

# **AGGIE** **jump** **START**

**AGGIE JUMPSTART: IMPACT AND EFFECTIVENESS**

**2019–2022**

## **Aggie Jumpstart: Impact and Effectiveness**

2019-2022

Report Date: January 2023

Aggie Jumpstart, a program within the College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences, started in fall 2019. Aggie Jumpstart was funded for three years (2019-22) by the Provost's Office with two years of continued support provided in fall 2022. The program partners with the campus [Retention Initiatives](#) and the Internship and Career Center to support students and provide various program components. This report provides an overview of the Aggie Jumpstart program and a summary of the impact and effectiveness to date. We also discuss opportunities to continue to develop and enhance the program based on our evaluation of its successes, challenges and areas of growth.<sup>1</sup>

### **Pillars of Aggie Jumpstart**

Aggie Jumpstart is designed to increase the persistence of and mitigate opportunity gaps for students who identify as first generation, low income and racially/ethnically underrepresented. The program is informed by research-based practices that boost institutional navigation, community building and a sense of belonging, which are tied to a student's motivation to engage and persist at the university. Incoming first-year and transfer students are invited to participate in the program through a brief application process. Students are selected based on interest and commitment to participate in the program, as well as availability to enroll in the Career Discovery Group courses that are part of the program (SAS 6A, 6B, 6C for first-year students; SAS 106 for transfer students).

Key program components of Aggie Jumpstart include:

**Community Building:** Through partnerships with the Retention Initiatives and the Internship and Career Center, students have opportunities to engage with their peers in a variety of formal and informal settings. Participation in the Career Discovery Group program is a key component of building the student cohorts. Aggie Jumpstart students enroll in sections specifically targeted for students in the program. Students meet at least weekly for the class and build connections with each other and a graduate student mentor who supports them throughout the academic year. The Career Discovery Group courses focus on practical professional development skills and activities, including strengths assessments, networking, career research and cover letter and resume writing. In the class, students also attend group field trips and reflect on experiences meeting professionals and observing them on site at their workplace.

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<sup>1</sup> A progress report from Year 1 is available ([report](#) and [summary](#)) as well as the interim report submitted to the Provost's Office in spring of the second year of the program ([here](#)). Selected information from these reports is also incorporated into this summary report.

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In partnership with the four campus Retention Initiatives,<sup>2</sup> regular events and activities are planned where students can meet with Aggie Jumpstart peers and other campus students. The events and activities range from study sessions planned with the Retention Initiatives to fun events such as attending “Waffle Wednesday” at El Centro. These events may be designed specifically for community building within Aggie Jumpstart cohorts or may be part of general retention initiative programming with open invitations to all campus students to encourage broader networking of Aggie Jumpstart students with campus peers.

**Network of Support:** Intentional, holistic academic advising support provided by assigned academic advisors in the CA&ES Undergraduate Academic Programs office is foundational to the support network provided to Aggie Jumpstart students. Students meet with their advisor 2-3 times per quarter during their first year on campus.<sup>3</sup> Additional targeted drop-in advising hours are also provided. Academic advisors make strategic referrals to major advisors and campus resources based on individualized student needs. These advising relationships continue through the academic tenure of the student while at UC Davis.

**Leadership and Service:** Students participate in quarterly “Leadership through Learning” workshops facilitated by the CA&ES Undergraduate Academic Programs student leadership coordinator and/or other campus groups. Students also engage in service through quarterly service activities. Service activities that support local community-based groups are organized through the student leadership coordinator, and students can also identify “service at home” activities on their own (also discussed below). Intentional opportunities to reflect on both the leadership and service experiences are provided post-activity through a Canvas-based Aggie Jumpstart group site.

With these pillars in mind, we support students in achieving the learning objectives that we have identified for the program, and we are confident that Aggie Jumpstart students will:

Objective 1: Increase their sense of belonging through relationships with graduate student mentors, professional advising and student affairs staff and peers

Objective 2: Develop leadership skills and participate in community engagement activities

Objective 3: Learn about and utilize various campus resources to build a network of support and better navigate the university

Objective 4: Explore various academic and career paths to gain skills to compete for jobs, internships and research opportunities

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<sup>2</sup> Campus Strategic Retention Initiatives include the African American Retention Initiative, Asian and Pacific Islander Retention Initiative, Chicana/Latina Retention Initiative and Native American Retention Initiative. Information on these Strategic Initiatives is found [here](#).

