

## EAST BAY COLLEGE AGILE NETWORK THE REGIONAL SUPPORT PIPELINE TO COLLEGE

With support from the Stupski Foundation, Cal State East Bay engaged in an extensive study and assessment of all student advising systems and services. The goal was to develop and implement a comprehensive, integrated, student-centered advising network that gives every student a clear and consistent path to graduation.

The research and diagnostics revealed our need to create a streamlined and more integrated student-centered ecosystem that can be scaled and unified to meet the needs of our highly diverse student population. Importantly, the project showed how much the wide scale deployment and use of predictive analytics will support students better by identifying possible challenges and triggering proactive support for students in need. This will enable us to change how we respond to our students' most pressing needs that may endanger their degree progress and success.

Our experience tells us that we need a systematic approach to deliver individualized success plans for each of our students that encompasses both academic assistance as well as personalized guidance and support. In modifying our practices to meet the challenges uncovered by this research, we realized that making these changes for East Bay represented a significant improvement for our students' experience, more could be done. With more than 60% of our students transferring from regional community colleges, there is a need for strengthening degree pathways across higher education segments. Therefore, we seek to include regional community colleges into the new ecosystem, and leverage the assets of all campuses to provide the best opportunity for systematic, sustainable change in the success of students across the region.



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#### OVERVIEW:

Over the past decade there has been tremendous focus on the need to prioritize student completion of degrees and certificates to meet California's workforce demand. The Public Policy Institute of California (PPIC) made the point that California's higher education system is a critical driver of the state's economic progress. Yet, by 2030, the state will have an economic demand for 1.1 million more college graduates than are currently projected. PPIC refers to this shortfall as the *workforce skills gap*.

California's community colleges and four-year institutions play critical roles in preparing students for the workforce and closing the skills gap. PPIC noted that California needs to increase the number of community college students transferring to and graduating from four year schools. Clear degree pathways, streamlined transfer processes, and timely student advising are key to increasing transfer and completion rates. Processes to support student transfer from community college to university should be identified and implemented to support timely degree completion.

With the passage of SB 1440 in 2012, good progress has been made between the California State University system and the California Community Colleges to align requirements for transfer through developing transfer degree pathways with guaranteed CSU admission, but challenges still remain. While 51 percent of California State University graduates transfer from a California Community College, the percent of students completing a baccalaureate degree within two years of transferring is only 31 percent, and 73 percent within four years. With three out of every ten Californians age 18-24 enrolled in a California Community College, and a disproportionate number being low-income, first-generation, and historically underserved students, it is clear that both systems need to strengthen their partnerships to support equity for opportunities and outcomes for our students.

In its October 2019 report, "Making Room for Success," the College Futures Foundation argued that to meet California's workforce needs into the future, higher education needs to work toward three objectives:

1. *Improved student experience:* "Expand student success initiatives so that students can complete their degrees more efficiently." This includes creating clear degree pathways, making the process of transferring easier, and strengthening student support systems, including advising.
2. *Creative use of space:* "Redefine the use of physical space by sharing and optimizing resources." As opposed to thinking of each campus as a separate entity, shared spaces across multiple campuses can make better use of space and be able to connect students remotely through hybrid and online programs.
3. *Regional partnerships:* "Create regional partnerships that align education and labor needs." Essential to this effort is reimagining connections between East Bay and Community College partners including dual enrollment, reverse transfers, shared support systems, and guaranteed articulated pathways.

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#### OUR STUDENTS:

California State University, East Bay educates students who reflect the vibrant, creative, and multicultural communities of the Bay Area. *The Chronicle of Higher Education* recognized Cal State East Bay as one of the most diverse public four-year universities in the continental United States. Eighty-six percent of our 14,500+ students are from traditionally underserved communities. More than half are economically disadvantaged and over 60 percent are the first in their families to attend college. Our alumni tell us their degrees significantly changed their lives, the lives of their families, and their communities. Published data support their claims. Money Magazine rated East Bay as the 14th most transformative university in the U.S., and Stanford University researcher Raj Chetty found that East Bay students excelled in social mobility: 87 percent of our students from the lowest economic quintile moved beyond their families' income quintile to a higher one.

