
Feedback Report Prepared for Yuba College

The Aspen Institute College Excellence Program	September 2016
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INTRODUCTION

The Aspen Institute College Excellence Program is committed to advancing high achievement and performance in community colleges across the nation through its emphasis on student success, stimulating innovation, and creating benchmarks for measuring progress. As exemplified by the highly regarded Aspen Prize for Community College Excellence, the College Excellence Program is focused on helping colleges improve their understanding and capacity to instruct and graduate students, with particular attention to the growing population of low-income and minority students on American campuses.

This report provides feedback to Yuba College (YC) in support of its efforts to improve student success. It begins with an overview of the institution, and continues with a set of five primary recommendations that together offer direction for YC leadership. The report then offers a broader set of recommendations—together with strategies to consider, exemplary institutions, and available printed resources—in six specific domains: institutional culture, completion, learning, transfer and bachelor's degree attainment, equity, and labor market success. Whenever available, we have integrated, into each section, charts reflecting institutional, state, and national data. This feedback report is based on information gleaned from extensive document review, significant data analysis, and in-person site visit interviews conducted in April 2016.

As part of a single engagement, this document complements two other feedback reports provided by the Aspen Institute: one to the Yuba Community College District (YCCD) leadership and the other to Woodland College (WC). Some recommendations made in this report mirror suggestions for improvement in the other two feedback documents, reflecting areas of overlapping needs and opportunities for change among the district's institutions. We hope this report helps Yuba College as it prioritizes strategies to achieve its vision for students, the institution, and its community.

OVERVIEW of YUBA COLLEGE

Yuba College (YC) is one of the oldest community colleges in California, with a long history of serving as a primary center for higher education and a beacon for mobility in this sprawling rural and relatively impoverished region. YC offers a place of promise for students, many who would not see higher education as an option without Yuba. Given limited workforce opportunity in the immediate area and an historical transfer focus, many of Yuba's students see transfer and bachelor's attainment as the main path to improved economic stability and the chance for a better life.

Over the past several years, conditions have tested the college's sense of optimism. YC's enrollments are declining and student outcomes rest below state and national averages. Unstable and insufficient funding has challenged college administrators, faculty, and staff. Repeated leadership turnover, a

recent accreditation warning, district-led reorganization of campuses, and increasing external accountability demands appear to have left many at the college somewhat tired and skeptical. Consequently, reliable data on student success is not often examined and considered at the college, and there appears to be a lack of urgency about improving student outcomes. In the words of one administrator, “the college’s self-perception as a great institution has slipped away.”

At the same time, there is an incredible amount of promise at the college. Yuba exhibits critical building blocks for establishing itself as a place of even greater opportunity and of excellence, for its students, their families, and the communities it serves. Several factors are working in Yuba College’s favor.

- > *New leadership.* Many key faculty, student services, and administrative leaders display an eagerness for change and openness to leadership. A new president of the college, and an incoming vice president of student services and instruction, offer the college a chance to answer this call. These new leaders articulate a keen awareness of the historical context, an understanding of the barriers to improvement, and ideas for how the college can shift toward a more student-centered culture, driven by meaningful inquiry about what is and is not working for students.
- > *Adoption of Completion by Design.* Over the past two years, top-level leaders at the college have embraced the framework and learning of Completion by Design (CBD) and have promoted it via preliminary campus-wide professional development. During the site visit, senior administrators, faculty and staff referred to the principles of CBD and discussed different aspects of the loss/momentum framework, indicating the presence of a common vocabulary around which change efforts at the college can be focused and directed.
- > *Examples of innovation.* In multiple places across the institution, faculty and staff are working to improve student outcomes in important ways. For instance, the English department’s use of common final exams and discussion of results, and experimentation with reform in developmental education coursework using the California Acceleration Project model. The Math department administers a district-wide common final exam in below transfer-level courses as a way of setting levels of expectations for the three courses and emphasizing consistency in assessments. The college’s adoption of the Umoja and Puente programs demonstrate a strong interest in improving outcomes for specific populations. First semester education planning is now required of students, and an early alert system is being piloted. These and other student success initiatives signal a willingness to act in thoughtful, new ways to improve student outcomes as well as specific opportunities to scale learning and completion initiatives for broader impact.

