



California Community Colleges

SYSTEM WEBINAR SUMMARY (Feb. 2023): PROMOTING THE VALUE OF OUR COLLEGES

The primary item on the agenda was recent college efforts to increase enrollment and persistence, including creating a college culture of community engagement. Guest presenters included President Annebelle Nery, VP Vaniethia Hubbard, and VP James Kennedy of Santa Ana College, President Kevin Walthers of Allan Hancock College, Josh Fryday of California Volunteers, and several community college students.

Why is Enrollment and Persistence Such a Big Priority?

- Enrollment, persistence and success are a continued priority for the Board of Governors (BOG), especially in the context of recent [enrollment losses](#) across the colleges. A recent BOG [resolution](#) urged the Chancellor's Office to collaborate with partners to develop a toolkit of resources to support enrollment, persistence and success, and urged college districts to partner with local officials to hold public events during National Community College Month in April to engage with the community and students.
- The state has invested in student retention and enrollment efforts in the last two budgets, and the Governor's [proposed](#) budget for 2023-24 includes additional funds. The Governor also requests more dual enrollment agreements, to include service-learning courses, as a means of engaging students early.
- We need to focus on communicating the value of our colleges to our communities to support enrollment going forward, including identifying notable practices and adopting bold strategies.

How Has Santa Ana College (SAC) Used Enrollment Funds?

- The college experienced double digit enrollment growth in 2022, which leaders attribute to community engagement and a focus on providing [opportunities](#) for the whole family, from children through older adults.
- SAC hosted [Family Night](#) in July 2022 to highlight the wide array of opportunities at the college including adult high school, [dual enrollment](#), the [SAC Promise](#) program, [bachelor's degree](#) and transfer programs, older adult classes, free [childcare](#), and various student support programs. The [event](#) was widely promoted through radio ads in English and Spanish, social media, text messaging to students, and promotional fliers. It included food and entertainment, campus tours, and children's activities. People were able to immediately register for classes and access student services. The event generated enrollment from among the 2,500

attendees. SAC will host the event again in [July 2023](#), and community partners have already requested to take part and provide sponsorship.

- SAC engages with young students early, through [KinderCaminata](#), by sending college acceptance letters to local sixth graders to remove doubts about college as a real opportunity for all students, and by offering noncredit college prep and study skills classes. All high school seniors receive an acceptance letter offering a campus tour, a meeting with counselors, and help with FAFSA completion.
- SAC partners with community organizations to ensure student access to basic needs, and partners with public and private organizations on noncredit programs.

How is College Corps Engaging Students?

- Allan Hancock College (AHC) partners with [College Corps](#), a state program in its first year of operation. The program provides financial support for college in exchange for community service. Students get \$10,000 for 450 hours of service over one year (AB 540 students are eligible), earn academic credit via cooperative work experience (CWE), gain real-world skills and experience, and receive wraparound services.
- At [AHC](#), 40 student fellows work with 16 different community host organizations (CHO), including K-12 schools and organizations focused on climate action and food security. The students attend monthly fellows meetings, workshops and speaker events, and leadership and professional development opportunities. A staff member provides support to the fellows and works with CHO representatives to monitor and support student success.
- College Corps fellows from several community colleges reported positive experiences, finding the program helpful in shaping their interests and goals, providing soft skills and support to balance various responsibilities, and connecting them with fellow students, college leaders, and professional mentors.

What are Some Key Lessons of College Enrollment Efforts?

- The Chancellor's Office and its partners conducted large statewide student surveys and learning tours to various colleges focused on enrollment efforts, finding that:
 - Students are interested in proactive contacts by colleges, greater flexibility in educational options and learning modalities, and more financial and other supports.
 - Progress is being made, but there is more work to do. Colleges must: focus on enabling flexible schedules and multiple learning modalities; reach out to students rather than waiting for them to initiate contact; maximize opportunities to provide financial support to students; streamline processes to facilitate student progress; and provide wrap around services to support student success.