<sup>3</sup> Note that while expectations for advising are communicated to Aggie Jumpstart students, we do not place registration holds on students who do not meet the expectations, and instead we use positive reinforcement. Small incentives for completing program requirements are provided each quarter (e.g., gift cards to local and campus stores, school supplies and college swag) for participation in program activities, including academic advising.

## **COVID-19 Adjustments and Impacts**

The COVID-19 pandemic impacted each of the three Aggie Jumpstart student cohorts entering in fall 2019, 2020 and 2021. Each cohort experienced remote instruction for all or part of the academic year, and the physical and social isolation during this time required us to be flexible and innovative in identifying ways to support students and meet the goals and objectives of the program.

In addition to moving classes online (including the Career Discovery Group classes that are required for participants), all the community building, leadership and service activities were held online in spring 2020 and all of 2020-21. Options for participating in many online events and activities continued in 2021-22, and again were required for part of winter 2022 due to the pandemic. As discussed in the next sections, we returned to in-person instruction in 2021-22 and continued to provide some flexibilities that were used during the pandemic for online participation since we found that online engagement can enhance participation for some types of activities.

During the pandemic we also provided students with more options for identifying and completing their own service activities, rather than only having service activities organized through CA&ES. The student-identified activities proved to be meaningful experiences for the students, and we have continued to provide that option. As we move through the fourth year of the program, we will continue to evaluate and balance the in-person and virtual experiences to ensure that we continue to meet program goals.

In response to student interest and feedback, we significantly increased the modes and frequency of communication with students. For example, we implemented a bi-monthly Aggie Jumpstart newsletter, created an Aggie Jumpstart Instagram page, and activated a Discord channel. These approaches allowed for enhanced communication about ways for students to get involved on campus, learn about opportunities to build participation in Aggie Jumpstart and to get to know the Aggie Jumpstart community through student and staff profiles featured in the newsletter and/or via social media posts.

We are proud of the accomplishments of our students and Aggie Jumpstart staff and campus partners during this difficult time. As discussed below, student outcomes remained strong for all three cohorts and student reflections and feedback have indicated that students felt supported and connected to our campus in significant ways, despite the many challenges that the pandemic presented to all of us.

## **Student Cohorts**

The Aggie Jumpstart cohort sizes ranged from 41-55 students who fully participated each year in the first three years of the program. The first-year (i.e., freshman) cohorts ranged in size from 33-36 students per year and the transfer cohorts consisted of 8-19 students. The smallest first-year and transfer cohorts were during the program's inaugural year when we had limited time to promote the program prior to the start of fall quarter.

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A summary of overall demographics for Aggie Jumpstart in the first three years of the program is provided in Table 1. Aggie Jumpstart students predominantly identified as women (81%), and the overall percentage of Aggie Jumpstart students who identified as women was greater than that of nonparticipants (68% woman identifying).<sup>4</sup> Overall, 89% of Aggie Jumpstart students identified as first generation, compared to 39% of nonparticipants.

Students in Aggie Jumpstart were racially/ethnically diverse, with 99% of the participants in the first three years identifying as African American, Hispanic/Latinx, Native American/Alaskan Native or Asian-Pacific Islander. A small number (< 1%) of the students were international students. The overall percentages of underserved students were much higher than the general population in the college.

During the first three years of the program, students from 24 of 28 CA&ES majors, plus the exploratory program, participated. In total, students who participated in Aggie Jumpstart represented the broad disciplinary diversity of our college.

**Table 1.** Demographics of Aggie Jumpstart participants and non-participating CA&ES students; incoming 2019-2021 cohorts.