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- > *Connections with outside partners.* College faculty and staff highlighted pockets of work to engage employer partners to build regional training efforts in emerging sectors. YC has also initiated planning with K12 partners around creating more seamless pathways into the college using Career Pathways Trust and Doing What Matters funds and equipping classrooms on high school campuses to provide introductory coursework in these pathways. These budding collaborations offer opportunities to deepen partnerships that can help the college deliver more of what students and the surrounding community needs and expects from the institution.

With these positive practices in place, YC's leadership has an opportunity to organize a core team to engage faculty, staff, and administrative stakeholders in developing and implementing more scaled strategies to improve student outcomes. In the near term, leaders need to focus on deepening the sense of trust among these stakeholders and making a case for change that is meaningful to Yuba, not based on outside mandates or driven by accreditation compliance.

To jumpstart this process, Yuba College leaders should spend time examining student success data to assess what most needs improving if students are to accomplish their goals while at the college and afterwards. Once a core set of possible outcomes are decided upon (we offer a simple set below which have been used in several national projects aimed at improving college completion), leaders should invite others into the conversation by sharing a clear and simple set of facts around which urgency for improvement can be built broadly throughout the campus. Next, the college should devise a process to set collective goals around the gaps in student achievement that are most compelling, on which existing and future strategies can be grounded in a common sense of purpose and an evidence-based understanding of the barriers to achievement at the college.

With a shared understanding of outcomes Yuba College hopes to achieve, where students are struggling and what barriers to success they are encountering, how YC aims to remove those obstacles, and how and when initiatives will be assessed for effectiveness, the institution can lay the groundwork for sustained efforts to improve student achievement. To support this organizational transformation, we offer Yuba's leadership the following core recommendations.

1. ESTABLISH CLEAR STUDENT SUCCESS GOALS, BUILDING ON THE COMPLETION BY DESIGN FRAMEWORK.

With its accreditation warning in the past, new leadership on board, and additional funding streams in place (through the Student Support and Success Program and Student Equity Planning), Yuba has a great opportunity to launch a campus-based conversation about improving student success in a strategic, integrated, and authentic way. The Completion by Design loss/momentum framework

offers a foundation on which to bring together people across the institution, build this conversation, and establish concrete goals for strengthening student outcomes. While key leaders have embraced these principles, Yuba should continue deepening understanding of CBD across the institution—ensuring that the conversations that have started happening at the leadership level translate into action that paves the way for improvements in student outcomes that are significant and eventually scaled to a vast majority of students. To start, we recommend the following.

- > *Train practitioners on CBD and provide them the opportunity to hear from students.* Begin by including interactive professional learning in the College's fall 2016 FLEX days about the research undergirding the loss/momentum framework and how others have used it to guide improvements in student success. At the same time, organizing focus groups of students to hear about their experiences at each stage of the framework—entry, connection, progress and completion—can be used to deepen understanding of what needs to be changed and motivate participants to improve. Ask students what their educational goals are and whether they feel supported in achieving them. If they want to transfer or graduate directly into the workforce, do they understand all the steps needed to accomplish that goal? What keeps them from taking more courses, or finishing the ones for which they register? What causes them to withdraw? What systems at the college are most frustrating and why? To create the conditions for candid feedback, it is important in these conversations to first ask students what works well, and then ask what can be improved. YC should engage faculty leaders, as well as other part-time and full-time instructors, in helping plan and deliver this professional development, and to help conduct and observe student focus groups. Doing so can foster the investment of this stakeholder group. YC can tap peers at Woodland College for an example of how it carried out this type of exercise at its winter 2016 FLEX day.
- > *Examine data on student success.* At the same time, Yuba should utilize the loss/momentum framework to examine existing data on how students connect to and enter the college, and progress towards and complete credentials. YC might start by asking a series of questions about outcomes for one particular population, such as first-time, full-time students. For example, how many first-time, full-time students arrive needing developmental education coursework in math and/or English? How many of these students complete their developmental coursework in one year? How many students in college-level courses complete 30 credits in one year? How many complete credit bearing math and English? How many students persist from the fall to the spring term? How many persist from their first year to a second year? How many enter a program of study within one and two years? How many reach their educational goal (certificate, degree, and/or transfer) within two, three and four years?

