



The Board of Governors of the California Community Colleges

PRESENTED TO THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS
 DATE: November 12-13, 2013

| | | | |
|--|---|------------------------------|---|
| SUBJECT: A Model for Student Success: The Academy for College Excellence | | Item Number: 4.5 | |
| | | Attachment: No | |
| CATEGORY: | Student Services and Special Programs | TYPE OF BOARD CONSIDERATION: | |
| Recommended By: |  Linda Michalowski, Vice Chancellor | Consent/Routine | |
| | | First Reading | |
| Approved for Consideration: |  Brice W. Harris, Chancellor | Action | |
| | | Information | X |

ISSUE: A critical element of the student success initiative is developing alternative approaches to basic skills curriculum and improving support for at-risk underprepared students. This item features a program that has developed, refined, and validated a model to enable vulnerable students to achieve academic success.

BACKGROUND: The idea for the Academy for College Excellence (ACE) was born in 1999 as founder Diego Navarro sought to leave the high-tech industry for a more personally rewarding career. He wanted to return to his roots as a community organizer and help people transcend poverty through education.

ACE founder Diego Navarro will share with the Board of Governors how and why this program works and will share the encouraging findings of two recent longitudinal evaluations of the ACE.

RECOMMENDATION: This item is presented for information and discussion.

ANALYSIS: In 2002, Diego interviewed 125 experts in the country who worked with young adults, and reviewed 36 curricula. He used research and process design methods he'd learned while a researcher at Hewlett-Packard labs to assess the needs of underprepared youth and to design a program that would transform them into successful community college students. His research took over a year and a half and included nine pilots that tested different elements of a two-week intensive, now called the Foundation Course that begins the ACE student experience.

Working with an outstanding team of faculty, Diego refined and combined program elements to develop a specialized curriculum from which the first student cohort was taught in the fall of 2003 at the Cabrillo College Center in Watsonville, California. At the time, Diego called it the Digital Bridge Academy, since the idea was to help students bridge the digital divide as a solution to poverty. The target population was underprepared Latino students in a rural, agricultural community. Cabrillo College continued to run one cohort per semester at its Watsonville Center through spring 2008.

In fall 2006, three other northern California community colleges ran student cohorts: Las Positas College, College of Alameda and Merritt College. These partnerships proved that the program curriculum was effective with urban students from diverse backgrounds. Las Positas College continues to run one ACE cohort every fall semester, with a focus on learning disabled students. In fall 2008, Cabrillo College increased the number of cohorts at its Watsonville Center to two, and expanded the program to its main campus. During this same semester, Hartnell College and Berkeley City College adopted the ACE program. In 2010, Los Medanos College came on board. Since that time, ACE at Cabrillo College has grown to eight cohorts per year, which includes cohorts that focus on medical assisting, integrated science, and social justice academic acceleration. Hartnell College has also expanded and now hosts seven cohorts per year, some of which focus on career technical education programs.

Broward College in Ft. Lauderdale, Florida, launched the ACE program in the summer of 2012 with 10 cohorts totaling 250 students. They aim to expand to 3,000 students per year over the next five years. To date, seven partner colleges across the country are using the Academy for College Excellence model of student support and engagement, linking it to a variety of programs of study. In the last ten years, the Academy for College Excellence has served more than 2,700 students and trained more than 650 faculty to use affective learning methods in their classrooms.