

Allan Hancock College American River College  
**City College of San Francisco**

Antelope Valley College Bakersfield College  
Barstow College Berkeley City College Butte  
College Cabrillo College Cañada College Cerritos  
College Cerro Coso Community College Citrus  
College Coastline Community College College of  
Alameda **Chabot College** College of Marin  
College of San Mateo College of the Canyons College  
of the Desert College of the Redwoods College of  
the Sequoias College of the Siskiyous Columbia  
College Contra Costa College Copper Mountain  
College Cosumnes River College Crafton Hills  
College Cuesta College Cuyamaca College  
Cypress College DeAnza College Diablo Valley  
College East Los Angeles College El Camino  
College Evergreen Valley College Feather River

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Fresno City College Fullerton College Gavilan

College Glendale Community College Golden West

College Grossmont College Hartnell College

Imperial Valley College Irvine Valley College

Lake Tahoe Community College Laney College Las

Positas College **Los Medanos College** Lassen

College Los Angeles City College Los Angeles Harbor College

Los Angeles Mission College Los Angeles Pierce College Los

Angeles Southwest College Los Angeles Trade-Tech College Los

Angeles Valley College Mendocino College Merced College Merrit

College Miracosta College Mission College Modesto Junior College

Monterey Peninsula College Moorpark College Moreno Valley College

Mt. San Antonio College **Long Beach City College** Mt. San

Jacinto College Napa Valley College Norco College Ohlone College Orange

Coast College Oxnard College Palo Verde College Palomar College Pasadena

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City College Sacramento City College Saddleback College San Bernardino

Valley College San Diego City College San Diego Mesa College San Diego Miramar

College **Chaffey College** San Joaquin Delta College San Jose City College

Santa Ana College Santa Barbara City College Santa Monica College Santa Rosa

Junior College Santiago Canyon College Shasta College Sierra College

Skyline College Solano Community College Southwestern

College Taft College Ventura College Victor Valley

College West Hills College Coalinga West Hills

College Lemoore West Los Angeles

College West Valley College Woodland

Community College Yuba College

What

Works

Now

A collection of five solutions  
to improve student success  
in California's Community  
Colleges

Practices with Promise 2012

The Campaign for

College  
Opportunity

The Campaign for College Opportunity would like to thank Carlos Maldonado for conducting the interviews and contributing to the writing of the profiles in *What Works Now: A Collection of Five Solutions to Improve Student Success in California's Community Colleges*.

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**The Campaign for**

# College Opportunity

[www.collegecampaign.org](http://www.collegecampaign.org)

*Ensuring that the  
next generation of  
Californians has a  
chance to go to college  
and succeed.*

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# Executive Summary

Student success matters and many community colleges are innovating and leading the way in finding solutions to some of the biggest challenges facing students. This report provides five examples of what is working now. These leaders are not waiting for brighter budget times or “better students.” They are delivering high quality programs and services now, and they are demonstrating success.

With a student body of 2.5 million and 112 colleges in almost every region of the state, California Community Colleges are the world’s largest system of higher education. Indeed, over 70 percent of California’s postsecondary students are enrolled in community college. However, recent studies have revealed an enormous gap between the enrollment and completion rates among community college students. In *Divided We Fail: Improving College Completion and Closing the Racial Gap in California’s Community Colleges*,<sup>1</sup> researchers found that 70 percent of students did not earn a certificate, degree, or transfer to a four-year university after six years. This mismatch between access and success is a serious concern to the welfare of California where the economic recovery will largely depend on a more educated workforce and the ability of community colleges to significantly increase student success. With a projected shortage of one million bachelor degrees by the year 2025,<sup>2</sup> California policymakers and college leaders must take up the issue of completion in a more serious and focused way and we believe the practices in this report can help the dialogue move forward.

We recognize that California’s colleges and universities are struggling with decreased state funding and we must continue to demand adequate support. We also believe that the practices highlighted in this report, and all other efforts to improve college completion rates, are good for students, good for future state revenues, and in some cases actually save the state money through innovation and efficiency. Practices such as utilizing data to target academic interventions, prioritizing enrollment for students with a goal of degree, transfer, or vocational certificate, requiring students to complete an educational plan, streamlining the assessments for English and math across the system, and accelerating progress for students through basic skills or remedial courses, are just a few proven innovations that can get significantly more students across the finish line.

None of these programs asked to be recognized or spotlighted, but each of them are deserving of our recognition and our efforts to shine praise and attention on them. More importantly, they should compel us to ask, how can we support expanding what works to every community college in California? And what are the consequences if we do not?

