

CRF Youth Internship Program



Evaluation

Evaluation of CRF's Youth Internship Program

Constitutional Rights
Foundation



Program Information

For information on CRF's Youth Internship Program, visit us online at www.crf-usa.org or contact Erin Schmidt at 213-316-2134 or erin@crf-usa.org.

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Executive Summary

Background. Constitutional Rights Foundation (CRF) initiated the Youth Internship Program in 1995, and the program has since served over 1,100 primarily low-income and first-generation college-bound high school stu-

dents. The seven-week program is a unique combination of paid employment in professional office environments and participation in educational seminars. Eligible students complete an extensive application (which includes two rounds of competitive interviews and are placed in corporate, non-profit, or government sector job sites depending on their career interests). Interns participate in educational seminars for the first week of the program and every Friday thereafter. These seminars are designed to complement interns' employment experiences by providing a forum for further professional development, information about higher education, and preparation for serving as civic and community leaders.

Constitutional Rights Foundation collected anecdotal evidence of the program's impact on participants' lives for the first decade of the program's operation. In 2006, the Jack Kent Cooke Foundation awarded CRF a generous grant to initiate a more extensive, empirical, and objective evaluation and to expand the number of interns the Youth Internship Program serves.

Evaluation. The evaluator designed a three-stage evaluation of the program to measure achievement of program goals, test anecdotal assumptions, and assess the long-term impact on participants. During Stage One (2006), a total of 68 interns participating in the Youth Internship Program completed pre-tests at the start of the program and post-tests at its conclusion that measured their acquisition of civic knowledge and the enhancement of attitudes toward academic goals, academic success, career goals, and career success. In Stage Two (2007), 104 participating interns completed pre-tests and post-tests that measured gains in confidence and office skills. Finally, in Stage Three (Summer 2007), 80 past participants from 1995-2006 completed retrospective pre-tests and post-tests asking participants to assess the longitudinal impact of the program on their job skills, pursuit of higher education, career planning, leadership skills, motivation, self-efficacy, and interest in civic and community issues.

Findings. In Stage One, the evaluator found that the program had a statistically significant effect on interns' growth in all three of the program's goals. The program had a positive impact on participants':

- Civic Knowledge and Attitudes
- Attitudes toward Academic Goals and Success
- Career Skills and Attitudes

Additionally, in Stage Two, the evaluator found the program also had a statistically significant and positive impact on interns' confidence (as measured by a shyness scale)

and office skills. In Stage Three, the evaluator found the program had a statistically significant and positive impact on longitudinal gains in civic engagement, self-efficacy, leadership, and achievement motivation.

While the mean score on civic knowledge increased a respectable 19.7% between pre-test and post-test, the Stage-Three survey showed a remarkable increase of 46.3% (from 35.2% to 78.8%) in the number of interns with high or very high interest in civic issues as a result of participation in the program. This interest increased even after completing the program so that at the time of the Stage-Three evaluation, 92.5% of former interns had either high or very high interest in civic issues.

Interns showed modest gains of 5.8% in mean scores on attitudes toward career success (as measured by a scaled questionnaire), but their perception of their office skills increased 19.8%, and the percentage of interns who said they knew what steps to take to enter the professions of their choosing increased 38.1%. These findings suggest that while interns may have already been motivated to pursue college and career success, they lacked the knowledge and skills needed to navigate the college application and financial aid processes and the job skills and knowledge about how to enter their professions of interest.

Similarly, prior to participating in the Youth Internship Program, almost all interns (98.5%) wanted to go to college, but their pre-tests indicated that they did not know much about how to enter college and how to transfer to a four-year university. However, through participating in the Youth Internship Program, interns learned about how to enter college and/or transfer to a four-year college (a gain of 39%).

The Stage-Three evaluation demonstrated that interns' gains in leadership, attitude toward civics, responsibility, and achievement motivation all improved due to participation in the program and that this upward trend continued in the years that followed.



Statistical analysis revealed no significant differences among groups when comparing interns from different sessions of the program, males and females, interns with and without prior employment, and high school sophomore and junior class standings. This suggests that the program was equally beneficial for participants despite demographic differences.