As expected, the students of community colleges that articulate into Cal State East Bay fit a similar profile. Chabot-Las Positas Community College District (CLPCCD) serves 29,000 students annually, through its two colleges: Chabot College in Hayward, and Las Positas College in Livermore. The District serves 27 public high schools, which include traditional, continuation, independent study, and college preparatory high schools. These students are socially, economically and educationally at a disadvantage. Greater than 70% of district students are of low income. Approximately 75% of students arriving at the district's colleges are assessed as being unprepared for college with Latino and African American students at higher rates than their peers. Regional increases in these populations, as well as relative enrollment increases, indicate that the proportion of the student body needing intensive academic and support services will increase. The majority of district students do not have a family history of completing higher education. Latino students, in particular, tend to be the first in their families to attend college.

California State University, East Bay and the Chabot-Las Positas Community College District have a shared responsibility to assist students in this region and beyond to reach their full potential through education for the uplift and advancement of their communities.

#### PROPOSAL:

Our goal over the next year is to develop a model network, entitled the East Bay College Agile Network (East Bay CAN), between California State University, East Bay (CSUEB) and the Chabot-Las Positas Community College District (CLPCCD). Working collaboratively, CSUEB and CLPCCD seek to leverage and strengthen existing relationships and initiatives across systems to identify and remove barriers that impede student success. An intentional, deeper pilot partnership between CSUEB and the two CLPCCD colleges—Chabot College and Las Positas College—will increase transfer rates among these three Hispanic-serving institutions and will increase Associate and Bachelor degree completion with reduced time to degree and advanced equity for historically underserved students.

For the past two years, the leadership at Cal State East Bay has been in conversations with the leadership of the Chabot-Las Positas Community College District to develop stronger connections and programs. We propose a regional redesign with our campuses linked in a support network that is adaptive and nimble to student educational needs. This redesign focuses on:

- Designing a dynamic schedule to increase students' ability to enroll in needed courses at the three campuses;
- Creating seamless pathways designed to meet students' educational goals;
- Coordinating academic, transfer, and financial counseling across institutions to ensure timely planning and transferring to CSUEB to ensure the awarding of all available public financial aid;

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- Allowing students to remain on their “home” campus while using the resources available at another campus, thereby accelerating degree completion;
- Sharing instruction through online and Zoom-linked courses and grow the ability to leverage space and better use underutilized facilities across campuses;
- Sharing analytics across campuses to equip advisors with the information needed to provide proactive support and intervene when students veer off track;
- Implementing sustainable systems which measure impact and allow for continuous improvement.

As a partnership with significant history working together on behalf of transfer student success, East Bay and the CLPCCD will work toward an aligned and stronger system of commitment to degree completion. Our overarching goal is to generate a more educated, more diverse East Bay population prepared to meet the challenges of the regional economy.

Our discussions to date include mutual interest in technology to provide students with digital access to a unified dashboard of progress toward degree completion at East Bay, whether they are enrolled at the university, Chabot College, or Las Positas College. This vision includes more mature structures through articulated pathways that support students enrolling in community college and university concurrently, leveraging the best options for their demanding lives. Along with this structure, we would invest in human resources, building knowledgeable advisors across institutions to guide students in setting goals and proactively engaging students to achieve key milestones toward those goals. Moreover, with CC and LPC as linchpins to adult education and early college credit for regional high school students, this vision would manifest K-20 pipelines in the East Bay in a way never before seen.

We believe the new East Bay College Agile Network (East Bay CAN) involving California State University East Bay, Chabot College, and Las Positas College represents an innovative scaffold for higher education access, service, and degree attainment. This evidence-based proposed design will lead to:

- An increase in students enrolling in community college directly after high school;
- An increase in re-entry adults seeking degree completion to secure their place in the economy;
- An increase in transfer rates from Chabot and Las Positas Colleges to CSUEB; and
- An accelerated rate at which students complete their degrees.

Cal State East Bay is seeking funding to support the assessment of each participating campus, develop recommendations, and design an operational program for broad, scalable implementation. This network will serve as a state-wide model for two-year and four-year university partnerships.

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