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1 Moore, Colleen and Shulock, Nancy. *Divided We Fail: Improving Completion and Closing Racial Gaps in California’s Community Colleges*. Institute for Higher Education Leadership and Policy, California State University, Sacramento. October 2010.

2 Johnson, Hans and Sengupta, Ria. *Closing the Gap: Meeting California’s Need for College Graduates*. Public Policy Institute of California. 2009.

While every example is unique and addressing different challenges, several commonalities quickly emerged and we believe they provide a critical framework for any effort to improve student success:

## INFORMATION MATTERS

Every program began with researching student data to help college faculty and leaders understand and contextualize the challenges they faced and what solutions were needed.

## WORKING TOGETHER

In each of these efforts, the barriers that were preventing colleagues from talking to one another were taken down. The consensus was that cross-campus collaboration, planning, and executing could improve student success. They acknowledged that students do not reside in one or two departments, and that support across different departments and disciplines breaks down silos and improves efficiency in an environment of scarce resources.

## SUPPORTING STUDENTS OUTSIDE THE CLASSROOM

Beyond improving curriculum and working with faculty on instruction, the practices acknowledge the opportunities beyond the classroom that contribute toward success including: access to tutoring labs, counseling, and orientation.

## COLLEGE LEADERS ARE KEY

Executive leaders play the important role of setting priorities for their respective campuses. Colleges with leaders who embrace innovation and a focus on using data, working collaboratively, and supporting student services to improve student success are essential.

Californians want to see their tax dollars spent in the most productive way possible and colleges must be good stewards of the limited resources they have while balancing the needs the students they have. Indeed, producing graduates capable of contributing their savvy and skills in the workforce is a great return on investment for the state of California and a positive personal payoff for the graduate. With this in mind, the state budget and public policies that promote student success and foster—not hinder—the innovation and expansion of the efforts highlighted in the report are essential to California’s ability to produce the educated workforce our economy requires.

If we do not take the opportunity to scale programs that are working now, California’s downward spiral of low college completion rates will set the stage for producing a generation of young adults less educated than previous ones. California’s ability to remain a beacon of innovation and prosperity is inextricably tied to the future success of our community colleges. Further research, task force committees, commissions are not required. ***We know what works now; if we embrace it, we can imagine a strong economic future for California because more community college students will reach their goals and succeed more often than not.***



## City College of San Francisco in partnership with San Francisco State University

Metro Academies are “schools within schools” at both City College of San Francisco and San Francisco State that give students a personalized educational home during the first two years of college—the critical time when large numbers of underserved students drop out. Outreach is focused on students who are **first-generation, low-income, and/or underrepresented**. The goal is to increase college graduation with both two-year and four-year degrees, and to dramatically increase transfer from community colleges to the Cal State University system. The program is unusual because it provides students a nearly identical, parallel program—regardless of whether they are attending a community college or the Cal State University system.

Each Metro Academy has a career theme. Together, City College of San Francisco and San Francisco State currently have five Metro Academies in progress: two academies focused on health sciences, two focused on early childhood education, and a fifth in the area of Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM). Each Metro Academy has the capacity to serve 140 students.

### CORE ELEMENTS

- Studying in a **long duration learning community**, Metro students in a given Academy take eight classes together over four semesters, forming close bonds among peers, faculty, and counselors.
- **Student services are embedded** in core classes: academic advising, tutoring, access to financial aid advising, and early intervention if a student starts falling behind.
- Students develop individual **education plans** with a dedicated academic counselor who follows each student over time.
- One hundred percent of Metro classes are general education courses that **count for graduation** with an associate degree, for university transfer, and for graduation with a bachelor’s in all 241 majors in the Cal State University system.
- Faculty participate in a **faculty learning community** which gives instructors 45 hours of professional development in tested “high impact educational practices.”

Metro’s demonstration and evaluation was funded by The James Irvine Foundation, the US Department of Education, the Mimi and Peter Haas Fund, and others. Main support for Metro’s ongoing operation comes from the home institutions. Metro is sustainable because it is based primarily on re-configuring services that are already institutionalized—including general education courses, academic counseling, and tutoring. Metro re-focuses these resources around students in learning communities, creating a much more personalized experience.

## SUCCESS

- Two-year Graduation and Transfer Preparation: Compared to other students who place at the same level, Metro students at City College are nine percent more likely to reach sixty units, the number of units necessary to graduate with an associate degree and to transfer to a university.
- Persistence: At San Francisco State, usually only six out of ten underserved students persist into the fifth semester. In contrast, more than eight out of ten Metro students make it into their junior year—with many measures showing that they are significantly more engaged and self-confident.
- Efficiency: At both City College and SF State, Metro produces significant savings per graduate by helping students progress more rapidly and by curtailing ‘excess units’—students taking courses that do not count toward graduation. This has real cost-saving implications for students and the colleges themselves. It also frees up seats for students waiting in line for high demand courses.



