. Camelback High School first opened to the public in 1954. Initially its population was primarily middle and upper-middle class students from the Biltmore (i.e. local) area. With desegregation in the 1980's, Camelback High School's draw area

and demographics changed. As of 2017 Camelback High School serves a diverse and multicultural community of approximately 2,100 students, as shown in the graph to the right.

Camelback is a Title One school which means that it has a sufficiently high percentage of



students from low-income families to qualify 100% of Camelback students' as eligible to receive free or reduced fee lunches. In addition to support from Title One funds, a local nonprofit organization has responded to the financial need of

Camelback students and families by creating a campus food bank.

To give Camelback students educational and community-based opportunities, Camelback principal Dr. Chad Gestson approached the Social Venture Partners of Arizona to locate additional resources for the school and its students. This organization is a local chapter of Social Venture Partners (“SVP”), an international network of engaged philanthropists and social entrepreneurs who invest time, money and professional expertise into nonprofits and education institutions for a maximum of five years. After five years, SVP turns over program management and funding to each nonprofit or school it has been assisting. SVP launched an investment program to support Camelback High School and sent its volunteer manpower to help with school programs. From SVP Arizona’s initial investment and support the Camelback Community Network was created. In 2014, SVP Arizona completed their five years of support to Camelback. As planned, SVP Arizona turned the programs they had initiated over to the Camelback Community Network. Bruce Hilby, Rick West, and Becky Wolf continued their leadership of the Camelback Community Network, which has grown beyond SVP Arizona’s initial mission and

added many new programs. One major Camelback Community Network contribution is the creation and continued funding of the GAP Scholarship program. To assure good management of funds, in 2014 Bruce Hilby enlisted the Arizona Community Foundation to administer the scholarship by collecting donations and disbursing scholarships to students.

In addition to the introduction of the GAP Scholarship program, SVP Arizona and subsequently, the Camelback Community Network, have implemented many other needed projects. Dr. Chad Gestson, who left Camelback in 2014 to become the Superintendent of the Phoenix Union High School District, was the visionary who initiated most of the programs that materially improved the culture and student outcomes at Camelback. Through his partnership with SVP Arizona and the Camelback Community Network, Dr. Gestson could fund and implement programs to



*Dr. Chad Gestson*

address the issues he identified. Some of Dr. Gestson's and SVP/Community Network's successful programs included: dividing up the school into six strands, or communities, which operated like smaller high schools within the big campus; creating advisory groups (like homerooms) where each student had a teacher mentoring and advising them; starting a large peer tutoring program which challenged all levels of students; starting the first Montessori High School inside a public high school; and creating the GAP Scholarship program, which was administered by the Arizona Community Foundation. SVP/Community Network has also provided manpower to support many after school clubs, ranging from coding, fashion and culinary clubs; to Toastmasters, DECA, and others.

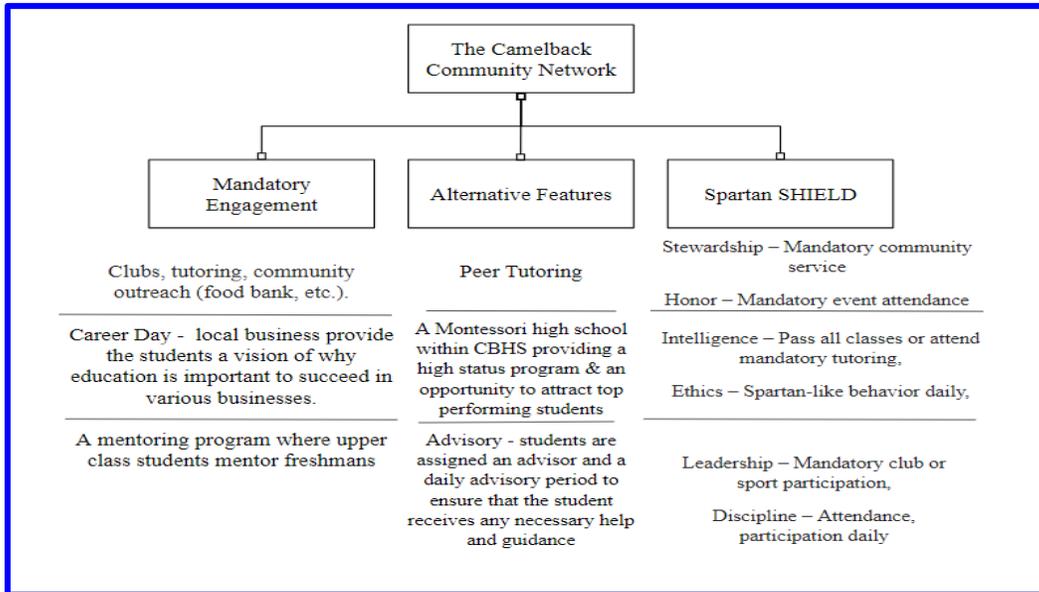
“Focus on what interests the individual student, and the grades will take care of themselves,” stated Dr. Gestson. He is a prime believer in change and improvement. As a result, Dr. Gestson transformed Camelback into a school where “success is mandatory,” a phrase he often used. By requiring that any student failing a class for the semester participate in ten hours of peer tutoring during the following semester, Dr. Gestson in



partnership with SVP and the Camelback Community Network- created a game changing program at Camelback. As a result of peer tutoring, all students participating including the tutors have continually improved their academic achievement in all areas. Notably, the bottom quartile of student improved their scores on the 10th grade AIMS (state standardized) math tests, which is the key indicator for school quality in Arizona.