	Aggie Jumpstart (participants)	CA&ES Students (non-participants)
First-Year	69.9%	62.5%
Transfer	30.1%	37.5%
Men	19.2%	32.1%
Women	80.8%	67.9%
First Generation	89.0%	39.5%
African American	11.6%	3.8%
Hispanic	61.6%	26.8%
Native American	1.4%	<1%
Asian-Pacific Islander	24.7%	31.9%
International	<1%	10.7%
White	<1%	24.5%
Not specified	<1%	1.6%

### Staff and Partnerships

Direct staff support for Aggie Jumpstart is provided by a full-time (contract) Aggie Jumpstart and Community Coordinator, who provides guidance and strategic planning for the program and connects with students in a variety of ways. This position has been critical to the program by regularly meeting and engaging with the many campus partners involved in Aggie Jumpstart, leading program assessments and directly engaging with Aggie Jumpstart students through monthly check-ins and via newsletters and social media platforms. Prior to hiring the staff coordinator, a graduate student helped support many of these activities. This individual was hired

<sup>4</sup> Nonparticipants are defined as all CA&ES students entering in the fall without including the Aggie Jumpstart participants. Aggie Jumpstart students comprise about 3% of the total incoming first-year and transfer populations.

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into the inaugural staff coordinator position but left in the middle of the 2021-22 academic year for an out-of-state career advancement opportunity. A graduate student helped with many of the coordination tasks in winter and spring quarters of 2022 and has continued supporting the program in 2022-23. In December 2022, we hired a new, full-time (contract) Aggie Jumpstart and community coordinator.

In addition to the coordinator, two to three CA&ES Undergraduate Academic Programs academic advisors were assigned to meet with students in the program. The CA&ES Undergraduate Academic Programs student leadership coordinator develops and facilitates the leadership workshops and local service activities. Staff from all four Retention Initiatives and the Internship and Career Center, as well as the Career Discovery Group graduate student mentors, also directly support students in the program.

During the 2021-2022 academic year, we added Aggie Jumpstart peer mentors to the network of support provided to participants. The peer mentors are students who have been in the Aggie Jumpstart program for at least one year and have similar backgrounds as participants. The peer mentors offer a student perspective to participants, assist with the newsletter and social media and help plan and implement various Aggie Jumpstart programs and events. Peer mentors enroll in a unit-bearing course that provides them the opportunity to gain valuable career skills, give back to the first-year Aggie Jumpstart student community and engage with CA&ES staff and faculty in meaningful ways. The peer mentor program has been highly successful and expanded from two peer mentors in 2021-22 to four mentors in 2022-23.

### Academic Outcomes

Several academic outcomes for Aggie Jumpstart participants were evaluated using mixed effects regression analysis to compare participants and nonparticipants across the three cohorts (Table 2). The UC Davis Budget and Institutional Analysis team provided the statistical analysis ([here](#)).

Over the three years evaluated, and controlling for incoming GPA and demographics, **retention from first year into the second year increased significantly (6 percentage points) for Aggie Jumpstart participants** when compared to all nonparticipants. This is also seen in Table 2 by comparing the overall retention data for Aggie Jumpstart participants with CA&ES first generation and underserved student populations, which are demographically more similar to Aggie Jumpstart students than to the average nonparticipant population. Of particular interest is that the retention rate of participants stayed constant or improved, despite the pandemic. This is in contrast with nonparticipants where retention rates dropped during the pandemic (2020-21 cohort) and did not return to initial 2019-20 levels or only partially recovered in 2021-22.

When holding incoming GPA and demographics constant, **cumulative spring GPA was significantly higher for Aggie Jumpstart participants** compared to nonparticipants, for both first-year and transfer students. This can be seen in the greater change ( $\Delta$ ) in GPA from fall to spring for participants compared to nonparticipants (Table 2). Across the three cohort years (2019-2022), the cumulative spring GPA for Aggie Jumpstart students was at the higher end of, or better than, the range observed for CA&ES first generation and underserved students that are demographically more similar to Jumpstart students than the overall nonparticipant population.

**Table 2.** Academic outcomes for Aggie Jumpstart participants and nonparticipating CA&ES students; incoming 2019-2021 cohorts.

	Aggie Jumpstart Participants	CA&ES Students; Non-participants <sup>1</sup>	Statistical significance <sup>2</sup>	CA&ES First Generation Students <sup>1</sup>	CA&ES Underrepresented Students <sup>1</sup>
<b>Retention</b>					
First-Year/Freshmen	94.1% (Range: 93.9 – 94.4%)	91.9% (Range: 91.0–93.7%)		Range: 87.6% – 92.5%	Range: 87.2% – 91.6%
Transfer	100%	93.3% (Range: 92.0 –94.0%)		Range: 90.1% – 94.6%	Range: 91.2% – 94.8%
Total	95.9% (Range: 95.1 – 96.4%)	92.4% (Range: 91.4 – 93.9%)	$\beta = 0.06$ $p = 0.004$		
<b>Spring cumulative GPA</b>					
First-Year/Freshmen	3.10 (Range: 3.07 – 3.12)	3.23 (Range: 3.18 – 3.27)	$\beta = 0.1$ $p = 0.048$	Range: 2.98 – 3.10	Range: 2.93 – 3.10
$\Delta$ from fall to spring	0.15	0.07		-0.01 to 0.18	-0.01 to 0.19
Transfer	3.22 (Range: 3.11 – 3.34)	3.10 (Range: 2.98 – 3.22)	$\beta = 0.23$ $p = 0.004$	Range: 2.92 – 3.14	Range: 2.83 – 3.17
$\Delta$ from fall to spring	0.15	0.04		-0.02 to 0.16	-0.04 to 0.13
<b>Academic Standing (% in Academic Difficulty)<sup>3</sup></b>					
First-Year/Freshmen	9.9% (Range: 6.1 – 13.9%)	7.5% (Range: 4.4 – 9.1%)	NS	Range: 7.7 – 16.2%	Range: 8.9 – 17.6%
Transfer	7.0% (Range: 0.0 – 17.6%)	9.5% (Range: 7.7 – 12.8%)	NS	Range: 8.6 – 16.2%	Range: 10.6 – 19.2%
<b>Mean Cumulative Units, Spring Q<sup>4</sup></b>					
First-Year/Freshmen	38.1 (Range: 37.2 – 39.8%)	41.0 (Range: 40.6 – 41.3%)	NS	Range: 38.2 – 39.5	Range: 36.7 – 38.3
Transfer	41.1 (Range: 39.9 – 41.4%)	40.1 (Range: 38.2 – 41.7%)	NS	Range: 37.7 – 42.3	Range: 37.2 – 39.3

<sup>1</sup>Aggie Jumpstart participants are not included in this data.

<sup>2</sup>Mixed effect regression analysis holding incoming GPA and demographics constant for Aggie Jumpstart participants and all CA&ES nonparticipants. NS is not statistically significant at  $p \leq 0.05$ .

<sup>3</sup>Includes students in an academic probation, probation continues, or subject to disqualification status at the end of the first spring quarter.

<sup>4</sup>Does not include non-credit bearing developmental (e.g., WKLD) courses.

Differences in the **percentage of students in academic difficulty** were observed across years but **were not statistically significant** when controlling for incoming GPA and demographics for

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each cohort. Of note, no transfer students were in academic difficulty at the end of spring quarter for the first two cohorts (see also full data shown [here](#)). Also of note is that in CA&ES and campus wide, underrepresented students typically are about two times more likely to be in academic difficulty compared to the represented population (source: AggieDash Academic Standing Dashboard). We did not observe differentials this large in any of the three years evaluated. Along with the higher cumulative GPA, discussed above, our results indicate the potential for the Aggie Jumpstart program to close opportunity gaps in academic progress observed for underserved students.

**Cumulative units completed by the end of the first spring quarter were not significantly different for Aggie Jumpstart participants** compared to nonparticipants. This is notable in that at least for the first cohort and depending on the quarter, 22-45% of Jumpstart students enrolled in one or more developmental courses (i.e., courses that do not earn UC Davis academic credits). Although not fully examined for this report, on average, first generation and underserved students in CA&ES enroll in more developmental courses than do represented students. The lack of statistical significance in cumulative units by the end of the first spring quarter indicates that even if Aggie Jumpstart students enrolled in more developmental courses, they were generally able to complete a similar number of credit-bearing courses compared to nonparticipants.

