

SPOTLIGHTS



California Community Colleges
Institutional Effectiveness

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Expanding Access: How Citrus College is Opening New Pathways for the Community

For Citrus College, education means more than serving enrolled students – it's about creating new opportunities for everyone in the community to learn, grow, and thrive. In recent years, the college has made a concerted effort to remove barriers, address untapped needs, and expand innovative programs in noncredit, community, and contract education.

BUILDING MOMENTUM THROUGH TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

While noncredit education has long been part of Citrus College's mission, many of its goals in this area have remained aspirational. That changed in 2022, when the college engaged with a Partnership Resource Team (PRT) through the Institutional Effectiveness Partnership Initiative (IEPI) to help develop an Innovation and Effectiveness Plan (I&EP) to help realize the college's goals in noncredit, community, and contract education.

The PRT process brings peer experts to institutions to provide technical assistance at no cost, in self-identified areas of focus. For Citrus College, it meant access to specialized expertise, structured planning, and targeted funding to implement its plan.



Through the support of the PRT, the college is expanding innovative programs in noncredit, community, and contract education.



A distinguished group of lifelong learners, demonstrating that the pursuit of education has no limits.

PRTS AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

The goal of a PRT is to work diligently with the college or district to understand the key issues or opportunities, help develop possible solutions and strategies, and then assist in implementing an action plan with a focus on continuous improvement.

“The best part is that the connections we’ve made through the PRT process last long after the visits are over.”

- Greg Schulz, Ed.D., President

The PRT is explicitly trained in process improvement techniques such as active listening and appreciative inquiry to help guide the institution in its work.

IEPI’s Project Director, Peggy Lomas, reviews the college or district’s letter of interest and designs the PRT’s composition to match the areas of focus identified by the institution with the PRT members’ knowledge and experience.

The PRT process is often referred to as a ‘colleagues-helping-colleagues’ model of improvement.

“The timing [of the PRT] could not have been better for us,” Greg Schulz, Ed.D., Citrus College President, said.

The College had piloted a few programs, but IEPI’s grant funding and technical assistance gave the institution the bandwidth to make real progress.

“Our culture at Citrus is very open, very inviting, and supportive. Having the external expertise brought to the college helped raise internal expectations for this good work,” Dana Hester, Ed.D., Vice President of Academic Affairs, said.

SIMILAR CHALLENGES, DIFFERENT CULTURES

While the general areas of challenge for California community colleges are similar, the manner and method of meeting the challenge are as diverse as the institutions themselves.

“Collaborating with other institutions working on the same issues is great, but it is special when you get help from a neighboring college that is familiar with your institution’s culture and history,” said Schulz.

PRT assistance is not geographically bound. Institutions from around the system offer team members and experts help each other based on skills and expertise.

But it is serendipity when members on the PRT are from neighboring colleges offering similar programs.

Learning what works at other colleges is valuable, but each community has unique needs, Todd Scott, Executive Vice President of Instruction, Innovation and Student Success at Victor Valley College and PRT Lead, said “The PRT process helps colleges adapt best practices to their local context.”



Class of lifelong learners exemplifying a commitment to growth and education.

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“What works somewhere else might not work at home (colleges) and it is the discussion and reflection components of the Partnership Resource Team process that helps the college experiment with the menu of options available and pick and choose or try something new to their specific areas of focus,” added Katie Cabral, Research & Planning Analyst at Cuyamaca College who served as a PRT member.

STRATEGIC FOCUS: MEETING COMMUNITY NEEDS

Citrus College set out to strategically expand enrollment and reach audiences who might not have considered college previously – including adult learners, working professionals, older adults, and youth. Key priorities included:

- Building noncredit-to-credit bridge programs to help learners transition seamlessly into degree or certificate programs.

- Filling gaps in offerings such as adult education, citizenship preparation, vocational ESL, and programs for adults with disabilities.
- Expanding community and contract education to serve local industries and lifelong learners.

To move forward, the college first assessed its infrastructure, built campus-wide awareness, and secured buy-in from leadership and faculty.

TURNING VISION INTO OPPORTUNITIES

For Ivon McCraven, Director of Continuing Education, the goal of expanding noncredit and community education had been years in the making. The PRT process provided the structure to align faculty, senate leadership, and staff around a shared vision.