By every measure, Camelback High School improved (and continues to improve) beyond all initial expectations. This improvement, largely driven by the peer tutoring results, resulted in increased numbers of students graduating, being accepted by colleges, and being offered college scholarships. However, many students obtaining large scholarships could not use them due to small gaps in funding. Students aware of improvements and opportunities now offered are making an effort and drive to reach that post-secondary education. Thus, The Community Network then decided to find a way for these talented students go to college, and they created the GAP scholarship program.

Below is a table of the programs implemented at Camelback by Dr. Gestson, SVP and the Community Network.



### III. PROCEDURES AND RESEARCH METHODS USED

#### A. Description of secondary (library) research conducted: books, articles and other sources on market research, local descriptive data, etc.

To conduct this study, our team carried out secondary research to understand the state of education in Arizona and the financial obstacles facing graduating high school seniors. We researched publications from universities and from government sources, such as: “Dropped? Latino Education and Arizona’s Economic Future”, authored by the ASU Morrison Institute for Public Policy. The article states that the Hispanic community in the United States has increased 46% since 2000 resulting in Hispanics becoming a majority-minority. The article also points out that, despite an increasing Hispanic population, every year the graduation rate drops due to reasons ranging from financial difficulties to lack of essential necessities one needs for healthy brain development and educational achievement. It follows that Camelback High School students

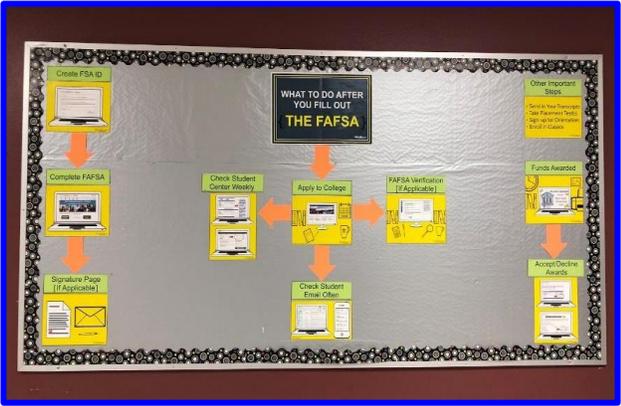
struggle to achieve their college education, since Camelback's population has a high percentage of Hispanics who have the odds against them.

We used online articles and blogs to gain a better understanding of the financial obstacles facing graduating seniors. Jaschick reports that "A new study finds that a majority of students with low incomes but high academic ability never apply to a single competitive college." This study helps support furthermore, according to Maggie McGrath, in an article published on January 6, 2016, 63% of Americans do not have enough money to handle unexpected and unplanned expenses. McGrath states that "Americans could not save the \$500.00 to \$1000.00 dollars" for unexpected expenses. This urgency for money affects the lives of graduating high school seniors looking for a college education; students in families with this kind of financial pressure cannot afford a post-secondary education without graduating with a lifetime of debt. "Roughly 70 percent of grads leave college with student debt, and over 44 million Americans hold a total of \$1.4 trillion in student loan debt" (Hess). Hess reports that for federal student loans, the standard repayment plan expects borrowers to pay off their debt in less than 10 years. For many, however, it can take twice as long. In addition, College Success Arizona, a state-wide educational advocacy organization, recommends that the State of Arizona consider giving all students the opportunity to access state based financial aid to facilitate their transition from high school to college. Since funding for public colleges and universities has dropped 56%, which equals \$3600 per student, College Success argues that the State should step in and provide financial aid to cover this \$3,600 drop in per student spending.

As college costs have increased, Arizona students' college enrollment has decreased since 2008 (Jaschik). In 2008, 56% of graduating seniors enrolled in college, but since then college enrollment has dropped to 46%. Financial obstacles are influencing students' decisions

about their future. From our conversation with Mr. Hilby, Camelback students who are partially funded to attend school find it impossible to locate a source to fund the last few thousand dollars of the cost of college. As a result of this shortfall a large number of students are unable to pursue their dream of attending college.

Many low income students at Camelback High School work extremely hard during high school. They hope that their GPA and community service will earn them grants and scholarships to pay for college. In fact, many rely on Title One lunch services at school. In addition, some students have to earn and contribute financially to their families. For many students there just seems to be no money left over to pay for college.



Thus, college bound students must apply for financial aid and scholarships and locate part time jobs to find money they need for college. Students are more than aware of their financial disadvantage, too often lower their expectations and decide not to apply for the college of their choice.

