

# Elevating Equity for Social Mobility

Examples of Equity-Focused Practices and Partnership



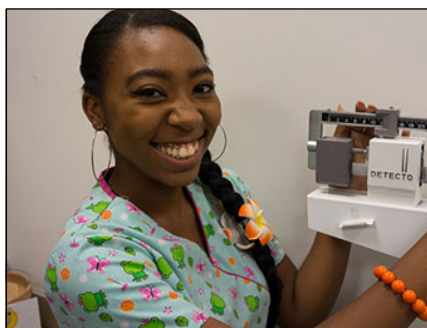
The Community College League of California • The RP Group

September 2017

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## Introduction

Historic inequality along with contracting social mobility in the U.S. have exacerbated the challenges facing students, families, and the community colleges that serve them. And despite some recent progress among students from traditionally underrepresented and underserved populations, the achievement gap persists. According to a recent report by PPIC, “the proportion of bachelor’s degrees awarded to Latinos, African Americans, and American Indians at public universities has been rising slowly since 2010—from 25 percent to 35 percent at CSU and from 17 percent to 24 percent at UC.”<sup>1</sup> However, disparities still exist in other key measures of achievement. At California community colleges, African American, American Indian/Alaskan Native, and Latinos students earn a certificate or degree or transfer to a four-year institution within six- years (“completion”) at a rate of 40%—an over 25 percentage point spread when compared to their white and Asian counterparts<sup>2</sup>. Further, research indicates that achievement gaps are strongly correlated with racial gaps in income, poverty rates, unemployment rates, and educational attainment<sup>3</sup>. Educational equity is a civil and human rights issue and it’s one that community college educators and professionals confront on a daily basis.



California community colleges possess the opportunity and have the responsibility to help improve the economic prospects of the students we serve by leveraging existing vehicles of investment such as the Student Equity Plans. Our system’s focus on access has enabled the promotion of educational opportunities for all. This is an important distinction and privilege unique to community colleges. Unlike other systems of higher education, community colleges are entrusted to provide a quality education to individuals from all walks of life.

Nonetheless, while the differences among our students can lead to an enriching learning environment, the challenges are extensive and require investment and planning. Promoting increased social mobility and equity-minded educational quality requires reexamination of a wide range of

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<sup>1</sup> The Public Policy Institute of California. Retrieved from: [http://www.ppic.org/content/pubs/report/R\\_0416HEBKR.pdf](http://www.ppic.org/content/pubs/report/R_0416HEBKR.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> Colleen Moore and Nancy Shulock report similar patterns in their 2010 report, *Divided We Fail: Improving completion and closing racial gaps in California’s community colleges*. [http://www.csus.edu/ihelp/PDFs/R\\_Div\\_We\\_Fail\\_1010.pdf](http://www.csus.edu/ihelp/PDFs/R_Div_We_Fail_1010.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> Reardon, S.F. (2011). The widening academic achievement gap between the rich and the poor: New evidence and possible explanations. In R. Murnane & G. Duncan (Eds.), *Whither Opportunity? Rising Inequality and the Uncertain Life Chances of Low-Income Children*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation Press.

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education policies, practices, and partnerships. A focus on equity and social mobility necessitates a rigorous evaluation of institutional and pedagogical norms and practices and the opportunity to improve outcomes for students disproportionately impacted in the status quo.

## The Goal: Equity & Social Mobility

The problem that student equity dollars are trying to solve is real. Our statewide student population is diverse – in some cases even more diverse than the state population. Within the system’s expansive mission is the vision to use its programs and services towards efforts to help people - whether it’s helping them transfer, supporting a career transition, or even helping pave a path out of poverty. Social mobility, in essence, is a key goal of community colleges. But how do community colleges achieve the laudable goal of increasing social mobility? Our hypothesis: focus on equity.

*Student Support (Re)defined* found that comprehensive approaches to support can address the multiple needs—academic, financial, social and personal—of underrepresented students<sup>4</sup>. This research suggests that colleges need to find a way to provide comprehensive support to traditionally underrepresented and underserved student groups. Without action, the equity gap will continue to grow.