Two transfer cohorts (2019-20 and 2020-21) were evaluated for **graduation rate and time to degree** (Table 3). While differences were observed, they **were not statistically significant for participants and nonparticipants**, and for the 2020-21 cohort, the graduation rate was higher for Aggie Jumpstart participants. The graduation rate gap for underrepresented students compared to represented students has been >4% in CA&ES (source: AggieMetrics; data available through the 2019-20 cohort). The fact that graduation rates appear to be similar, if not better, for Aggie Jumpstart participants compared to nonparticipants is highly promising. Further, the graduation rates approach or exceed the campus goal that 66% of transfer students will graduate within two years of matriculation.

**Table 3.** Graduation rates and time-to-degree for 2019 and 2020 transfer cohorts.

		Aggie Jumpstart Participants	CA&ES Students (Non-participants)
Graduation Rate	2019-20 cohort	75.0%	79.0%
	2020-21 cohort	63.2%	43.4%
Combined Mixed Effects Regression, $\beta = - 0.03, p = 0.738$ (NS)			
Time to Degree	2019-20 cohort	2.3	2.3
	2020-21 cohort	2.0	2.0

In sum, **these academic outcomes are highly promising and demonstrate excellent potential for closing opportunity gaps for underserved students.** The results are even more striking given the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic during each of the three years of the program.



## **Community and Belonging**

The foundational program components of Aggie Jumpstart are designed to support students in developing meaningful relationships that build community and create a sense of belonging, as described in our student learning outcomes. Thus, we have tracked participation across a range of events that focus on the pillars of Aggie Jumpstart: advising, community engagement, leadership through learning, service and career exploration. We have also collected student feedback about programming through regular student check-ins with the staff Aggie Jumpstart coordinator, one-on-one advising with academic advisors, an end-of-year survey and a capstone activity.

Through student feedback, we learned that students highly value the advising relationships that are built with the Aggie Jumpstart academic advisors and CA&ES Undergraduate Academic Programs staff who support their sense of belonging and engagement with the campus. As a result of these relationships, students feel more confident in their academic abilities and report that they are better able to utilize campus resources, with tutoring, success coaching and faculty/TA office hours being the most frequently used resources. Typical Jumpstart student comments include:

“... I met [Advisor Name], the academic advisor at the CAES Dean's Office. [They] helped find mental health resources, the Food Pantry on campus, and many other programs that would help me find my footing. The inclusivity of the environment has made me feel comfortable and has helped me combat imposter syndrome.” –Evelyn, first generation student (see also [here](#)).

“...thanks to Aggie Jumpstart, especially the advisors like [Advisor Names] that I have connected with in these past three quarters, they have really helped me develop myself and be the type of student I want to be and make me feel like I am at home here at UC Davis.” –Christian, first generation student

In fall 2020, we evaluated the number of advising appointments per student for Aggie Jumpstart participants compared to a group of students who had applied for the fall Jumpstart cohort but were not accepted to the program. On average, Aggie Jumpstart students had three advising appointments during fall quarter 2020, compared to an average of one appointment for the comparison group. The majority of appointments were with the Aggie Jumpstart advisors, but nearly 75% of the students also met with major advisors, peer advisors and/or other campus partners, such as success coaches, tutors and career advisors.

The number of total advising appointments decrease in winter and spring quarters, however, students typically remain engaged, and in 2020-21, more than 60% of Aggie Jumpstart participants continued to meet with advisors at least once per quarter in their first year. Students also continued their engagement with major advisors and faculty advisors during this time, at nearly the same level as in fall quarter. We are enthusiastic about these findings because they demonstrate that Aggie Jumpstart students continue to develop their advising relationships and their broader network of campus support through the academic year.