Since 2013, the Camelback Community Network has maintained the GAP Scholarship program. Bruce Hilby, pictured above, has organized the fundraising each year. The GAP Scholarship targets hard working students who have most of their college tuition and expenses committed but lack a small amount which their families cannot cover. Although these gaps seem small to many people, funding these gaps can mean months' worth of work for families already struggling with their personal expenses. The Community Network has enthusiastically raised money for GAP Scholarships for five years, but they need more data to continue their

fundraising. Donors wanted to know if their money had made a difference in college attendance and career preparation. Since we might more easily locate and question recent graduates and GAP scholarship recipients, these Camelback Community Network asked Camelback DECA to contact recipients for feedback about the effectiveness of the GAP Scholarship program.

Secondary research sources are displayed in the table below:

<p><b><u>Websites</u></b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <a href="http://www.successismandatory.com">www.successismandatory.com</a></li> <li>2. <a href="http://www.phxhs.k12.az.us">www.phxhs.k12.az.us</a></li> <li>3. <a href="http://www.scholarships.com">www.scholarships.com</a></li> <li>4. <a href="http://www.socialventurepartners.org/arizona/">www.socialventurepartners.org/arizona/</a></li> </ol> <p><b><u>Blogs</u></b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. It's Too Expensive to Go to College Anymore</li> <li>2. 10 Reasons College Costs So Much</li> <li>3. The Real Reason College Tuition Costs So Much</li> <li>4. Why Is College So Expensive? 4 Trends Contributing to the Rising Cost</li> <li>5. The Real Reasons Why College Tuition Is So High And What You Can Do About It</li> <li>6. Why is College So Expensive? Rising College Costs, Explained</li> </ol>	<p><b><u>Online Articles</u></b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Students struggle, exhaust options to afford college</li> <li>2. This Is Why 12 Percent Of High School Graduates Don't Go To College</li> <li>3. Many Students Can't Afford Their First Choice College</li> <li>4. Is College Tuition Really Too High?</li> <li>5. Why are fewer people going to college?</li> <li>6. High-scoring, low-income students no more likely to complete college than low-scoring, rich students</li> <li>7. Why Is College So Expensive?</li> </ol>
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**B. Description of primary research conducted**

In order to determine whether or not the GAP Scholarship has made an impact on the recipients' college career and follow through with their goals, Camelback DECA conducted an analytical survey using Google Surveys that was meant to be sent out to past recipients of the scholarship. This survey was designed to give quantitative and qualitative data about the success of scholarship recipients



*Rodrigo Dorador, Professional Data Analyst & Evaluation Coordinator*

and some of the beneficial impacts of the GAP Scholarship Program. After building the survey, our team located, emailed and called over 70 of the GAP Scholarship recipients and received responses from 38 (54% of those contacted). With the help of Rodrigo Dorador, a professional Data Analyst and Evaluator, our Survey Team statistically analyzed the feedback provided by past recipients.

The following displays the survey which was distributed amongst the recipients:

**The Gap Scholarship Survey**

**1. Personal Information:**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Last Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_  
Facebook: \_\_\_\_\_  
LinkedIn: \_\_\_\_\_

What year did you graduate?

- 2017
- 2016
- 2015
- 2014
- 2013
- Other

**2. College Information**

What college do you attend directly after graduating from Camelback?

- Arizona State University
- University of Arizona
- Northern State University
- Grand Canyon University
- Phoenix College
- Gateway College
- University of Phoenix
- Other

Was this your first choice?

- Yes
- No

**3. Impact of the Gap Scholarship**

How important was the Camelback High School Gap Scholarship in attending your first year of college? One being not that important

1

2

3

4

5

How did you pay for your first year of college?

- Federal Grants
- State Government Grants
- Scholarships
- Loans
- Working
- Other

After your first year in college, how did you replace the financial support you received from the Camelback High School GAP Scholarship?

- Federal Grants
- State Government Grants
- Scholarships
- Loans
- Working
- Other

Would you be in college without the GAP Scholarship

- Yes
- No
- Maybe

What year do you expect to graduate or did you graduate from college with a Bachelor's Degree?

- 2014
- 2015
- 2015
- 2016
- 2017
- 2018
- 2019
- 2020
- 2021
- 2022
- 2023
- I do not expect to graduate

#### **4. Current College Information**

What college are you currently attending?

- Arizona State University
- University of Arizona
- Northern State University
- Grand Canyon University
- Phoenix College
- Gateway College
- University of Phoenix
- Other

What best describes your college situation?

- Full-time student at a 4 year college
- Part-time student at a 4 year college
- Left college, and plan to return
- I am in community college and seek to transition to a 4 year college
- I am in community college and will stop after I earn my Associate's degree

### 5. College Graduation Details

If you graduated, what college did you graduate from?

\_\_\_\_\_

What degree did you earn or are you working towards?

- Bachelor's
- Associate's
- Other

What major did you earn or are you working towards?

\_\_\_\_\_

### 6. Thank You

Beyond the GAP Scholarships, how can we provide support to you after you leave high school?

\_\_\_\_\_

May we contact you about opportunities to volunteer, CBHS updates, etc ..

- Yes
- No

In addition to the surveys, our team held open interviews with current college students that were awarded this scholarship. This personal testimony gave recipients a better chance to express fully benefits of this scholarship. As a result, we received a better understanding of the students' benefits.

Of the recipients interviewed, all but one was still in college and working to obtain their degree.