*For more information on the Metro Academies at City College and SF State, please contact:*  
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# SUCCESS CENTERS

## Chaffey College

Chaffey College's Success Centers were launched in 2000 in response to over half its students assessing as **underprepared for college level work**. Chaffey features a network of eight centers—four on campus, four off—that enhance the college learning experience for students. The centers are an **academic support** structure based on the philosophy that students: 1) in any discipline should have the opportunity to acquire learning tools and strategies that they need to succeed in any learning situation; 2) achieve a measure of confidence in their learning ability; 3) have material presented in their own learning styles; and, 4) develop the skills to become life-long learners. The centers function as an extension of the classroom, not ancillary support services. One-third of the courses at Chaffey require students to access the Success Centers at no additional cost. Students who do not have a course requirement can also access any Success Center for any learning need.



## CORE ELEMENTS

- On-campus centers include: Writing Success Center, Language Success Center, Math Success Center, Multidisciplinary/Reading Success Center.
- Students can participate in Directed Learning Activities where subject-specific activities are completed independently and followed by a session with a Success Center tutor. All of these activities are designed by classroom faculty and engage the learning process rather than practice or drills.
- Students have access to one-on-one tutoring.
- Students can participate in workshops to access learning techniques and study skills or in learning groups with lessons focusing on collaborative learning.
- The Success Centers provide students with tools to complete their classroom assignments including computers, software, internet access, and other specialized materials.
- Each site is supported by a full-time instructional specialist, and the program is coordinated by a full-time faculty member
- Faculty participate in the Faculty Success Center where they can share and develop effective teaching strategies.

## SUCCESS

- Scale: 16,000 students access a Success Center annually. This represents between 55-60% of Chaffey's total student population.
- Improved Rates of Transfer: Since the launch of the Success Centers in 2000, the transfer rates for students who originally assessed in pre-college level math and English increased from 6% to more than 30%.
- Success rates for students who access the Success Centers are approximately 20% higher than for students who do not access.
- Change in Student Behavior: Success Center access increased after students took a course with a Success Center requirement. Nearly 43% of students who had taken a previous course that required Success Center access sought out subsequent support through the Success Centers, suggesting an increase in students' self-directed help-seeking behavior.
- Impact on Degree Completion: Over 60% of Chaffey's degree-earners were required to access the Success Center during their academic career.
- The college has so embraced the philosophy of the Success Center that it has added a Faculty Success Center for faculty to improve the scholarship of teaching and learning and support innovative instructional practices.

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# Equity Scorecard

## Los Medanos College

Latino and African American students make up approximately 40% of the total student population at Los Medanos College. Based on a cohort study of new students ages 17-19 to the college, only 6% of African American students and 32% of Latino students become transfer ready within 5 years. In an effort to improve transfer ready rates for these students, in 2009, Los Medanos launched the use of the Equity Scorecard. The Equity Scorecard is a process that uses data, broken down by race and ethnicity, to identify campus-wide barriers to student success and to pinpoint areas for improvement. The initiative's first phase is currently focusing on improving the success of first-time students from pre-college level English into college-level English and the Matriculation process—those up-front services that support students in reaching their college goals including registration, orientation, assessment, counseling, and other services. A second phase has been added and will look at improving transfer rates to four-year universities.

### CORE ELEMENT

- Convene and train an Evidence Team comprised of 17 administrators, faculty, and staff across various departments to conduct research and analyze data that will lead to recommendations and steps to improve campus outcomes.



Los Medanos has utilized an institutional researcher to support the collection and interpretation of robust data. The contract with the Center for Urban Education, based out of USC, to apply the Equity Scorecard has been funded both through state funding of the Basic Skills Initiative and a federal Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSI) grant.

## SUCCESS

The Equity Scorecard is a new tool at Los Medanos but has already had a tremendous impact on the way the campus approaches new interventions to improve success. Campus leaders share that they now know how to ask equity-minded questions that allow them to make interventions that close the achievement gap. Although data is still pending on actual rates of improvement, numerous changes in campus practices are being employed and considered.