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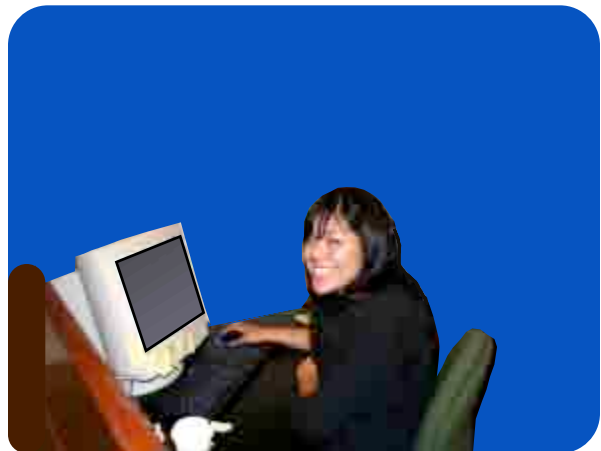
Methods

The objective of this study was to examine the effect of the Youth Internship Program on:

- Stage One (2006): acquisition of civic knowledge and the enhancement of student attitudes toward academic goals, academic success, career goals, and career success.
- Stage Two (2007): attitudes toward college and career, office skills, confidence, and self-worth.
- Stage Three (2007 longitudinal): long-term growth in confidence in job skills, interest in college, career planning, self-efficacy, leadership skills, achievement motivation, and civic participation.

Stage-One and Stage-Two evaluations followed a pre-test and post-test design. Interns who participated in the Youth Internship Program in 2006 (Stage One) and 2007 (Stage Two) took surveys twice, once prior to starting and again after finishing the internship. The Stage-Three evaluation utilized a retrospective survey that was posted online for alumni to complete. Former interns were contacted via standard mail and email and asked to evaluate themselves with respect to each attribute prior to starting the Youth Internship Program, right after the Youth Internship Program, and at present. The program evaluation did not involve a control group because the Youth Internship Program is designed to help all of the applicants who want to participate.

For the Stage-One evaluation, CRF staff developed a multiple-choice test for assessing the interns' knowledge of civics based on the material covered in the Youth Internship Program. The evaluator constructed the survey of attitudes toward civics, academic goals, academic success, career goals, and career success based on the objectives of the grant, the input of an intern focus group, and the input of CRF staff.



For the Stage-Two and Stage-Three evaluations, the evaluator conducted a comprehensive literature review to compile scales measuring confidence, self-worth, internal locus of control, leadership skills, and achievement motivation. These scales were supplemented by additional questions based on data collected from the Stage-One evaluation.

An analysis comparing baseline data of interns from different sessions from the same or different years showed no statistically significant differences among groups. Therefore, all three phases of the evaluation aggregated data across sessions and program years to obtain larger and more representative samples.

Findings

Stage One

Description of the Sample. Data were collected on a total of 68 interns (with 26 interns who participated in the first session and 42 interns who participated in the second session). Over 80% of the subjects were female. See Table 1.

Enhanced Civic Knowledge and Attitudes. The Youth Internship Program had a statistically significant and positive impact on enhancing civic knowledge and attitudes.¹ The average gain on knowledge of civics from pre-test to post-test was 19.7%. Pre-test and post-test means on civic knowledge were 36.4% and 56.1%, respectively. The average gain on civic attitudes from pre-test to post-test was 5.9%. The pre-test and post-test means on civic attitudes were 76.3% and 82.2%, respectively. See Table 2.

Additionally, the percentage of interns who indicated that they know about groups who work to make society better increased 19.5% from pre-test to post-test; have met people who work to make society better increased 14.9% from pre-test to post-test; and know about organizations that help other people increased 28.1% from pre-test to post-test. All three of these increases are statistically significant.

More Positive Attitudes Toward Academic Goals and Success. Following participation in the Youth Internship Program, the percentage of students who indicated that they want to pursue higher education and know the steps to apply

and be accepted increased dramatically. See Table 2.

Additionally, the percentage of students who indicated that they are confident or very confident that they can give their friends advice about college increased 17.9% from pre-test to post-test. Students who feel they have control over academics to a large or a very large extent increased 16.5% from pre-test to post-test. These increases are statistically significant.

Table 1: Stage-One Evaluation Demographics

	Number	Percent
Grade		
Sophomore	32	47
Junior	36	53
Gender		
Male	12	18
Female	55	81
No answer	1	1
Employed Prior to Program		
Yes	20	30
No	48	70
Age		
Fifteen	11	15
Sixteen	33	49
Seventeen	24	34

Improved Attitudes Toward Career Success. The Youth Internship Program had a statistically significant and positive impact on attitudes toward career success.² The average gain on attitudes toward career success was 5.3% from pre-test to post-test. The pre-test and post-test means were 67.9% and 73.2%, respectively.