From the interviews performed, one particular student, Tania Olvera, stood out the most to us. Tania was at the top of her Camelback graduating class in 2015 and had the same goals as many of her classmates, which was to attend the college of her choice.



*Tania Olvera*

Like many others who face financial hardship, Tania had to work twice as hard as most college bound students. She and her other five siblings lived at home with their single mother who struggled financially to cover household necessities. There was no money left over to save for college. While Tania had scholarships from Saint Mary's University in Texas covering tuition, room and board, she did not have the money to pay for incidentals such as school supplies, some fees, and flights home. She was awarded the GAP Scholarship for those expenses. Now Tania is in her last year at Saint Mary's University. Her brother graduated from Camelback last year and attends Saint Mary's University. He also received a GAP Scholarship. Their mom is still struggling, but she now has her two oldest children attending college and anticipating to begin their careers after graduation.

### **C. Description of involvement of chapter members and businesspeople in the project**

Our creative marketing project included two main audiences: 1) the Community Network/GAP Scholarship donors, and 2) Camelback college bound seniors who are potential GAP Scholarship applicants. To gain a better understanding about the goals and needs of the Camelback Community Network, we attended their monthly meetings. After several meetings our team designed and presented our research project, along with both a general overview and goals we aimed to accomplish through our survey of past scholarship recipients. Some of these goals were to: locate past recipients of the GAP Scholarship, find out if they are still attending college, and identify how important the



*Meeting with the Camelback  
Community Network*

GAP Scholarship was to them. Once we obtained and analyzed the survey results, we organized an event with the help of Bruce Hilby to educate donors about the impact of the GAP Scholarship. We invited donors to attend a reception from 4 to 5 PM on January 9, 2018, in the conference room at Camelback High School. We presented the results of our study, focusing on the importance the GAP Scholarship played in recipients' attendance. We also answered donor's questions.

After presenting to the donors, we turned our attention to educating and recruiting students to apply for the GAP Scholarship. Our DECA team's heartfelt goal was to encourage our Camelback peers to grow intellectually, to see an academic and professional future for themselves, and to motivate students to apply for the GAP Scholarship as a way to achieve that future. In order to educate students about the GAP Scholarship, we reached out to our DECA Chapter for ideas.



*2017-2018 DECA Chapter*

Our team, with input from our DECA Chapter, concluded that the best way to market the GAP Scholarship to our peers was to host a student assembly and urge them to apply. We believed that getting the word out about the scholarship and showing students how to apply would increase the number of applications by eligible students. Throughout the marketing process of this project, several committees were created by our DECA chapter to help advertise this unique scholarships, to handle logistics of the assembly,

and to design our presentation at the assembly. Although all Camelback students are eligible for this unique scholarship the planning committee decided to invite the top third of the graduating class to learn about the GAP Scholarship application process and to urge them to apply. We designed our presentation to emphasize the remarkable impact the GAP Scholarship could make on these talented students' future.

With the GAP Scholarship deadline approaching, we needed to hold the assembly to market the scholarship to students as soon as possible. To set the date of the assembly, the event planning committee contacted Brenda Powell, a counselor at Camelback. With her guidance our committee identified a date for the assembly that accommodated everyone's schedule. Next we spoke with current Camelback High School Principal Dana Cook and Ms. Wimble, the Librarian, who agreed to the assembly and assigned a room and time for it. We publicized the assembly, and with the help of Ms. Powell we sent reminder slips to the top third of the class.

Once the assembly arrangements were set we worked with Bruce Hilby, the Communicator of the Camelback Community Network, to create our presentation. Over 70 of Camelback's top students attended the assembly. Our presentation focused on how hard it was for many seniors to locate the last dollars for college, and how the GAP Scholarship was designed to give hardworking students those last dollars to fund their freshman year costs. We told the seniors that if