- When data showed that African American students were overrepresented in late registration, a new process was instituted that attempts to reach out to students earlier in high school about the importance of college planning, particularly first-generation students, and to encourage participation in the New Student Orientations. Students who participate in the orientations qualify for early registration dates.
- The student orientation was completely revamped into a full-day orientation, including improved counseling workshops, a bilingual parent track, and holistic student services workshops, with the goal of doubling the number of incoming students who participate in the orientations each spring by 2015.
- The assessment tools for math placement are under critical review and the campus is considering a more effective way of assessing its math students and the possibility of requiring assessment preparation.
- A new partnership with local high schools is being explored to improve the English and math assessment and placement process. A joint preparation system is being explored where students in high school can prepare for the assessment, take the assessment early and take higher levels of math in high school in order to place onto college-level courses in the first year.
- A transfer academy was created that strives to enroll students in English, mathematics, and a support class delivered through the AVID program. Students are encouraged to take 12 units in their first semester, putting them on track to be transfer-ready in a more timely fashion.

*For more information on the Equity Scorecard at Los Medanos College, please contact:*

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# Accelerated English

## Chabot College

Since the mid-1990's, Chabot College has been offering an accelerated integrated reading and writing course one level below college-level English. Over 85% of first-time college students assess into developmental English or math at Chabot. The Accelerated English course increases student completion of college-level English by reducing the basic skills pathway from two semesters to one. Research has found that students who are assessed as underprepared for college-level courses and placed in remedial math and English face a disproportionately difficult challenge at ever successfully completing a certificate, degree, or transfer pathway. This effort significantly improves a student's shot at success.

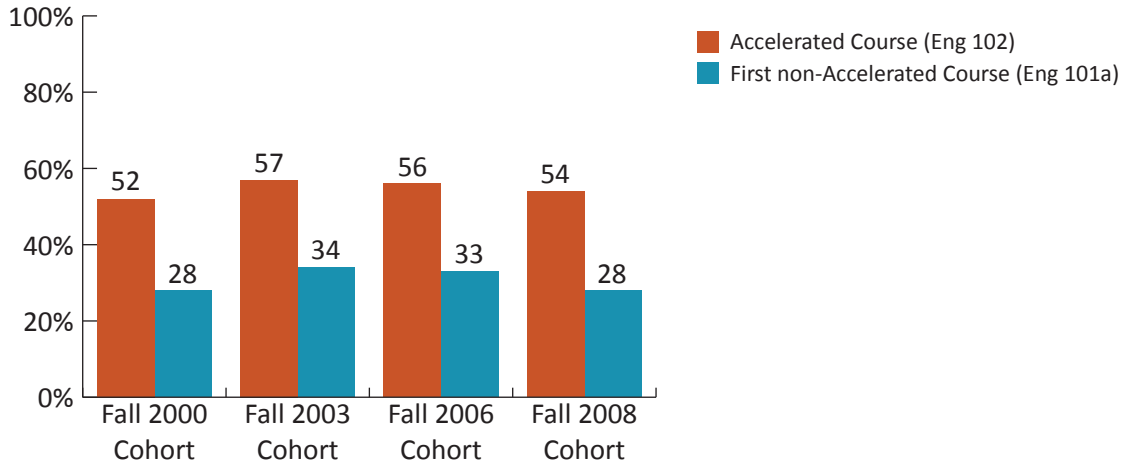
### CORE ELEMENTS

- The accelerated English course is open access with no pre-requisite or minimum placement score.
- The accelerated English course is designed to integrate the mastery of academic reading, critical thinking skills, and college-level writing.
- Students read full-length books, and write analytic essays integrating ideas and information from what they have read.