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We also supported numerous ways for students to **build community with peers and campus faculty and staff**. Each fall, we held an “Aggie Jumpstart Kick-Off” event to welcome incoming students. We also hosted informal monthly check-ins, and in spring 2022, we had an end of year celebration for participants. (Information on a range of example activities from 2021-22 can be found [here](#)). Partnerships with the Retention Initiatives were also key to supporting students in building community with peers. In the first year of the program, we learned that students were not engaging with the Retention Initiative resources as much as we hoped. Therefore, in subsequent years we held more Aggie Jumpstart-specific programming with the Retention Initiatives, and we increased advertising for and encouraged participation in regularly planned Retention Initiative events and programs through posts in the biweekly newsletters and social media. The broader range of events was particularly important during the pandemic when student schedules were often disrupted by many external factors, and thus provided students with more flexibility to identify programs/events that matched their interests and schedules/availability.



*Aggie Jumpstart students at Breakfast Buddies event held at the Center for African Diaspora Student Success; 2021-22.*

An evaluation of participation in community-building events showed that, on average, each student participated in 2.6 events in fall quarter 2020, and 1.6 events in winter quarter 2021. Importantly, these activities provided valuable opportunities for students to grow their community, identify with peers and find themselves represented across campus and within the Aggie Jumpstart program. Selected comments from student reflections exemplify the meaningful and inclusive support that these events provided to participants:

“Being Filipinx and enjoying this within the (...) community was comforting”.

“...seeing this small but significant glimpse into my own culture (...) makes me feel that much more recognized by the world”.

“...it was nice to hear about [the other students’] goals and their stories and it made me realize that there are a lot of students on campus who I share similarities with, so I shouldn’t be afraid to put myself out there and share my story, too.”

We applied this same degree of inclusivity and flexibility in our **Leadership through Learning and service programming**. We offered Aggie Jumpstart-specific leadership workshops each quarter designed and facilitated by our Undergraduate Academic Programs student leadership program coordinator. Students were also invited to attend additional events throughout the quarter that focused on developing leadership skills, building professional correspondence materials and growing their network for careers and leadership development. The student leadership coordinator also identified and coordinated opportunities for service to local community groups. During the pandemic when all instruction was remote, students could do ‘Service at Home’ activities. Due to the constraints of the pandemic, we found that this level of

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Affirmation notes made by Jumpstart students as part of a CA&ES-organized service project. Notes were tied to bikes parked on campus or handed to students walking on campus; 2021-22.

flexibility was the most reasonable and sustainable way to encourage students to engage in service during this time. The creativity and effort that students put into giving back to their communities was inspiring. Some examples of service that students engaged in included teaching siblings how to prepare homemade meals and cooking for their parents who were working during the day, assisting siblings with remote learning strategies and teaching family members how to utilize online learning platforms, translating documents for families with limited English skills and creating engaging events for seniors living in care facilities.

Levels of participation in leadership and service activities are the lowest of the various Aggie

Jumpstart program components. We continue to talk with students to learn the best ways to support their interests and participation in these areas. Despite the lower participation, we are extremely proud of the ways that Aggie Jumpstart students have grown and contributed to their communities. A survey of students during the first year of the program indicated that the majority of students felt that the Aggie Jumpstart program helped them to develop and feel more confident in their leadership skills, including working well with others who are different from them, networking and communication skills. In addition to the specific leadership and service activities, participation in the Career Discovery Group program was also credited with helping students to learn these leadership skills. Student reflections demonstrate the impact these activities have had on Aggie Jumpstart students:

“Aggie Jumpstart helped me develop some skills, such as public speaking, by constantly going to the Aggie Jumpstart staff appointments, participating in the Career Discovery Group course and the presentations that were assigned helped a lot.”

“Aggie Jumpstart helped to develop these skills through the Career Discovery Group course where we presented our posters and also talked to professionals. Also, in the workshops we often had to talk to each other.”

“I helped my cousin with FAFSA since I had experience with it. I wanted to help her out because of the most stress[ful] part of college applications was the FAFSA portion of it and I thought it would relieve some stress for her.”

“I volunteer (...) as a literacy tutor for adult learners (...) I also feel privileged in a lot of ways for the education I was able to receive, so it seems like the least I could do to give back to someone who didn't have those opportunities. Plus, we usually have a lot of fun and my learner proves that even without the same skill sets as other people, she has a lot of other skills and is very resourceful.”