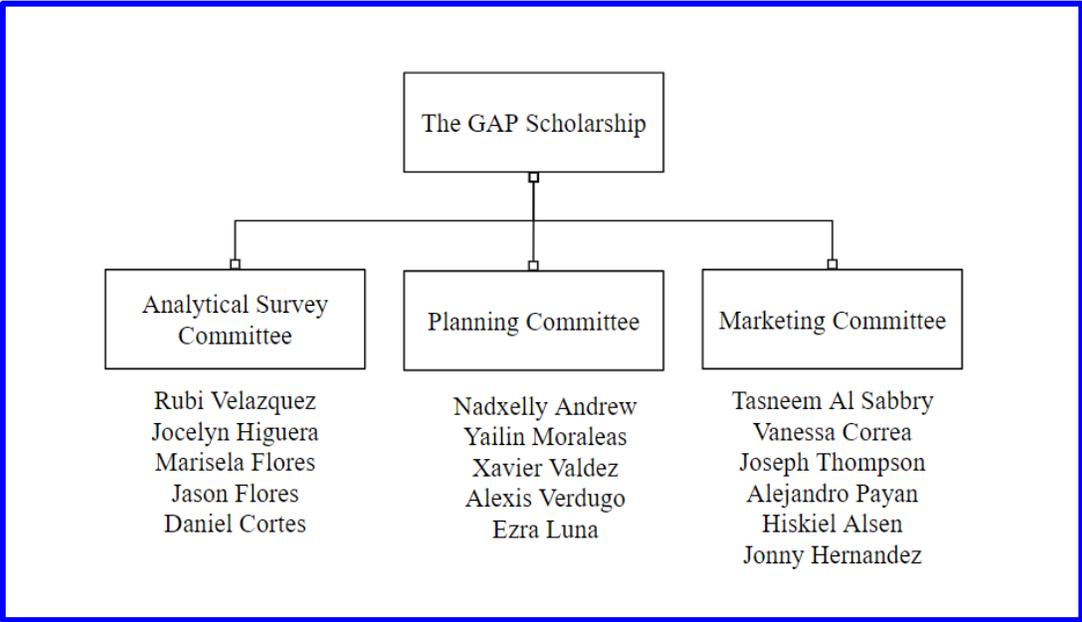
they needed \$1000 to \$4000 to make college a reality, they should apply for the GAP Scholarship. We emphasized that college would have a great impact on their future. After we explained the benefits of the GAP Scholarship, we showed assembly attendees how to apply. Applicants must first create a scholarship application account through the Arizona Community Foundation website and fill out their application forms online. A surprising and positive result of the DECA marketing project was that many of the 2017-2018 Camelback High School DECA Chapter members created their own personal scholarship application accounts with the Arizona Community Foundation (“ACF”) and applied for the GAP Scholarship. By applying for the GAP Scholarship through the ACF portal. In addition to the GAP Scholarship, ACF manages funds and seeks applicants for many other scholarships. Any applicant for an ACF managed scholarship automatically has their application to each of the more than 80 college scholarship funds that ACF administers.



Since benefits of applying for the GAP Scholarship could change our fellow students’ lives, we did not want them to miss the deadline. Therefore, our DECA chapter members assisted in making and distributing flyers throughout the campus. We wanted to remind students that the deadline was approaching very

quickly, while also creating more awareness for the scholarship at Camelback High School not only for students but for faculty and teachers as well.

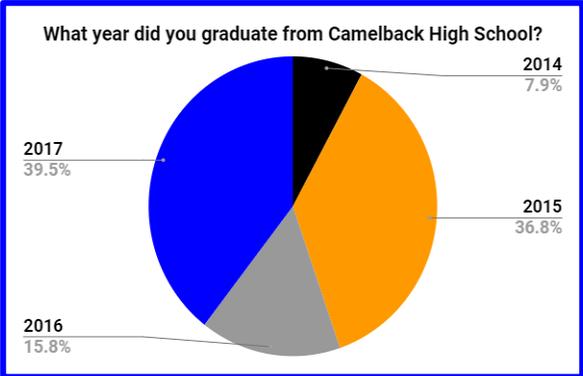
The following chart lists the committees and DECA participants involved in our project:



**IV. FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS**

**A. Presentation of findings, data to support findings**

The survey findings indicated that GAP Scholars are beating the odds. With our team’s survey findings we were able to demonstrate the benefits of the GAP Scholarship to donors and



potential applicants. The GAP Scholarship not only affects recipients’ choices of college, but determines for some recipients whether college is even a choice at all. The scholarships make a substantial impact.

**2014-2017 Gap Scholars surveyed.**

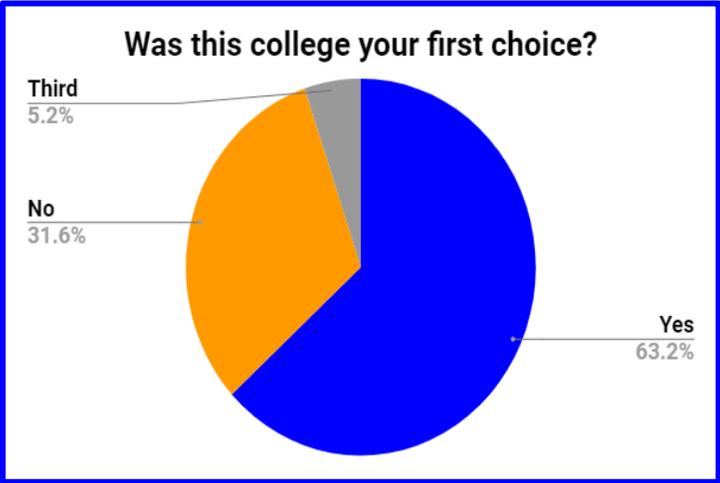
We decided that we could locate the 70 Gap Scholars from Camelback classes 2014 through

2017. Through Google Surveys, we sent surveys to 70 GAP Scholars recipients and received returned surveys from 38. Of the 38 students responding (54% response rate), we discovered that one student is not in college; but the remaining 37 are enrolled in college full-time. 90% of these students are enrolled in a four year college and plan to graduate in four years. The remaining 10% of students are enrolled in a community college and plan to transfer to a four year college and graduate in four years. Of the three respondents from the Camelback class of 2014 two are graduating in May 2018. From this small sample of respondents we found that GAP Scholars have a graduate in four years at a rate of 66%, twice the Arizona average rate.

The following charts display a few of the answers provided to survey questions provided by the recipients.