Additionally, after participation in the Youth Internship Program, the percent-

Table 2: Results of Stage-One Evaluation (%)

	Before	After	Gain
Civic Attitudes	76.30	82.20	5.90
Attitude Toward			
Career Success	67.90	73.20	5.30
Academic Goals			
Desire to Attend			
College	98.50	100	1.5
Know Steps to			
Enter University	62.70	89.60	26.90
Know Steps to			
Enter Commu-			
nity College	49.90	77.60	27.70
Know Steps to			
Transfer			
Colleges	30.70	67.20	36.50

age of the interns who indicated they have seriously considered their future profession increased 7.4%; the number of interns who are very sure or sure about the careers they want to pursue did not change.

Overall Positive Impact of the Program. After the program, the interns were asked to respond to a number of questions about what they may have gained as a result of participation in the Youth Internship Program. After participation, 90% to 96% of the interns indicated that they:

- Know how to accomplish their goals
- Feel more confident in their abilities
- Have a more positive outlook about their future
- Are more responsible and independent
- Know how to identify adults who might help them in the future
- Have made some long-lasting relationships
- Have improved their computer skills

- Have learned more about downtown Los Angeles

Stage Two

Demographics. A total of 104 interns participated in the Stage-Two evaluation. Of these 104 interns, 23 were male and 81 were female. See Table 3.

Improved College Skills

Data collected in Stage One indicated that the interns' attitudes toward academic success grew as a result of participation in the Youth Internship Program. For Stage Two, the evaluator asked interns questions about practical skills required to attain their academic goals. The

Table 3: Stage-Two Evaluation Demographics

	Number	Percent
Gender		
Male	23	21
Female	81	76
Grade		
Sophomore	37	35
Junior	67	63
Prior Employment		
Yes	49	46
No	55	51

percentage of interns who indicated that they know the steps to enter a two-year college, enter a four-year university, and apply for financial aid increased 44%, 39%, and 63%, respectively. These findings demonstrate that while interns were already highly motivated to pursue higher education prior to participation in the program, the program provided the interns

with skills that will make success more likely. See Table 4.

Enhanced Career Skills. The evaluator also investigated gains in career skills. The percentage of interns who were confident that they knew the steps to enter their chosen professions increased 38%. Interns also noted a significant median gain of 20% in office skills based on their answers to a 19-item Likert scale.³ See Table 4.

examine these assertions quantitatively.⁴ See Table 4.

The Youth Internship Program had a statistically significant effect on decreasing the interns' reported shyness and enhancing their perceived communication skills.⁵ The Youth Internship Program also had a statistically significant effect on increasing the interns' reported self-esteem.⁶

Table 4: Stage-Two Evaluation Results (%)

	Before	After	Gain
College Skills			
Knowledge of steps to enter two-year college	37.9	81.7	43.8
Knowledge of steps to enter four-year college	40.4	79.4	39.0
Knowledge of steps to transfer to four-year college	16.4	55.7	39.3
Knowledge of steps to apply for financial aid	13.5	76.6	63.1
College Attitude			
Want to attend	92.4	95.5	3.2
Believe you will be admitted	75.0	86.8	11.8
Believe you will do well	69.9	87.7	17.8
Believe you will finish	87.4	91.7	4.3
Career Attitude			
Are sure about adult profession of choice	40.4	71.4	31
Know steps to enter profession of choice	22.1	60.2	38.1
Believe you will be able to enter profession of choice	37.5	66.0	28.5
Believe you will succeed in profession of choice	50.0	76.5	26.5
Perception of office skills (Average score 1-100)	68.2	88.0	19.8
Perception of shyness (Average score 1-100)	29.95	24.73	-5.22
Self-esteem (Average score 1-100)	77.68	83.08	5.4

Reduced Shyness and Raised Confidence and Self-esteem. A focus group of former interns highlighted gains in confidence and self-esteem along with reduced shyness as a result of participation. An extensive search of the literature was conducted for scales measuring shyness, confidence, and self-esteem. These scales enabled the evaluator to

Stage Three

Demographics. A total of 80 interns responded to an online retrospective pre-test and post-test asking former participants to assess the longitudinal impact of the program. Of the 80 former interns, 31 went through the program in 2006, 22 went through the program in 2005, 13 went through the program in 2004, and 14 went through the program between

1995 and 2003. 61 interns were female and 19 were male. Of the 58 interns who were no longer in high school, 100% graduated and went on to pursue higher education. See Table 5.

Greater Interest in Civic Issues. The percentage of interns who had high or very high interest in civic issues was 32.5% before the program, 78.8% right after the program, and 92.5% one year or more after the program. The percentage of interns who had high or very high interest in social studies class was 46.3% before the program and 75.1% after the program.

Improved Interest in Attending College. The percentage of interns who had a very high interest in attending college was 67.5% before the program, 80% right after the program, and 93.8% one year or more after the program.⁷

Table 5: Stage-Three Evaluation Demographics

	Number	Percent
Year		
1995-2003	14	17.50
2004	13	16.25
2005	22	27.50
2006	31	38.75
Employment Prior to Program		
Yes	11	13.75
No	69	86.25
Currently Employed		
Yes	49	61.25
No	31	38.75
Age		
Age during Program (mean)	16.17	-
Current Age (mean)	18.65	-
Gender		
Male	19	23.75
Female	61	76.25
Grade during Program		
Sophomore	40	50.00
Junior	39	48.75
No answer	1	1.25
Current Academic Standing		
HS Junior	1	1.25
HS Senior	21	26.25
Community College	2	2.50
Four-Year College	56	70



Table 6: Questions Regarding College & Career Goals (Percent of often or always)

	Before	After	Present
Being conscious of your career goals.	47.6	67.5	88.8
Setting your career goals.	45.0	57.6	71.3
Being aware of the education needed to reach your goals.	58.5	82.5	95.1
Being aware of the skills that are needed to reach your goals.	38.3	76.3	92.5
Being aware of the GPA needed to enter college and pursue your career goals.	60.1	77.5	95.0
Knowing the cost of college or the resources that could help you with entering college.	37.5	76.3	91.3

Improved College and Career Goals.

Table 6 shows that the Youth Internship Program also enhanced the interns' college and career goals and that this upward trend continued over time.

Gains in Career Skills. The percentage of the interns whose confidence was high or very high with respect to their job skills was 36.3% before the program, 87.5% right after the program, and 100% one year or more after the program. The percentage of interns who had a high or very high interest in planning their future career was 63.8% before the program, 91.3% right after the program, and 100% one year or more after the program. The percentage of interns who had a high or very high interest in having a part-time job was 48.8% before the program, 83.8% right after the program, and 88.8% one year or more after the program.



Table 7: Questions on Internal Locus of Control Scale (Percent Agree or Strongly Agree/Often or Always)

	Before	After	Present
It is hard to change the community.	50.0	24.8	21.3
Luck plays a major role in one's life.	18.8	8.8	10.0
You can change the future by what you do today.	58.3	78.3	88.8
Good things happen because of hard work.	78.8	92.5	96.3
It is better to be lucky than smart.	5.0	5.0	5.0
Only good politicians can improve the community.	27.5	26.3	31.1
Clean neighborhoods have good mayors.	20.1	16.3	21.3
Luck plays a major role in one's life.	20.1	16.3	21.3
Average people have little control over the government.	35.1	25.1	21.3
Networking or knowing the right people is the key to finding the right job.	36.3	50.0	57.4
It is useless to question the government decisions.	12.6	7.6	6.3
Challenging inequalities will not change anything.	5.0	5.0	5.0
Give up a job that is difficult to do.	10.1	7.5	13.8
Try to find alternative solutions to the same problems.	27.6	57.6	71.3
Having upset feelings when challenged.	15.0	6.3	3.8
Not giving up on a job that is difficult to do.	68.3	77.2	86.3

Enhanced Self-Efficacy. After participation in the Youth Internship Program, interns were more likely to attribute their success or failure to factors within themselves rather than to factors such as luck or knowing people in power. See Table 7. The Youth Internship Program had a positive and statistically significant effect on increasing the interns' self-efficacy (also known as internal locus of control).⁸ The interns' total score on an internal locus of control scale increased 14.24% after participation in the Youth Internship Program and an additional 6.24% one year or more after they finished the Youth Internship Program. See Graph 1.

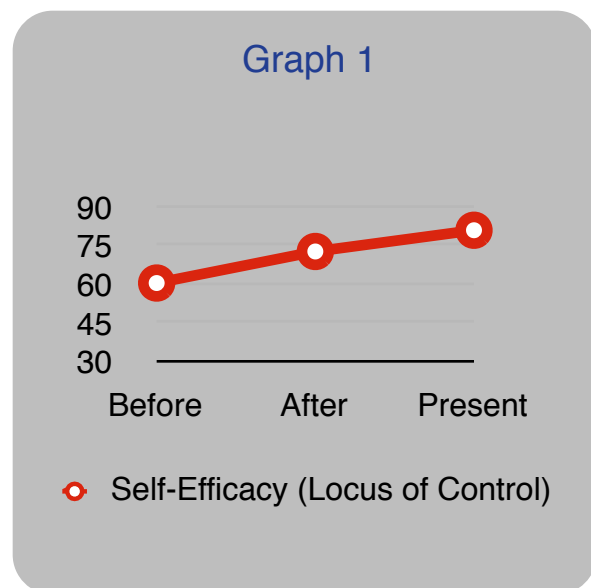


Table 8: Questions on Leadership Scale (Percent Often or Always)

	Before	After	Present
Being a good listener.	66.3	80	92.6
Expressing your thoughts clearly.	37.5	62.5	88.8
Maintaining a positive attitude.	52.5	73.8	73.8
Working toward group goals.	46.3	82.6	88.8
Consulting with others when making decisions.	35.0	62.6	68.8
Speaking well to groups.	74.5	66.2	66.2
Communicating a sense of being in charge.	22.6	40.0	61.3
Taking wise and sensible risks.	40.0	55.1	70.1
Admitting to making mistakes.	40.1	61.3	75.0
Following logical steps in making decisions.	43.8	73.8	86.3

Gains in Leadership Skills. Participation in the program enhanced interns' leadership skills, and this effect continued after they left the Youth Internship Program. See Table 8. The Youth Internship Program had a positive and statistically significant effect on increasing the interns' leadership skills.⁹ The interns' total score on a leadership skills scale increased 14.15% after participation in the Youth Internship Program and an additional 8.35% one year or more after they finished the Youth Internship Program. See Graph 2.

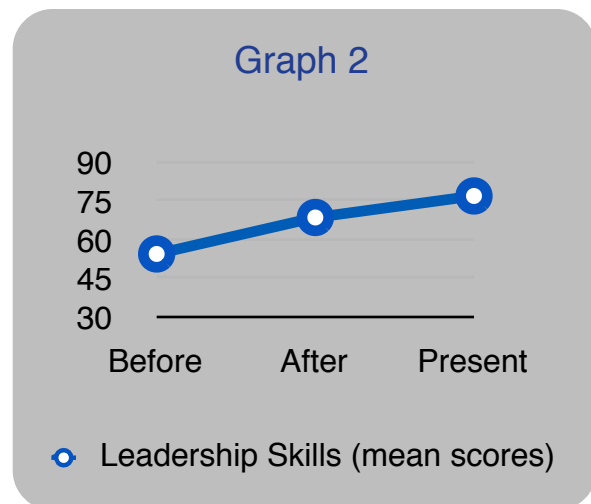


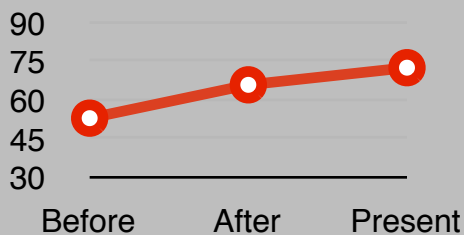
Table 9: Questions on Achievement Motivation Scale (Percent of frequently or always)

	Before	After	Present
Working hard to do well even if they did not like what they were doing.	51.2	81.2	95.1
Preferring to work on projects that helped them think, even if the work was difficult.	50.0	72.6	88.8
Trying to make a connection between what they learned in school and the real world.	36.3	65.0	81.3
Performing activities that challenged them to learn.	82.5	88.8	88.8
Figuring out something that is confusing.	36.3	60.3	80.1
Understanding things as thoroughly as possible.	57.6	82.6	95.0

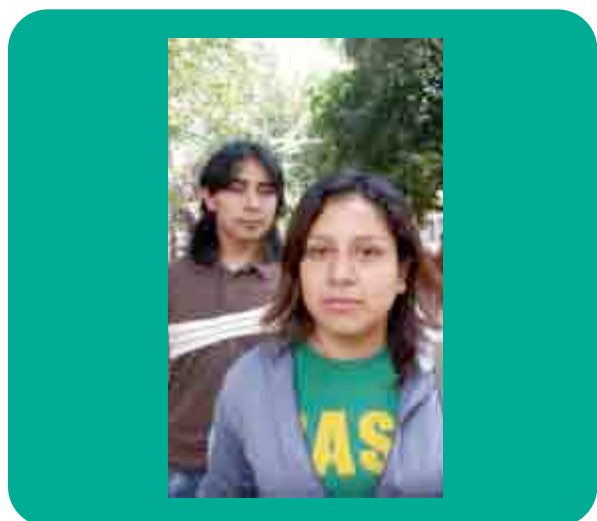
Greater Achievement Motivation. The Youth Internship Program improved participants’ achievement motivation, and this effect continued after they left the Youth Internship Program. See Table 9. The program had a positive and statistically significant effect on increasing the interns’ achievement motivation.¹⁰ The interns’ total score on an achievement motivation scale increased 12.94% after participation in the Youth Internship Program and an additional 6.64% one year or more after they finished the Youth Internship Program. See Graph 3.

No Significant Differences Among Groups. Sophomores and juniors benefited equally by participating in the Youth Internship Program as did participants who had jobs before participating and those who did not have prior employment. There were no statistically significant differences between participants of differing grade levels or employment statuses with regard to gains in internal locus of control, leadership skills, or achievement motivation.¹¹ These findings suggest that gains in internal locus of control, leadership, and achievement motivation cannot be explained as merely the result of maturation or employment alone.

Graph 3



○ Achievement Motivation (mean scores)



Notes

1. A comparison of mean scores t-test was conducted to determine the statistical significance of the impact of the program on civic knowledge ($t = 9.726$, $p < 0.001$) and attitudes ($t = 3.15$, $p < 0.001$).
2. A comparison of mean scores t-test was conducted to determine the statistical significance of the impact of the program on attitudes toward career success ($t = 4.45$, $p < 0.001$).
3. In order to evaluate the interns' perceptions of their office skills, a questionnaire was designed that consisted of 19 items expressed in a Likert scale. Each item was given a score of 1-5, where unskilled was assigned a score of 1 and highly skilled was assigned a score of 5. For purposes of data analysis, the scores were transformed to a scale of 0-100.
4. A 13-question Likert scale was constructed to measure the effect of the Youth Internship Program on lowering shyness and enhancing communication skills. Another 10-question Likert scale was constructed to measure the effect of the Youth Internship Program on the interns' self-esteem and confidence. For purposes of statistical analysis the scores were transformed to a scale of 0-100.
5. A paired sample t-test was used to determine the statistical significance of the program's effect on the interns' reported shyness and communication skills (mean decline = 5.2%, $t = 3.37$, $p < 0.001$).
6. A paired sample t-test was used to determine the statistical significance of the program's effect on the interns' reported self-esteem (mean gain = 5.4%, $t = 4.06$, $p < 0.001$).
7. Increase in the interns' interest toward attending college after the program was statistically significant ($p < 0.001$). However, improvements in GPA ($P = 0.08$) and school attendance ($P = 0.07$) were less significant.
8. Repeated measures ANOVA was used to determine the significance of gains in interns' mean scores on locus of control scale ($F = 96.161$, $p < 0.001$). The average scores of the interns on locus of control before the program, right after the program, and one year or more after the program were 60.89%, 75.13%, and 81.37%, respectively.
9. Repeated measures ANOVA was used to determine the significance of gains in interns' mean scores on leadership scale ($F = 114.363$, $p < 0.001$). The average scores of the interns on leadership skills before the program, right after the program, and one year or more after the program were 54.97%, 69.12%, and 77.47%, respectively.
10. Repeated measures ANOVA was used to determine the significance of gains in interns' mean scores on achievement motivation scale ($F = 98.92$, $p < 0.001$). The average scores of the interns on achievement motivation before the program, right after the program, and one year or more after the program were 53.47%, 66.40%, and 73.05%, respectively.
11. Statistical significance with regard to group comparisons was determined using mixed design analysis of variance and repeated measures ANOVA.



About the Evaluator

Mahtash Esfandiari, Ph.D (pictured) is a faculty member of the Department of Statistics at University of California Los Angeles and President of the Southern Chapter of the American Statistical Association. She can be reached at 310-573-6257 or mesfandi@ucla.edu

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