## This Paper

The problem is real, yet the solutions can seem elusive as the root causes may be so ingrained generationally and the legal parameters set by Proposition 209<sup>5</sup> are daunting. The purpose of this paper is not to reflect on how our students may come from poverty or disenfranchised communities, or even how underprepared they are for college and the world of work. Instead, this paper aims to reflect on our own institutions and how we as faculty, staff, administrators and trustees of the “system” need to see our own role (intentionally or unintentionally) in perpetuating the inequities, or more importantly, in helping to achieve student equity. As observed by the Center for Urban Education, “organizational learning, at the local level, by individuals who are closest to the problem may have a greater impact in reversing inequality in higher education.”<sup>6</sup>

The League, in partnership with the RP Group, created this report to highlight how colleges are using their Student Equity Plans to leverage community-based resources and partnerships that give needed support to community college students who would otherwise fail or dropout. The report

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<sup>4</sup> Booth, K., Cooper, D., Karandjeff, K., Large, M., Pellegrin, N., Purnell, R., Rodriguez-Kiino, D., Schiorring, E., & Willett, T. (2013). *Using Student Voices to Redefine Success: What Community College Students Say Institutions, Instructors and Others Can Do to Help Them Succeed*. Berkeley, CA: The Research and Planning Group for California Community Colleges (RP Group).

<sup>5</sup> Proposition 209 amended the California Constitution to prohibit public institutions from discriminating on the basis of race, sex, or ethnicity.

<sup>6</sup> Bensimon, E. (2005). *New Directions for Higher Education*, no 131. Los Angeles, CA : Center for Urban Education.

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builds on *Practically Speaking: Community College Practices That Help (Re)define Student Support*<sup>7</sup> and *Student Support (Re)defined*<sup>8</sup>.

The goals of this policy paper are the following:

- Make the case for continued, focused funding for student equity;
- Provide some tools and recommendations for colleges to implement, integrate, and institutionalize their equity plans to achieve groundbreaking outcomes; and
- Encourage a statewide, open and honest conversation about student equity.

In addition, this paper will:

- Provide a historical perspective of the circumstances in law and policy as they relate to community colleges that have led us to this point;
- Provide some observations made by the RP Group and League Staff on student equity activities that seem promising; and
- Provide examples of equity-focused partnerships.

Across the state, college practices have shown that through a focus on equity, our students can transform their economic circumstances. This is a key focus of *Elevating Equity for Social Mobility*. In a time of rising inequality and declining social mobility, improving educational pathways has the potential to increase equality of opportunity and of educational outcomes for all Californians.

## **Student Equity Plans: A Brief History**

Although Student Equity Plans have received a growing amount of attention since Governor Jerry Brown proposed funding in January 2014, the plans have been required by law for more than two decades. In 1991, the California State Legislature charged all sectors of public education to prioritize equity “not only through a diverse and representative student body and faculty but also through educational environments in which each person has a reasonable chance to fully develop his or her potential.”<sup>9</sup>

In response, the California Community Colleges Board of Governors (BOG) adopted a student equity policy in 1992. The goal of the policy was to ensure that “groups historically underrepresented in higher education have an equal opportunity for access, success, and transfer,” and all community college districts were asked to develop and implement a student equity plan.<sup>10</sup> However, no resources were allocated for this purpose; consequently, the mandate was largely ignored. Four years later, in 1996, the BOG amended its policy to require the submission and

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<sup>7</sup> RP Group (2014). *Practically Speaking: Community College Practices That Help (Re)define Student Support*.

<sup>8</sup> Booth, K., Cooper, D., Karandjeff, K., Large, M., Pellegrin, N., Purnell, R., Rodriguez-Kiino, D., Schiorring, E., & Willett, T. (2013). *Using Student Voices to Redefine Success: What Community College Students Say Institutions, Instructors and Others Can Do to Help Them Succeed*. Berkeley, CA: The Research and Planning Group for California Community Colleges (RP Group).

<sup>9</sup> California Education Code § 66010.2c

<sup>10</sup> California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office. 2015. *Student Equity Planning: Fact Sheet*.

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implementation of a student equity plan for receipt of state funding, and in 2002, Title 5 regulations were updated to include the requirement that colleges develop a Student Equity Plan.<sup>11</sup>

While the recession obstructed progress on equity for years, the Seymour-Campbell Student Success Act of 2012 (SB 1456) reaffirmed the state's ambition to enhance equity within California's educational system. Senate Bill 1456 by Senator Alan Lowenthal created Chapter 624, under the California Education Code requiring the Board of Governors to do the following: 1) establish policies around mandatory assessment, orientation, and education planning for incoming students; 2) set a time or unit limit for students to declare a major or other educational goals; 3) establish minimum academic standards for financially needy students who receive enrollment fee waivers; and 4) establish the Student Success Program (SSSP).

The Title 5 regulation begins with the following statement: "In order to promote student success for all students, regardless of race, gender, age, disability, or economic circumstances, the governing board of each community college district shall maintain a student equity plan."<sup>12</sup> The sections that follow detail the plan requirements. Among these requirements are that colleges develop equity plans "with the active involvement of all groups on campus as required by law, and with the involvement of appropriate people from the community."<sup>13</sup> Finally, colleges are directed, at minimum, to engage in their plans: American Indians or Alaskan natives, Asians or Pacific Islanders, Blacks, Hispanics, Whites, men, women, and persons with disabilities.

## **LAO Progress Reports on the Student Success Act of 2012**

Since the passage of SB 1456, the Legislative Analyst's Office (LAO) has released two reports detailing the progress that the system has made as well as providing recommendations to the Legislature on areas of potential improvement for community colleges.

In its first report, the LAO identified the following issues: 1) regulations adopted by the B.O.G. on priority registration-which aligns well with legislative intent- may be harmful to first-time students due to lack of counselors and matriculation personnel; and 2) the need for improvement on course alignment, basic skills, and professional development.<sup>14</sup>

In its second report, the LAO concluded: 1) colleges are not spending their SSSP funding strategically; 2) CCC students still do not complete all mandatory SSSP services at the specified times; 3) priority registration provides little extra encouragement for students; 4) colleges misidentify inequities; 5) reporting lag hampers the legislature's ability to monitor results; and 6) there has been

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<sup>11</sup> Title 5 sections 54220 and 51026, § 54220. Student Equity Plans.

<sup>12</sup> California Education Code § 66010.2c

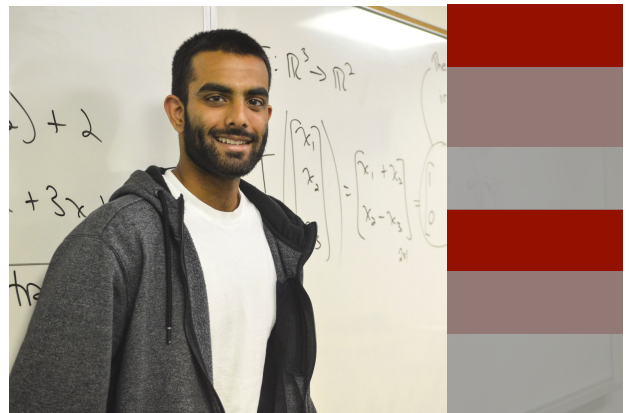
<sup>13</sup> California Education Code § 78220-78221

<sup>14</sup> CA Legislative Analyst's Office. (2014). California community colleges: A progress report on the Student Success Act of 2012, Sacramento, CA.

little progress in course alignment.<sup>15</sup> Hence, the LAO provided five recommendations: 1) strengthen the requirement for students to complete assessment, orientation, and educational planning; 2) require the Chancellor's Office (CCCCO) to identify consistent ways of measuring disparities for each of the specified student outcomes and provide additional training for campus personnel to analyze disparities; 3) create a special three-year scorecard to enable the legislature to evaluate outcomes prior to 2021; 4) the report directs the CCCCCO to identify, by October 1, 2018, a list of practices shown to be effective in improving student success and reducing equity gaps in community college; and 5) it directs the CCCCCO to identify, by January 1, 2018, strategies to monitor and improve the alignment of course offerings with students' goals.

## Examples of Promising Practices

While there are many notable student equity practices across the California Community Colleges, the examples below offer a broad-based look at the variety of programs that colleges have implemented to close the achievement gap. We have also highlighted efforts that recognize addressing equity issues necessitates community partnerships. Questions we considered include:



- How do colleges effectively transition students into their institutions, deliver the support they need, and guide learners along clear pathways to completion?
- How do colleges address long-standing equity gaps? Who must be involved in these efforts?