**Chart 1. First choice college?** We wanted to evaluate the effectiveness of the GAP Scholarship in improving the lives of the 38 recipients responding to the survey. We asked if the college they

attended was their first choice and we found that 63.2% of the recipients did attend the college of their choice. With this we can indeed say that the GAP Scholarship helped these recipients get to the college they dreamed of attending.



**Table 1: How did respondents pay for college?**

All survey respondent's used scholarships in addition to the Gap Scholarships to pay college expenses; 71% received federal aid; and only 16% used loans. 95% of respondents said

the GAP Scholarship was very important or essential in making their first year of college possible. This 5% gap could have kept these 38 students from college. As you can see, students with the drive to reach their goals took the initiative to apply for many other scholarships and Aid to ensure their destination into college.

How did students pay?	Percent	Number
Federal Grants	71.1%	27
State Government Aid	26.3%	10
Scholarships	100%	38
Loans	15.8%	6
Family Support	21.1%	8
Working	36.8%	14

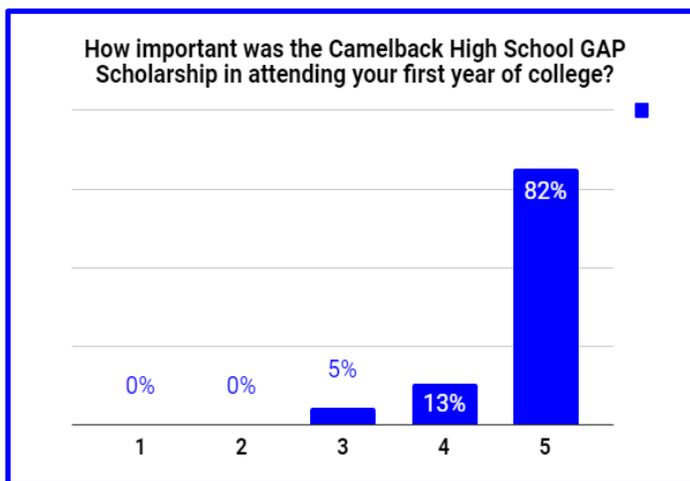
**Table 2: What challenges did students face when transitioning into college?**

63% of the respondents are more challenged by dealing with balancing college with other responsibilities than actually paying for college.

What challenges did students face when transitioning into college?	Percent	Number
No particular problems	5.3%	2
Paying for college	44.7%	17
Balancing college with other responsibilities	63.2%	24
Keeping up with the rigor of college level work	50%	19
Adjusting to the social life, making and keeping friends	57.9%	22
Transportation to and from college	15.8%	6
Family responsibilities that compete with studies	23.7%	9

**GAP Scholarship Importance.** To help us measure the success of the Camelback GAP

Scholarship, we asked how important the GAP Scholarship was to them on a 1-5 scale, with one being not important and five being very important. Over 80% of the respondents answered that the GAP Scholarship was very important



towards attending their first year of college.

### **B. Presentation of conclusions, rationale to support conclusions**

Using our collective data, we concluded that the GAP Scholarship is an essential aid to Camelback students with low income. Out of a total of 38 responses, only one respondent indicated they were no longer attending college. Many respondents commented that they made it to college because of this GAP Scholarship opportunity.

From our survey results we concluded that the Camelback Community Network donors are making a huge impact on graduates in the community by investing money in these future leaders of America through the GAP scholarship program. These philanthropists are bringing a change in the life of low income students who have goals that are not always attainable given their families' limited financial status. With the help of 2014 through 2017 scholarship recipient's responses, we have shown that the GAP Scholarship is a powerful contributor to recipients in achieving their goals to move toward college graduation. The GAP Scholarship is a major example of how Camelback High School is a community that relies on each other for learning, development, and support.

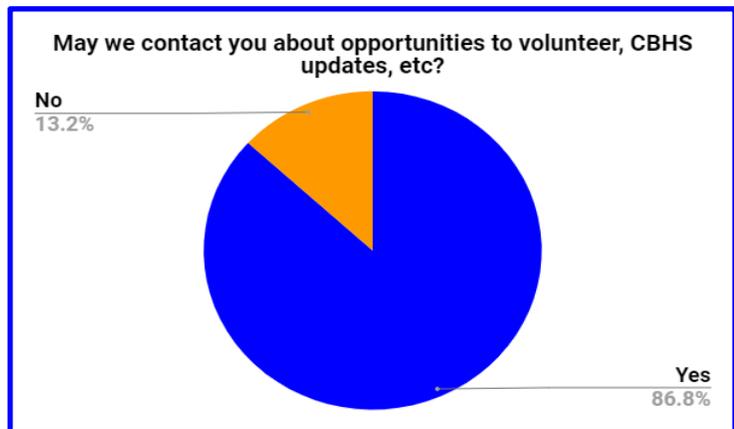
## V. RECOMMENDATIONS

### A. Recommendations resulting from the study

Based on our findings and conclusions from the survey data collected, we constructed five recommendations to improve the GAP Scholarship program. Each recommendation focuses on creating a structure for more Camelback graduates to attend college. Our recommendations require participation of both scholarship donors and recipients. Our recommendations along with suggestions for implementation are as followed:

#### **Recommendation #1: Alumni fundraising**

Our survey reveals that 86.8% of the recipients are willing to be contacted. Since many scholarship donors are repeat donors, funding for this scholarship must be diversified to make it sustainable. Locating new funding is necessary as existing donors' interests and capabilities change. Having a Camelback alumni group to



fundraise is a potential source of additional money. Alumni are often loyal to their school and want to help current students. They remember the hardships and stress they may have had balancing family and school responsibilities with finding money for college. As a result, alumni, particularly GAP Scholar alumni, are inclined to help their former high school community.