Faculty began proposing new certificates, creating “mirrored” courses (identical classes offered both for credit and noncredit), and launching high-impact



Citrus College offers mirrored courses that are offered as credit and noncredit education offerings.

programs such as a Drone Technology certificate. In addition to the Life Skills certificate that was created in collaboration with the office of Disability Programs and Services.

The college is currently offering two mirrored courses and has at least three more mirrored courses for approval to be offered in Fall 2025 in the Automotive and Esthetician programs.

REACHING NEW AUDIENCES

One of the most exciting developments is the creation of College for Kids (CFK), launched in summer 2025.

This enrichment program introduces children to the rigor and excitement of college-level learning. Through courses in academics, life skills, music, math, writing, and more, CFK builds both knowledge and confidence in young learners — planting the seeds for future educational success.



Reaching new student audiences is a goal in expanding noncredit education.



SUMMER 2025 PROGRAM



The College for Kids Program launched in Summer 2025 introduces children to Citrus College and college-level learning.

“Our CFK program has seen great interest in the community and builds a pathway to college in the minds of the participants,” said Director McCraven. “The CFK for Summer 2025 was a big success, and we are looking

“We have been able to build partnerships across the college as faculty have come to us with their ideas in developing certificates ...in the expansion of our offerings.”

- Ivon McCraven, Director of Continuing Education

forward to next year.” The Summer 2026 CFK opens enrollment in April of next year.

STRENGTHENING REGIONAL PARTNERSHIPS

Citrus College has expanded and strengthened pathways from noncredit to credit programs. For instance, the College’s noncredit program in Drone Technology, initially launched as a noncredit offering, is now available as a credit certificate developed by faculty.

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The College also introduced a new Life Skills certificate in collaboration with the DSPS office, further broadening opportunities for student success.

In addition, Citrus College continues to build strong relationships with educational partners in the region. Extensive conversations with the Adult Education Consortium have focused on developing complementary, rather than competing, programs. These efforts have fostered trust and strengthened partnerships across the region.

One of the significant outcomes of this focus on noncredit has been the development of new partnerships with Adult Education schools in Glendora, Duarte, and Claremont, with a potential collaboration with Azusa. The college is also mindful of the presence of nearby Azusa Pacific University, which offers noncredit courses to its university students, particularly in medical terminology and workplace cultural competency. (A.6)

EXPANDING COMMUNITY AND CONTRACT EDUCATION

In addition to noncredit pathways, Citrus College is developing targeted offerings for local industries and community organizations through contract education.



Drone Technology in action: equipping students with skills for tomorrow's workforce.

Goals include delivering customized training for employers, creating upskilling opportunities for workers, and expanding enrichment options for all ages.



The college expanded and strengthened pathways in programs such as Drone Technology from noncredit to credit programs.

The Citrus College contract education department works closely with managers, deans, and internal trainers to identify the training needs of your workforce and customize training courses to meet those needs. Citrus College conducts contract education at various campus sites and corporate and business workspaces.



A class of lifelong learners, each embodying the value of education as a lifelong journey

McCraven added, “We have been able to build partnerships across the college as faculty have come to us with their ideas in developing certificates and are happy to work in the expansion of our offerings.”

Partnerships exist with local adult schools, nearby universities, and local and community organizations for scheduling, resource sharing, and networking.



Preparing students for the future with practical training.

Outreach to discover community needs continues through the Citrus College Adult Education Consortium, offering complementary programs that are intentionally designed to avoid competition.

But, it started with conversations.



The college’s culture is open, inviting, and supportive, with a focus on students

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LOOKING AHEAD

For Citrus College, access and inclusion are ongoing commitments. The programs launched through the PRT process are only the beginning; leaders plan to keep listening to the community, adapting to changing needs, and building new collaborations.

“Working with peers in an innovative and supportive setting makes the thinking flow,” Schulz reflected. “The best part is that the connections we’ve made through the PRT process last long after the visits are over.”



Institutions interested in participating in the PRT Process may submit a Letter of Interest (LOI), which includes successes and outlines challenges, opportunities for improvement, and goals to Peggy Lomas, IEPI Project Director at peggy.lomas@canyons.edu.



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