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- > *Evaluate reasons.* Based on data analysis and student focus groups, in the areas where limited student success is identified, discuss reasons. Why are students succeeding at such low rates? What is the institution doing that could be causing these outcomes? How could the college practically change its processes and policies to improve outcomes? Through this process, the participants can be encouraged to refer back to what students said in focus groups, making clear that what students experience may not be what the college intended.
 - > *Set goals.* In light of conclusions about what could be changed, determine specific goals for improvement. Especially during this first iteration of the process, it is important choose a limited set of goals that are achievable, really meaningful to student success at Yuba, and can be readily measured.

As part of its goal-setting work, Yuba should aim to set a few discrete, short-term goals for its incoming cohort of new, first-time students in 2016-2017. For example, the college could set specific goals for retention from first to second year (or even fall to spring) and for the number of entering students who complete education plans in their first semester or year. Such short-term goals will enable the college to achieve measureable success relatively soon, critical at the outset of any change management effort. Achieving success will require choosing the right team that can set and implement specific strategies that support student retention and progress through the completion of a full, comprehensive education plan.

As part of the process, Yuba leaders should engage relevant stakeholders in discussions about what it would take to practically achieve these goals and pursue these approaches, setting timelines that facilitate accountability and establishing systems to assess effectiveness. Champions of this effort should then create spaces for faculty, staff, and administrators to openly reflect on progress and discuss lessons learned. At the first moment significant outcomes are available, leaders should celebrate and reward success and ensure that processes of reviewing outcomes result in concrete recommendations for corrections and/or further scale. By enacting student success reforms in this manner, YC leadership can underscore the gap between current and desired outcomes, generate a shared sense of urgency around the need to significantly improve, and help the college's practitioners feel a sense of ownership of and pride in their direction. Moreover, it can help the institution determine where to focus its investments in the face of constrained resources.

See Institutional Culture, Completion, and Labor Market Success sections for additional insights, suggestions, and resources.

2. CREATE DATA INFRASTRUCTURE TO SUPPORT A CULTURE OF EVIDENCE AND INQUIRY.

Regardless of the specific goals, achieving sustained improvements in student success will require strengthening institutional capacity for collecting and utilizing data. In order to set goals, Yuba will need to determine what data points will facilitate their understanding of student movement through the loss/momentum framework. The college will also need to identify specific measures that can help track movement toward its selected goals, and collect data against which to benchmark progress.

For each of these functions to be successful, YC will also need to expand its capacity for collecting and analyzing a range of reliable data—both quantitative and qualitative evidence—that can shed light on the success of particular initiatives. During our site visit, Yuba’s practitioners highlighted inadequate systems and habits for looking at data to set goals, identify challenges, select solutions, and test their effectiveness. Absent these systems and processes, and with some significant distrust of data that are currently produced, many individuals working across the institution seem unaware of the scope of change needed. While the system office needs to set up technological and other systems for storing and reporting data, staff at the college will need to ensure the presence of strong data entry systems and quality assurance mechanisms. As part of this process, YC leadership should identify venues to share and engage in conversations about concerns over current data quality. If data need to be fixed, revisions should be made and acknowledged to build a sense of trust in the data.

To support its ability to analyze data, the college might consider joining Achieving the Dream, a national reform organization that provides coaching, resources, and support for colleges seeking to build their institutional capacity to use data, evidence, and inquiry to advance student success. Investing in this membership provides participating colleges multiyear access to in-person professional learning with other colleges; campus-based leadership and data coaching; and connections to ongoing virtual support and resources that can guide development of systems for capturing, analyzing, sharing, and discussing data. This structured assistance, informed by national experts, may allow the college to move more rapidly to a data and information rich environment and quickly jumpstart efforts to pursue evidence-based decision-making.

See the Institutional Culture and Learning sections for further discussion and specific examples of resources and models that can facilitate data selection, reporting, discussion, and decision-making.