#### **Recommendation #2: Thanking and meeting with donors**

Despite the importance of the scholarship program, donors do not know the impact the GAP Scholarship Program has had on the lives of recipients. Our survey results also showed that

approximately half of the GAP Scholarship recipients either would have most likely not attend college without this scholarship. Donors need to know how important their contributions are, be properly thanked and be updated about the scholarship recipients' successes. Philanthropists appreciate being aware of the value their investments bring to the Camelback community and its students. Therefore, hosting a dinner or reunion would be an excellent opportunity for GAP Scholars to thank donors and update donors on the Scholars' educational achievements. This reunion and donor reception could be sponsored by the Camelback Alumni and held at the school on an annual basis.

**Recommendation #3: Annual survey update for scholarship recipients AND donors**

It is essential to understand the “whys” of every donor who made someone’s dream become reality. Understanding why they chose to be a member of the cause and why they continued to help fund the scholarship will help the whole community understand the importance of why the GAP Scholarship was created and has become an annual Camelback tradition for donors and students. To help collect this information, we recommend that an annual survey be created and sent to the donors annually. After survey results are compiled and analyzed, they should be presented to the donors. Presenting our charts, graphs, and interviews would help both donors and students understand the range of donors’ goals. It would let donors know that potential GAP Scholars regard the importance of donors’ GAP Scholarship contributions and how it made a huge impact and aid to the GAP Scholars. This presentation could be held at the annual thank you dinner put on by the past scholarship recipients, creating a consistent update on the GAP scholarships contributions. At that time GAP Scholars could also share scholarship recipient data with donors. Keeping donors aware of the scholarship program’s successes will promote donor satisfaction and consistent re-investment.

#### **Recommendation #4: A Mentoring Program**

Based on research studies it has been proven that new college students do better when they have one person committed to giving them academic guidance and emotional support. Many of the scholarship recipients are the first to attend college in their immediate family. Their families want to support them but do not always know how. Based on our data collected, 63.2% of the respondents agreed they struggled with balancing demands of college, and needed someone to help them through those difficult patches. To fill this need we suggest that a mentoring program be set up for GAP Scholars. Matching sympathetic community volunteers willing to help students successfully negotiate the challenges of school and adult life could be positive for both groups.

#### **Recommendation #5: Scale the program across the Phoenix Union High School District**

Because the GAP Scholarship has changed students' lives and improved communities, we recommend that these scholarships be given to students throughout the Phoenix Union High School District. Currently, the GAP Scholarship is available only to Camelback High School students. Yet the gap between students' scholarships and their full cost of college is not just a Camelback issue, but is a district and a national problem. The loss of talent because of a 5% shortfall in funds for college is a tragedy that affects the entire Phoenix high school community.

#### **B. Projected outcomes from implementing the recommendations**

##### **Outcome #1: Expanding the donor pool to include past recipients will create sustainability of the program**

Paying forward the good deeds will help create an ongoing cycle of good works that can continue from peer to peer. By urging our GAP Scholarship alumni to get involved after they graduate, we can create a more sustainable way to fund the GAP Scholarship. As long as

Camelback has eligible students and alumni are willing to pay their scholarships forward, Camelback will have a system for helping seniors fund the gap they need to go to college.

**Outcome #2: Donors will continue to fund if appreciated and made aware that their contributions helped students attend and graduate from college**

Receiving thanks from recipients will bring satisfaction to donors. But more important by keeping in contact with the donors, GAP Scholars can talk donors about their progress in school and potential career choices. Providing this feedback to the donors will allow them to see the power for positive change their donations have had in recipients' lives, and the future impact these students will have on the community.

**Outcome #3: Surveying the donors will help understand how to maintain their support**

Understanding why each donor chooses to support the GAP Scholarship will show us how to improve our relationship with donors. If we take the time to learn about the donors' values and standards, then we can ensure donor values are not violated. Making sure the donors' reasons for contributing are understood and acknowledged will influence more loyal and consistent donor support for the scholarship. These donors want to support a valuable cause, so implementing the scholarship program in a way that acknowledges the donors' values of education, opportunity, and concern for community will bring more meaning to their investment.

**Outcome #4: Mentoring**

Finding the right mentor will create a great support system throughout high school and make the fortunate mentee aware of the opportunities offered at school. A relationship with a mentor may be a students' major, or even only, support system. With caring mentors, students will be comfortable to ask for help to keep their college careers on track. The early years of college are especially tough if you do not have someone to help guide you through new

situations. A mentor’s assistance and advice is a game changer. Mentors can help students locate key opportunities; evaluate scholarships, competitions, and dual enrollment plans; and act as a sounding board to help students select courses and decide on career paths.

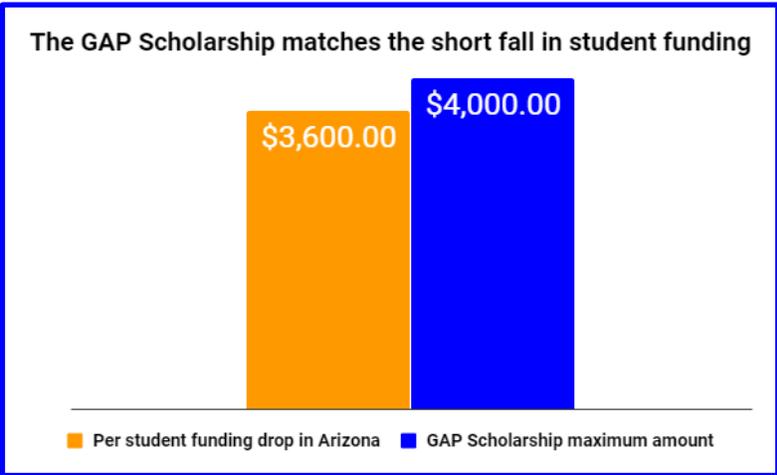
Mentors can be school donors, teachers, alumni, or community volunteers. The best mentors are aligned with student goals and are willing to connect students with opportunities throughout high school or college. This help may prevent students from missing out or regretting their educational choices. Many mentor relationships become amazing partnerships and guide young adults toward positive educational and career paths.

**Outcome #5: Scale the GAP Scholarship program across the Phoenix Union High School**

**District**

Offering the GAP Scholarship beyond the Camelback community to the entire Phoenix Union High School district will increase college enrollment among students who could not have attended otherwise. Insufficient funds to cover small gaps is not only a Camelback problem but a problem throughout many other Arizona high schools.

In fact, a drop in student financial aid since 2008, has increased the barriers to college for



students. College Success Arizona, a state wide educational advocacy organization, recommends that the state of Arizona consider giving all students the opportunity to access state based financial aid.

College Success Arizona argues that because funding for public colleges and universities has

dropped 56% since 2008, the state should step in and provide financial aid to cover the \$3,600 drop in per student spending.

Until the state decides to step in and solve the problem, a district wide GAP Scholarship could help provide aid to students in the Phoenix Union High School District. Implementing the GAP Scholarship and community networks across the district will increase the number of students receiving post-secondary education. A district wide scholarship program will also increase community engagement, thereby improving schools. Community networks help schools improve academically and provide funding and volunteer support for after school activities. Having such a supportive educational environment places life changing opportunities for students right within their reach. With this support, students can take opportunities and turn them into achievements.

The first step in creating a district wide GAP Scholarship program is to meet with Dr. Chad Geston, Superintendent of the Phoenix Union High School District, and find out if he would support a GAP Scholarship program for other Phoenix Union students who only need the last 5% of their funding to make their freshman year in college a reality. Seeking support for from a large foundation like the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation would allow those students in other Phoenix Union high schools who need the last 5% of first year college funds the opportunity to attend college, finish college and obtain a career.

### **C. Plan for implementing the recommendations**

To implement our proposed recommendations, we must utilize the connection we have, the Camelback Community Network. Once we present our recommendations to them and gain support, we can create programs and systems that can be implemented at Camelback High School. As we make recommendations and implement changes at our high school, we can tell

the story of our high schools’ partnership with the community to a broader audience. By creating awareness of our high school’s successful mentorship and alumni fundraising programs, we can plant the idea in other communities to replicate our program. We can also share information about Camelback programs by hosting assemblies for other high schools, creating advisory videos, and asking our Community Network members to share their experience with other schools. We plan to continue developing our community engagement and scholarship fundraising program through the combined efforts and resources of the Camelback DECA Chapter, the Camelback Community Network, and the growing Camelback High School Alumni Association.

**D. Evidence that the project has been presented to the appropriate business and/or government officials who would benefit from the study**

Throughout this project, we have kept in close contact with Bruce Hilby and Julie Bourdo, two of the most involved Camelback Community Network participants who have guided us throughout this project, personally and via email. We have also had frequent contact with the Camelback Community Network members, most recently by presenting our project results to a subcommittee. Our team was astonished by the subcommittee’s enthusiasm for our

project and its results. On February 15, 2018 our team presented our project to the full Camelback Community Network. At that time, we presented our findings in detail, showed the impact of the GAP scholarship program on recipients, gave our recommendations



and implementation plans, and answered their questions. Additionally, the presentation included the following:

- Speeches from 2 recipients of the GAP Scholarships and how the scholarship has affected their college experience.
- Recorded interview of Tania Olvera, a college senior and GAP Scholar.

Due to our successful results, the GAP Scholarship will continue to grant gifted students who struggle to obtain the remaining portion of their tuition. For the upcoming year, the goal is to raise \$50,000 and we are halfway there! With the help of our DECA chapter and the Camelback Community Network, further evaluation will continue in the years to come towards this successful program.

**VII. BIBLIOGRAPHY**

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