### Foothill College

#### Marketing and Public Relations

To improve access, Foothill College has created marketing and public relations campaigns aimed at increasing enrollment of underserved populations, including Asian-Indian, Vietnamese, and Veterans. The campaigns communicate in the native languages and vernacular of these demographic groups. Foothill's Marketing and Public Relations Department analyzes application patterns of certain demographic groups to ensure they follow through to enrollment. The analysis includes tracking whether a student registers for orientation, applies for financial aid, or selects classes. The Department also employs focus group research to understand potential improvements. For example,

<sup>15</sup> CA Legislative Analyst's Office. (2016). California community colleges: Second progress report on the Student Success Act of 2012, Sacramento, CA.

a Veteran's focus group found that the resource center was not well publicized, which led to a collaboration between the Rotary Club of Los Altos and the Foothill-De Anza Foundation to better promote the college's Veterans Resource Center to the community.<sup>16</sup> The Marketing and Public Relations Department has also increased campus-based communications so that faculty and staff possess relevant information concerning campus events improving the connection among faculty, staff, and students. In order to attract and retain students, the campus brought poets, artists, educators, and writers to workshops and lectures, including STEM-related weeklong activities, to bolster participation. These events were often student-directed which generated further student engagement and inspired campus-based clubs.

### Professional Development Program

The Professional Development Program aims to support faculty and staff in building an equity focused campus environment. The program includes the contextualization of professional development for faculty in particular disciplines, workshops for online teaching, financial support for part-time faculty training, and cultural competency training for faculty, staff, and administrators. Examples of professional development training include a problem-based year-long community of practice to examine classroom practices aimed at improving student equity and success. During the 2016-17 term, faculty met weekly to engage in a dialogue about equity on campus. In addition to the Director of Equity Programs, a faculty coordinator was hired to assist faculty with professional development related to equity considerations in curriculum development and pedagogical practices. The end goal of the professional development program is to improve course completion by providing faculty and classified staff information about the benefits of having different student populations in the classroom.

### Mentorship Program

To effectively increase course completion, Foothill College created a mentorship program for faculty, staff, and students. This program was administered by their Director of Equity Programs. The mentorship pairings promote course completion by providing a student with support and engagement, as needed. The Director of Equity Programs works closely with the Early Alert Coordinator to identify students who were repeating courses in basic skills math and English, those struggling with their course loads, and those who may benefit from other campus resources such as: DRC, EOPS, Psychological Services, etc.). The mentorship program also collaborates with other programs on campus (Puente, Pass the Torch, Disability Resource Center, Veterans Center, etc.) to better integrate existing mentoring services. Embedded tutoring provides out-of-class support in courses that have historically high drop rates among disproportionately impacted student groups. In

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<sup>16</sup> Foothill College. (2015). *Foothill College Student Equity Plan*. San Francisco's Bay Area's Silicon Valley: Kimberlee Messina.

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addition to course support, embedded tutoring seeks to build community among participants, which the report *Student Support (Re)defined* shows contributes to students' academic success and persistence. Course success rates among students participating in embedded tutoring were at least four percent higher compared to those not participating in embedded tutoring.

### Early Alert Program

The Early Alert Program is a preventive tool but it also serves as an auditing mechanism to alert students to important milestones and opportunities. The alerts include notices of student cohorts, the need to complete an education plan, high impact courses, and transfer and degree completion requirements. Research indicates that if students are provided a clear pathway they are more likely to achieve their education goals. The program offers disproportionately impacted students with better information about services available to them as well as opportunities to reach their goals.

### First-Year Experience Pilot Program

The Foothill College First-Year Experience Pilot program (FYEp) is a cohort program for underserved first-year college students, including, low-income students, single parents, students with disabilities, foster youth or former foster youth, and veterans. Foothill's first cohort included 45 students, who were 71% Latino and 4% African American. The FYEp program also provides students with direct support including book vouchers, course materials, calculators and laptop computers.