3. STRENGTHEN STUDENT ADVISING AND EDUCATIONAL PLANNING.

To advance the student success goals discussed above, particularly improved retention and the increased completion of comprehensive educational plans, we recommend that the college take steps

towards building clear pathways for every program of study, with recommended (or default) sequences for required and recommended elective courses. As this work gets underway, Yuba can immediately take advantage of a set of clear pathways that already exist: 10 associate's degrees for transfer (ATD). Yuba can immediately begin to focus on promoting ATDs to students who aim to pursue a bachelor's degree when they connect to and enter the college. These degrees offer the benefit of leading to specific programs of study and priority acceptance in the California State University system. By choosing this option, students can work with counselors to make more informed choices about their general education (GE) coursework; cut a clearer, more efficient path through the institution; and have a more explicit plan against which to benchmark their progress toward achievement of their transfer goals. This approach to advising and educational planning will require that Yuba's leaders engage members of the student services division in professional development about the benefits and technicalities of these degrees, and facilitate discussions between counseling and discipline faculty focused on mapping clusters of GE coursework to these degrees.

At the same time, the college should also generally consider how to improve systems to facilitate educational planning and track student progress. Many interviewed during the site visit, including students and faculty, cited inadequate public information about program offerings and concerns over an unwieldy and outdated catalog. Moreover, several individuals noted that the college lacks adequate systems for tracking students throughout their educational journey.

Accordingly, we suggest that Yuba consider the following:

- > Begin the process of creating clear pathways for all programs of study.
- > Implement both education planning and degree audit systems that (1) allow students at any campus to identify goals and map course-taking accordingly, and (2) enable college practitioners and students themselves to determine where students are on their educational pathway. The statewide Education Planning Initiative offers one potential resource to support this effort.
- > Produce an updated college catalog organized around programs that are tied to transfer and career pathways and subsequently align website content for easy access to this critical information.

We offer these same recommendations to YCCD, YC, and Woodland. Tackling public information, education planning, and degree audit systems collectively could create efficiencies for both institutions and students who may “swirl” between the district's institutions.

See the Completion and Equity sections for additional insights, suggestions, and resources.

4. COMMUNICATE THE BENEFITS OF ATTENDING YUBA COLLEGE.

With enrollments declining, Yuba has an opportunity to address how it communicates its value to prospective students and the community. It was clear from conversations with students that the reputation of Yuba in the community could be improved. One student went so far as to say that Yuba has become “ingrained in the community as an afterthought.” Additionally, students and practitioners mentioned the movement of a private, proprietary college into the area and its aggressive marketing and outreach to the populations Yuba traditionally attracts and educates.

To address negative perceptions about and highlight the value of attending the college, Yuba should, improve its value proposition by increasing student retention and completion while at the same time working to enhance academic quality. Once improvements are underway and some demonstrable progress has been made, the college should consider developing a clear marketing and messaging plan designed to target specific priority populations (e.g., graduating high school student, returning nontraditional learners seeking skill building or career change, English language learners, etc.). This campaign can highlight associate’s degrees for transfer recently adopted by the college that facilitate student movement to CSUs; specific career technical education programs leading to in-demand occupations in the region or state, including the length of training and starting salary in those positions; support services at the college for specific student groups; and available financial assistance. The college should consider what modes of communication are most effective for reaching the populations it seeks to attract, who is best positioned to influence these groups, and in turn, who can serve as ambassadors of the college to deliver these messages.

5. TRAIN COLLEGE LEADERS ON CHANGE MANAGEMENT.

As noted in our memo to the district and to Woodland, successfully implementing scaled student success initiatives will require skilled and thoughtful leadership, equipped with the ability to listen thoughtfully, craft and articulate a shared vision, build coalitions, hold people accountable, celebrate progress, and visibly allocate necessary resources. The college has already taken the first step in strengthening leadership by hiring and promoting a significant number of leaders in key positions across the district, offering a great opening for this cultural and operational change to begin. These leaders—including presidents and vice presidents at both Yuba and Woodland and executives at the district office—commonly cited the need for considerable improvement, recognizing weak student outcomes and tenuous climate at both colleges. We were impressed by the motivation, determination, and passion these leaders have for advancing student outcomes, and their universal recognition of the need to do better. At the same time, while these individuals had a sense of what

needed to be done and some good ideas for a few initiatives, they seemed unsure of how to proceed in improving the college-wide culture, expressing frustration with the *status quo* culture and offering limited suggestions for how it might be improved.