### SUCCESS

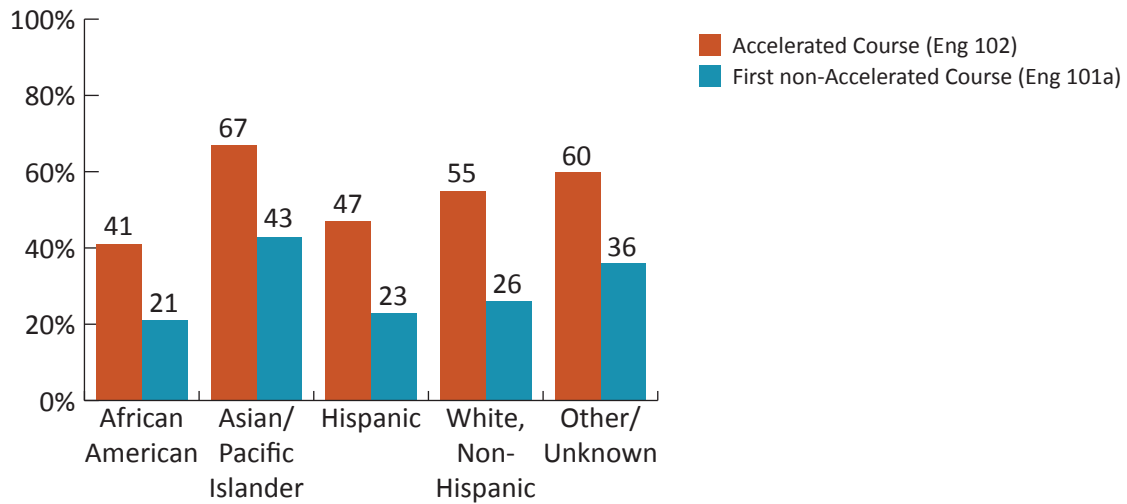
- Improved Progression: Students in Accelerated English consistently complete college-level English at significantly higher rates than students who start in the longer sequence.
- Closing the Achievement Gap: Chabot's Accelerated English course is doubling the success of students of color. 41% of African American students in Accelerated English complete college-level English within three years compared to 21% of their peers in the longer sequence. 47% of Latino students in Accelerated English complete college-level English within three years compared to 23% of their peers in the longer sequence.
- Transferability: Success in Accelerated English is correlated with higher pass rates in general education courses. More than 70% of successful Accelerated students passed History, Health, Psychology, and Speech.
- Scale: The Accelerated English course has become the pathway for a majority of students placing into pre-college level English. Since 2000, the college has more than doubled the number of accelerated sections it offers (13 to 30) and reduced the number of non-accelerated entry-level sections by more than half (24 to 10).

## Completion of English 1A Within 3 Years



## Completion of English 1A Within 3 Years by Race/Ethnicity

(Fall 2006 & Fall 2008 Cohorts Combined)



All data on Chabot accelerated English comes from Hern, K. (December 2011). *Accelerated English at Chabot College: A Synthesis of Key Findings*, Hayward, CA: California Acceleration Project.  
<http://cap.3csn.org/2012/02/24/new-report-chabot-accelerated-english/>

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STUDENT SUCCESSES

CENTERS

## Long Beach City College

Long Beach City College (LBCC) Success Centers are places that offer students a variety of services and resources to help them succeed in their classes. The Success Centers offer supplemental learning activities designed to help students with the most challenging aspects of some of the courses at LBCC. The Success Centers were launched in 2008 in response to the large number (90%) of students assessing into pre-college level Math and English. LBCC has Success Centers in the areas of Math, Reading and Writing, Career Technical Education, and two that are multidisciplinary, covering a wider range of subjects. The goal of the Success Centers is to increase persistence, retention, and success rates of underprepared students.

### CORE ELEMENTS

- All students testing into developmental Math or English must visit the Success Centers three to four times during the semester. All services at the Success Centers are free.
- Students can participate in learning activities via the following formats:
  - Workshops – larger groups taught by Instructional Specialists
  - Directed Study Groups – smaller groups taught by tutors
  - Directed Learning Activities – individual activities concluding with a follow up session with a Center staff member.
- The Success Centers provide students with tools to complete their classroom assignments including computers, printers, software, internet access, and other specialized materials.
- A research unit tracks the effectiveness of the centers and measures the impact they have on student success.
- The position of Dean of Student Success was created. The Dean leads all success efforts at LBCC, including co-chairing the Student Success Committee which is charged with scaling the Success Centers, gleaning faculty support in other disciplines where students often struggle academically (e.g., nursing and science), and aligning the pace of the Success Center curricula with instructors' teaching.

The Success Centers budgets are funded by a blend of District, Basic Skills Initiative, VTEA, and Lottery funds. The total budget for the Centers is \$2.6 million, which includes faculty, staffing, software, supplies, and all operational costs. The Centers are staffed by nearly 100 student workers and student tutors, 75 part-time, five full-time faculty members, and 20 classified staff.

## SUCCESS

- Scale: LBCC's Success Centers replaced various learning labs which served 2,000 students annually whereas in 2010-11, over 24,000 students accessed supplemental learning via the Success Centers.
- Persistence and Retention: Students required to access the Success Centers had a success rate that was 43% higher, and a retention rate 34% higher than students who did not participate.
- Moving Students into College Level Work: Between 2008-09, when the Success Centers opened, and 2010-11, the success rate of students in below college-level courses increased 5%.
- Closing the Achievement Gap: The course success rate for African American students required to access the Success Centers was 70.5% compared to only 30% for those who did not access the Centers. The course success rate for female students accessing the Success Centers was 46% higher than those who did not access them.



*For more information on Long Beach City College Student Success Centers, please contact:*  
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