## **Sacramento City College**

### English Transformation

Co-requisite remediation: Students who don't meet placement criteria for standard college-level courses can enroll in sections with additional concurrent support. The co-requisite model was piloted within an Umoja learning community focused on African American history and culture. The results have been impressive. Of students who started in the co-requisite pilot, 85 percent succeed in college English. This rate of completion of college English was five times the rate for students who started in English remediation one year earlier.<sup>17</sup>

## **College of the Canyons**

### Math Transformation

College of the Canyons has decreased its sole reliance on placement tests. Course placement is determined by either test score or high school performance data, whichever is higher. They have also instituted "placement floors" to ensure that students are not placed lower than the last math course passed with a C- or better. Further, transcript verification is not required and students self-report their

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<sup>17</sup> Henson, L.; Hern, K.; and Snell, M. (March 2017). *Up to the Challenge: Community Colleges Expand Access to College-Level Courses*. Sacramento, CA: The California Acceleration Project.



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high school grades during the assessment process. These bold policies resulted in racial/ethnic gaps in access to college-level math nearly disappearing. A 2017 analysis by the California Acceleration Project found that 63 percent of students who would have been placed below college-level using prior policies succeeded in their first attempt.<sup>18</sup>

## **Pasadena City College**

### First-Year/Second Year Pathways

The First-Year Pathway at Pasadena City College is a cohort-based program where a student enrolls in *College 1* (First Year Seminar course) and get an assigned coach and access to workshops that



support academic, personal and professional development. The Second Year Pathway incorporates the Association of American Colleges and Universities' high impact practices of common experience, collaboration, research, internships, and capstone projects. Second Year Pathway aids the student in career opportunities, commitment to an academic major, as well as arranging meetings with counselors to complete their academic

goals. Both programs have embedded “coaches” who assist students in their cohorts by directing them to resources and by supporting students in understanding course loads and scheduling.

### MAS2

MAS2 is a subsection of the MEchA program at Pasadena City College that assists future STEM students, primarily focusing on Latino students who are beginning their community college journey. This program is geared towards reaching students below college-level math. The program offers workshops, university campus tours, peer mentoring, networking, tutoring, recruitment of students in low-income high school districts into STEM majors, and workshops for families.

### Blackademia

Blackademia is a hub at Pasadena City College that empowers and supports black students with the essential resources to achieve educational success. Their primary goal is to significantly close the achievement gap through additional services, holistic guidance, and supportive connections.

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<sup>18</sup> Henson, L.; Hern, K.; and Snell, M. (March 2017). *Up to the Challenge: Community Colleges Expand Access to College-Level Courses*. Sacramento, CA: The California Acceleration Project.

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Through the resource center, students have access to an adjunct counselor, an academic coach, Blackademia ambassadors, tutors, and peer mentors. Blackademia also offers additional “wrap-around” services that include meal vouchers, transportation passes, gas cards, and book vouchers.<sup>19</sup>

### Safe Zone Comprehensive Student Support Service Project

Safe Zone is a pilot program that aims to support undocumented Latino students who are interested in transferring. Students in the program have an adjunct counselor assigned to provide mentoring, university visits, cultural events/activities, and collaborating with outside agencies that work with undocumented populations. The counselor works with the United Without Boundaries student club, Admissions and Records office, Financial Aid office and the Safe Zone Coalition committee to identify and reach out to undocumented Latino students.

## **Compton College**

### First-Year Experience

The First Year Experience program is designed to prepare students for academic success. Through the Program, students learn how to be a successful student. They gain knowledge of how to study and learn in groups; have access to vital campus and college resources; create a career plan; interact in a multicultural environment; develop important study skills; and learn how to access and manage electronic information, such as e-mail, Internet, and library databases. The program’s Learning Community Courses, help satisfy general education and elective graduation requirements. First Year Experience Faculty work closely with students, providing caring and committed individuals dedicated to supporting the success of First Year Students. Participants are further engaged through field trips to various UC, CSU, and Private Universities, Guest Speakers, and Peer Mentors.



### Formerly Incarcerated Student Transition Program (F.I.S.T.)

Compton College’s Formerly Incarcerated Student Transition Program (F.I.S.T.) has proven success in promoting student equity, diversity and access. F.I.S.T. provides academic, social and economic support for students reentering the community after incarceration. The program helps students develop confidence and their abilities through regular support meetings, soft skills training and

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<sup>19</sup> Pasadena City College. (2015). *Pasadena City College Student Equity Plan*. Western San Gabriel Valley: Bob B. Miller.

