



Summer Jam

THE BEGINNING

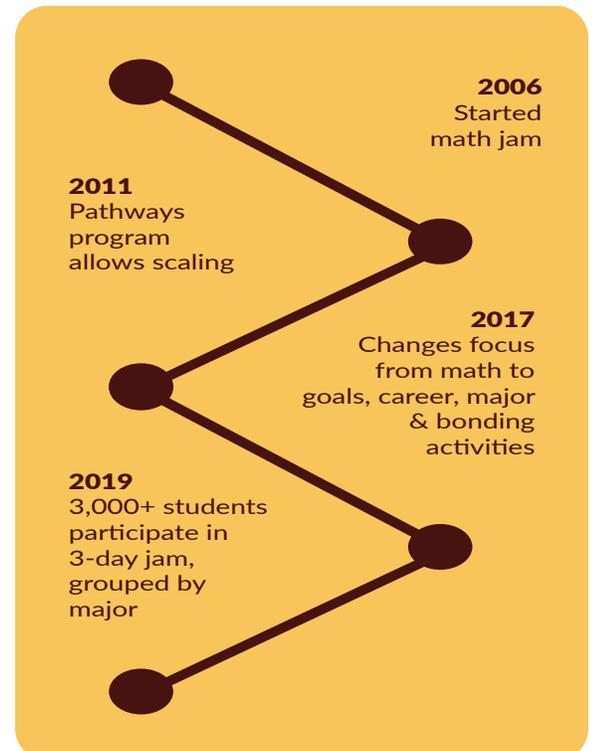
Jam began in 2006 as a two-week workshop intended to ease first-year students' math anxiety. It was funded by an Irvine Foundation grant (through SSPIRE) for three years. When PCC began scaling up its Pathways program in 2011, the college included a reworked version of Math Jam, which has been supported by district funds since then. In 2017, when research showed the grouping students according to math achievement divided them unnecessarily and didn't lead to the desired outcome of preparing them to persist and succeed in college, PCC dropped math from Jam and focused it instead on goal-setting, career and major exploration, and financial literacy, with fun and engaging orientation activities. The college found that outcomes improved when students were grouped by career community, engaged in fun activities, and connected with resources. Summer Jam now serves 3,000-plus students each year over three action-packed days.

IMPLEMENTATION

Getting the word out: Outreach Specialists built participation in Jam by delivering presentations at high schools (within PCC's district and – if invited – in other districts) and organizing campus open houses at PCC for students and their families.

The team: A counseling faculty lead trains Jam leaders (who are current students, students about to transfer, and former students who already have transferred but want to remain involved) over four consecutive Saturdays. Each leader works with 25 to 30 students during Jam.

TIMELINE



Career
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Project

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678 13th Street
Oakland, CA 94612

Phone: (510) 268-0566 | www.careerladdersproject.org

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STUDENT EXPERIENCE

Focus groups with past Jam participants helped clarify successes and where the program could improve. Many students liked the video activity (a project involving research, an informational interview with a professional working in their career community, and a presentation). They also liked the scavenger hunt (in which they learn where to find services on campus). They liked that it was interactive and a physical activity (participants walk around campus to complete the hunt).

“I enjoyed collaborating with others, and learning about careers in a fun way, and appreciated that it didn’t feel like work.”

“The purpose of Jam was to get a glimpse of what college is going to be like and to interact with new people to not feel alone—but most importantly to learn more about certain careers and what it takes to get there.”

– Summer Jam participants

EARLY OUTCOMES

Most participants who responded to a survey reported beneficial results from Summer Jam:

