Laney College Mini Conference on Faculty Inquiry
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Anne E. Price – Senior Associate
California Community College Access and Equity Initiative
75% of African Americans, Latinos and Native Americans who are first in their family to attend college start in a community college.

Only 1 in 3 are the “traditional” age (18 - 24) for entering higher education.

62% of community college students attend part-time.

Community college students are more likely to work, have family responsibilities, or be low-income.
High School Graduation Rates and College-Ready Rates, Selected School Districts, 2006-07

- **Oakland**: Graduation Rate = 47, College-Ready Rate = 18
- **Long Beach**: Graduation Rate = 64, College-Ready Rate = 21
- **Los Angeles**: Graduation Rate = 45, College-Ready Rate = 20
- **Sacramento**: Graduation Rate = 55, College-Ready Rate = 24
- **San Francisco**: Graduation Rate = 76, College-Ready Rate = 43
Big picture story...Overall we found good, innovative leadership strategies, and programs...but uneven attention to diversity and equity...devastating cuts to key support programs... and faculty overwhelmed and overworked
Faculty are Key to Student Success

• Students cite “supportive faculty” as the most often important factor in student success –
• Our research gathered many stories of the powerful impact of faculty.

“Yes, I feel welcomed-mainly because of the teachers. I’ve had excellent teachers and that’s by far the most important thing.”

Latina student, 32
Effective Faculty Practices According to Students

• Used interactive strategies
• Made themselves available
• Were knowledgeable and passionate about teaching
• Connected content to real life issues
• Were good lecturers
• Facilitated group support
Student’s cited that a class was “less effective” when...

- Teachers did not explain material well or were not well prepared
- It was boring
- Faculty demonstrated invalidating attitudes
- When there was insufficient out-of-class support available
- When there were inadequate instructional strategies used for students not fully proficient in English to understand
Benefits of faculty and staff diversity

• 72% of students say diverse faculty is a benefit

• 48% of faculty and staff say faculty and staff should more accurately reflect the communities served

• Only about 30% of administrators feel they have effective strategies to diversify the faculty and staff.
Other Major Challenges Cited by Students

• Work
  – Almost 80% of community college students work while attending school.

• Insufficient financial aid

• Family responsibilities
  – Especially common for vocational students, Latino and African American women.

• Access to classes

• Transportation

• Unavailable or limited counseling
  – 1200-1900 Students Per Counselor.

• Conflicting information
Faculty Identified The Following Challenges:

• Language barriers with immigrants
• Students don’t have strong enough academic preparation
• Students have family responsibilities
• Students don’t have access to campus resources and supports
• Students don’t go to orientations and many don’t take guidance classes
• Bias - pushing out students not seen as “college material”, institutional racism, etc.
Needs of immigrant students remain relatively invisible and under-addressed

• Shortages of ESL courses.
• Language and cultural barriers that severely limit access to information and affect classroom success.
• Sometimes unwelcoming campus climate, social isolation.
• Problems with proper course placement.
• Stress of residency and immigration status problems.
Benefits of special support programs

• Study after study confirms the positive role of support services in student success - good models exist.

  – I got a lot of help from one of the counselors. She was very helpful to me. She assisted me in registering for classes. She even got an exception for me since I was late for signing up. When I have issues, I go to her now. I feel most comfortable with her, because she speaks Spanish. She was helpful to me in choosing classes too. I ran into her that day and she looked at my placement test scores and suggested the right courses. If I had not received her advice, I would have signed up for courses that I was not prepared for.

  Latina female student, 22
Benefits of special support programs

• EOPS students are 6% more likely to transfer - and twice as likely to earn degrees or certificates.

• Students speak passionately about the counselors and staff, like being part of a group, say book vouchers and meal tickets make a big difference.

• Puente students say ethnic studies helps them understand themselves and history.
Promising practices are emerging to improve instruction

- Learning communities - linking courses that are interdisciplinary, team taught, with a counseling component.
- Connecting the culture and experiences of students to curriculum.
- Building a sense of community within courses.
- Structuring additional instructional support.
- Creating seamless pathways between non-credit and credit instruction, support services and instruction, academic and vocational instruction, in essence creating career ladders.
What strategies are needed to successfully address these issues?

• Professional development (innovation in instruction and support services) and leadership (on equity) at campus and system levels.

• Comprehensive campus change to improve outcomes—through instructional innovation, stronger support services, linkages and coordination, and etc.—in other words a strategy to move from promising practices and model programs to institutional practices and systems.

• Equity focused advocacy and organizing at system, state, and local levels.