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professional development, career counseling and entrepreneurship exploration, career workshops and basic skills enhancement. The program is already yielding impressive results. It is one of the most active clubs on campus, with 54 student members, 16 of whom have GPAs greater than 3.0.

## **Bakersfield College**

### BC DREAMers and LUPE

Across California, undocumented students navigate the higher education system amidst a sea of complex social, financial and legal challenges. In 2010, the student government president—an undocumented student herself— appeared before the college’s academic senate to advocate for and support these students at Bakersfield College and seek faculty assistance. Backed by the dean of students, faculty members Anna Poetker and Jeannie Parent launched the BC DREAMers effort. BC DREAMers serves two primary purposes across the college: (1) to inform and support undocumented students and (2) to provide professional development to educators on campus who want to aid these students. In its preliminary phase in 2010, the effort offered a series of informative monthly meetings in which undocumented students could connect with one another, have a point of contact and learn about relevant topics. These topics included knowing their rights as undocumented students inside and beyond the college, updates on key policies, and available financial support opportunities (e.g., Board of Governors fee waiver, scholarships). Faculty members and staff were also invited to display a BC DREAMers placard outside their office doors as an invitation to students who need assistance. Over the years, the initiative has developed a network of allies—faculty, staff, administrators and student services professionals—who provide one-on-one support and informal counseling to undocumented students through LUPE, a first-year experience program for 1st generation college students. LUPE, or Latinos Unidos Por la Educacion, was designed to enhance students confidence to succeed and complete their career, vocational and/or transfer goals by implementing proven best practices that champion student success, equity and accessibility. Through these various access points at Bakersfield College, students can receive the support they need while maintaining their preferred level of anonymity.

## **Los Angeles Southwest College**

### Passage Program

Passage is a comprehensive academic and student support service that equips male students of color with the tools to progress, graduate and transfer. Passage students take part in a learning community that focuses on the immediate completion of basic skills English and math. Basic skills courses are linked with college-level courses and supplemental instruction leaders are assigned to each course. Ninety minutes of supplemental instruction and 90 minutes of study hall are required each week.

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Additionally, Passage students receive “intrusive” counseling in the classroom, during study hall and by appointment.

Though initially intended for African-American male students, Passage has expanded to also include Hispanic male students in hopes of alleviating tensions found between these two groups outside of school in their communities. Students are either referred to the program through their counselors and peers or learn about Passage through on-campus outreach efforts. Supported by a coordinator, all services—counseling, field trips, workshops and mentors—are wrapped around the core: the classroom and learning community. The aim is to make the experience so seamless that students cannot differentiate between the academic and support portions.

Additionally, faculty members working with Passage students also receive relevant professional development to support their teaching styles and strategies. Before each semester begins, Passage faculty participate in an intensive Learning Community Instructional Development Training that sets the tone for the semester. During the training, faculty discuss real-world problems or issues of direct relevance to Passage students’ lives that also connect to the courses in the learning community. Collectively, they agree upon shared student learning outcomes for the learning community and each course, confirm shared resources, develop an integrative writing assignment, design scaffolding activities, schedule weekly communication and design a shared syllabus.



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## Progress & Recommendations

Since the League's 2015 report, *It Begins With Us: The Case for Student Equity*, a growing number of colleges have implemented many of the recommendations in efforts to increase equity and social mobility. In this report, we specifically highlight the policy recommendations the League finds have evidence of salability and continue to present opportunity for broader reform and implementation. They are based on our observations of statewide activities, conversations with our boards, lessons learned from the League's equity summits, and discussions with legislators and legislative staff.

### Guided Pathways/Career Pipelines

Improvement in equity must consider not only the classroom but also the entire system within which education takes place. Colleges have the opportunity to reduce inequity in access by developing seamless pathways and providing all willing students the opportunity to participate in them. Key partners in this effort are high schools (the source of most of our students) and four-year universities (the destination of many of our students). Our goal should be to provide all students with access to academically challenging coursework that can increase both their time-to-completion and their workforce competitiveness.