If they are open to doing so, district and campus executives could benefit from professional development focused specifically on leading and managing change. By pursuing this professional learning as a collective, the team can build a common language and skill set for facilitating change, setting additional building blocks for guiding and supporting one another in leading student-success oriented changes over time. They can use this venue for setting the strategic priorities for improvements discussed above and for determining how progress toward these goals will be tracked. They can also create a unified approach to dissemination of and involvement in these priorities across their campuses. Finally, they can commonly discuss how to manage and overcome obstacles that arise in their pursuit of these priorities. By taking this approach, top executives will have the opportunity to model effective professional learning and use this experience as a launch pad for further developing faculty, staff, and administrative leadership across the district. Possible resources include using the Aspen Institute's change management module, which will become available in late 2016, and engaging with the resources, training opportunities, and/or consulting services offered by [Kotter International](#).

In alignment with our recommendation to engage top-level executives across the district in professional learning around change management, we also recommend YC consider a campus-based effort to provide professional development and ongoing support to leaders—both formal and informal—across the institution. We suggest collectively training key administrators, faculty, student services professionals, and institutional researchers on facilitating organizational change and rooting this learning in a specific student success initiative. The Research and Planning Group for California Community College's (RP Group) 2017 [Leading from the Middle Academy](#) offers a specific opportunity for this type of sustained, project-based professional development and support.

Institutional Context

	Yuba College	California Average	National Average
Underrepresented Minorities	30%	48%	31%
Undergraduate students receiving Pell Grants	40%	28%	42%
Age 25 or older	40%	39%	38%
Attend part-time	60%	69%	59%
Credentials earned that are vocational/technical	40%	37%	52%
Median family income in community	\$56,895	\$75,613	\$62,642

INSTITUTIONAL CULTURE

Areas of opportunity:

- > Establish urgency for change
- > Determine a shared student success agenda to drive improvement efforts

Strategies to consider:

- > Utilize qualitative and quantitative data—including student perspectives—to motivate practitioners across the college to discuss a student success agenda
 - > Identify specific, measurable goals and interim targets
 - > Cultivate a culture of inquiry and evidence around the selection of student success initiatives
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Establish the need for a success agenda

Individuals interviewed from all levels and functions of the college clearly care about Yuba's students, and desire to make a positive impact on their life trajectories. Many recognized the need and opportunity to improve college policies and practices in an effort to achieve this effect. At the same time, repeated leadership changes, fiscal challenges, and the effort required to respond to the demands of multiple external accreditation and accountability requirements have created challenges. As one educator explained, "...The result is complete burnout. So, now when we try to have a conversation about improvement, people are just panting."

Yuba's new leaders have an opportunity to re-energize and refocus stakeholders, build on their collective caring and concern for students and their awareness of the need for change, and make the important case for significantly improving Yuba student outcomes. These efforts should be designed to move the college culture from its current state to one driven to act by a deep sense of urgency to improve student outcomes. At colleges that have dramatically improved their success, this transformation usually begins by fostering a sense of discontent over *status quo* student outcomes, and a recognition that they can—and must—improve.

It was apparent from our site visit that Yuba staff, faculty and administrators currently lack a shared understanding of the college's low student outcomes, or of core strategies for addressing student achievement gaps. By sharing a limited set of current outcomes—presented in a clear and compelling way and benchmarked against exemplary colleges of similar size and resources in the state and nation—YC leaders can help faculty and staff understand both why it is imperative to embrace a change agenda and that substantially better outcomes are within reach. Connecting gaps in student success with declining enrollments can also be used to build urgency, especially in the face of current financial constraints. If the college can improve student persistence and completion, everyone at YC can reap the financial benefits through increased apportionment.