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Career Discovery Group participation supports students in achieving many of the learning goals that are identified for the Aggie Jumpstart program. Students enroll in the classes in small 20-25 student cohorts with a graduate student mentor who stays with them throughout the academic year. This helps students to create connections and friendships with their peers and to develop mentoring relationships with the graduate students. The Career Discovery Group classes also focus on supporting **exploration of major and career interests**, networking with professionals and identifying transferable skills and strengths. We have not actively tracked internship, job and leadership activities of Aggie Jumpstart participants, however, we know that many of the participants have gone on to be employed in student jobs, such as peer advisors, peer mentors and orientation leaders. Students have obtained on- and off-campus internships. For example, one student completed a campus internship working on implementing the United Nations Sustainability Development Goals at UC Davis. Many Aggie Jumpstart students have leadership roles in college and campus organizations such as Aggie Ambassadors and the Student Alumni Association. We also developed an Aggie Jumpstart peer mentoring role to provide Jumpstart students opportunities to use the skills they develop during the program to support others who join the program in subsequent years.



*Aggie Jumpstart/Career Discovery Group (SAS 06C) field trip to Lake Tahoe Wildlife Care Center (left) and Tahoe Environmental Research Center (right).*

## Challenges

One of the significant challenges has been maintaining the staff coordinator position. It has been a contract position due to the uncertain nature of long-term funding for the program. We had a strong coordinator in the role for a portion of the time, however, as noted previously, that individual took another position that offered significant growth opportunity, and as a result the final six months of the 2021-22 academic year were completed without staff in this position. We were fortunate to have an excellent and dedicated graduate student who supported the program during this time and many Undergraduate Academic Programs staff picked up additional responsibilities. Still, many of the Aggie Jumpstart student events and activities have been limited during this time and many assessment components were not maintained at the level we require to ensure that the program remains responsive to student needs.

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Uncertainty of funding to hire a new staff coordinator prevented us from recruiting to replace the staff coordinator position until the end of the summer in 2022. Through strong college development efforts, as well as college financial support, we were able to secure funds to support a portion of the program costs for a limited time, and in September 2022, the Provost's Office also provided bridge funds to continue to support staff for the program for two more years. As a result, we are thrilled that we have been able to hire a new staff coordinator who started in December 2022. The position is again a contract position; for long-term program stability and to further grow the program and support more students, a career staff position is essential.

### Summary and Future Plans

In summary, the Aggie Jumpstart Program has been highly successful and met the goals we set during the first three years. We have recruited highly diverse first-year and transfer cohorts that have academic outcomes that exceed or match those of the nonparticipants in the college, providing evidence for the program to enhance retention and close opportunity gaps for underserved students. Aggie Jumpstart students have a strong sense of belonging and connection to the campus; they actively use campus resources and participate in campus events and activities; and they are involved in meaningful student jobs, internships and leadership experiences during their time as students at UC Davis. The most critical need is for funds to hire a career staff position who can provide long-term sustainability for the program. In addition, funds to support programmatic components are also necessary (e.g., event costs, travel to service events, etc.).

With our recently hired Aggie Jumpstart community coordinator, we seek to engage with our students to identify ways for the program to most effectively meet their needs. We will continue to assess academic performance and student engagement in program activities. We hope to enhance opportunities for students to engage with the program after their first year, including the potential for Aggie Jumpstart alumni to mentor students and participate in some program activities after they graduate from UC Davis. We would like to better understand the types of jobs, internships and leadership experiences our students have while at UC Davis and after graduating. Finally, we desire to grow the program to serve more students in each cohort and to broadly incorporate some of the successful strategies into our philosophies and practices college-wide to enhance retention and academic success of all students.

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*we have without their dedication, enthusiasm and laser-focus on supporting our students in the best possible ways. Most importantly, we are indebted to our students for inspiring us every day—they make our community and our world better, and we are proud of them and their successes.*



*Aggie Jumpstart end of year celebration, spring 2022*