### Enrollment Policies

There are many steps students have to complete in order to enroll in community college classes that are often overlooked as barrier to increase enrollment and persistence. Many of these steps can be obstacles for underrepresented and lower-income students. Developing a more effective suite of enrollment policies must begin with the observation that each step in the process represents an opportunity for a policy intervention— interventions that, if properly

crafted, can help students along the path to completion. Such interventions may include the ability to register in advance for classes for an entire year, availability of evening and weekend classes, or even equitable access to online registration tools. The easier it is for students to enroll, plan and match their college schedule to their education plan, the greater the chance that a student will complete his/her education.

### Financial Aid

Community college students have been consistently underserved by the state's Cal Grant system, and as a result, their ability to be successful has been impaired. Despite the population at community colleges being the most socio-economically disadvantaged in the state and comprising over two-thirds of the student population, they receive only six percent of the resources awarded through the state's Cal Grant system. Financial aid is crucial to helping college students work fewer hours, attend full time, and ultimately be more academically successful. To reform Cal Grants to meet the needs of community college students, the League recommends:

1. Increase the access grant of Cal Grant B. Designed to help students pay for living expenses, the current award is too low.
2. Increase the number of competitive Cal Grants – Competitive Cal Grants are awarded to very needy students who do not meet the criteria for entitlement Cal Grants.
3. Extend the window of eligibility for entitlement Cal Grants. Currently, students only have one year after graduating from high school to apply for the entitlement Cal Grant. This artificial window reduces the ability of community college students who would otherwise qualify for financial aid to receive much needed resources.

### **Basic Skills Reform**

We encourage continued review of college-level policies and practices in basic skills to ensure that college are not unknowingly placing and keeping greater proportions of underrepresented and low-socioeconomic students in basic skills courses. Progress has been made through the infusions of resources enables by the Basic Skills Student Outcomes and Transformation Program<sup>20</sup> but work must continue. Several reports on basic skills indicate that acceleration can lead to increased skill mastery and completion. The more levels of

developmental courses a student must take, the less likely the student is to ever complete college courses in English and Math. Decreases in achievement gaps have been show with accelerated placement for underrepresented students.<sup>21</sup> Therefore, we encourage colleges to reform basic skills classes by reducing the length of English and Math sequences as well as the exit points in which students are lost by not passing, or not enrolling in, courses in the pipeline.

### **Dual/Concurrent Enrollment**

Research shows that students who participate in dual enrollment programs have higher high school graduation rates, take fewer remedial courses upon entering college, and are more likely to attend and persist in college than their peers. “Dual enrollment has become a viable and effective method to prepare any student – even those who may have struggled academically and who may have had no initial interest in pursuing a postsecondary degree or credential – to complete high school and enter college.<sup>22</sup>” Since the enactment of Assembly Bill 288, the use of dual enrollment has notably increased. The League encouraged colleges to continue expanding dual enrollment programs for underrepresented minority populations.

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<sup>20</sup> California Ed Code §88800-88810

<sup>21</sup> Coleman, Dawn. 2015. *Replicating the Accelerated Learning Program: An Update*. Charlotte, NC: Center for Applied Research.

<sup>22</sup> Purnell, R. (2014). *A guide to launching and expanding dual enrollment programs for historically underserved students in California*. Berkeley, CA: Research and Planning Group for California Community Colleges in collaboration with the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office.

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## Conclusion

Many programs are being implemented around the state aimed particularly at serving underrepresented students. These programs take different shapes at different institutions, based on their culture and students' needs, but share a common goal of supporting the success of underserved students. At the heart of their success are equity-minded<sup>23</sup> college leaders whose mode of thinking calls attention to patterns of inequity in student outcomes. These leaders understand that assessing their own practice is a necessary condition for success of equity efforts. We thank the many leaders statewide that through innovative programs and passion are contributing to social mobility through a focus on equity.

## Acknowledgements

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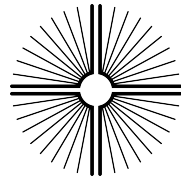
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<sup>23</sup>Dowd & Bensimon, (2015). Developing A Practice of Equity-Minded Indicators. Los Angeles, CA : Center for Urban Education.

# Elevating Equity for Social Mobility

A Publication of the Community College League of California in collaboration with the RP Group.



Quality Public Community Colleges For All Californians

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