Given the pervasive dedication to students we observed across the institution, we recommend that part of the process also include conducting focus groups with Yuba students that solicit information on both what facilitates and what stands in the way of their success—from connection and entry to progress and completion. At other community colleges, the student voice has proven a powerful inspiration for change because it makes clear that what students experience is often very different from what practitioners believe they have designed and are delivering.

Identify goals and interim targets

While engendering this sense of urgency, Yuba leaders also need help the institution determine what it is collectively seeking to achieve for students by setting specific goals with clear timelines. In the face of data that reveal very low student success rates, leaders should ask practitioners across the college what they hope student success outcomes could be in the next five and 10 years. Raising completion and transfer rates may offer an obvious place to start. For example, what would we like YC graduation rates to be by 2020 and 2025? What goals do we have for student transfer and bachelor's degree attainment? What other big aspirations do we have for our students, given who the college currently enrolls and is projected to serve?

Then, YC can then begin to identify specific changes that will help move the institution toward these completion outcomes. Using the CBD framework and tools, Yuba can begin to unpack its current completion rates, exploring these rates for different groups of students at the college. Who are the key student populations at the college (e.g., developmental education students, full- versus part-time students, CTE students, transfer-oriented students, etc.)? In its efforts to convene students and hear their perspectives, Yuba should solicit the voices of these different groups to help illuminate their unique challenges. What intentions do these student groups report having and what do they say impedes and facilitates their movement through the college toward these goals?

Using the loss/momentum framework and exploring the Key Performance Indicators identified by American Association of Community Colleges Pathways Project can help guide this discussion of where student fall away from the college or where they gain a boost toward attainment of their goals. Student Success and Support Program (SSSP) reporting requirements, Student Success Scorecard measures, and Institutional Effectiveness Partnership Initiative indicators may also serve as a basis for discussing and selecting measures that map to selected institutional goals. Regardless of their source, however, it is essential that Yuba tie all of the data it presents to a handful of student success measures that are of greatest importance to its students—including completion and post-graduation success—in order to keep the college focused on what matters most.

Cultivate a culture of inquiry and evidence-based decision-making

Yet, gathering and analyzing clear data related to important student success goals is not enough. We strongly recommend that the college find some way to strengthen its institutional research (IR) capacity so that YC staff, faculty, and administrators can receive reliable data on student success, find answers to key research questions, and can devise strategies and assess outcomes informed by reliable information. We additionally suggest improving the campus's ability to collect, input, and code clean data, and supply digested information to stakeholders across the college.

To foster a shift in culture to one of inquiry and evidence-based decisions about how to improve student outcomes, clear data presentations and time and space for engaged dialog about what those data mean will be necessary. During our site visit, faculty and staff expressed skepticism over data reliability, citing concerns with basic head count information and data coding issues. While the college has a research analyst, this individual focuses a majority of her attention on compliance and MIS reporting. While she supplies faculty and staff with requested data sets, people often do not know how to make meaning of them. Accordingly, it comes as no surprise that few people in the college track transfer outcomes, despite a primary institutional push toward this goal.

At the same time, the college ought not wait for perfect data to begin the conversation about improving student outcomes. Using the best data available, the college should consider which standing committee meetings offer the best venues for presenting data and pursuing data-driven conversations about what the data reveal and, where lagging student outcomes are identified, how those data can be improved. Given that YC administrators and staff report these conversations are beginning to take place in the College Council, this committee might be a place to anchor this work. While multiple conversations across several venues will be needed to devise student success strategies and begin to build a more evidence-based culture, it is important that the data themselves remain focused and consistent. Only with a limited number of high-level student success goals anchoring these conversations can leaders ensure that the college builds a deeper sense of common purpose.

The college might also consider other strategies to get data and evidence in the hands of educators across departments and divisions and facilitate conversations about their meaning. The English department's Faculty Inquiry Group (FIG) and the ESL Community of Practice (COP) offer two excellent places to build on existing practices of conducting data-driven inquiry and discussions about student learning and success. These groups can be leveraged to discuss topics such as course completion, preparation for four-year transfer, and what they reveal about student direction. YC leaders can explore replicating and seed this model in other parts of the institution, including both academic departments and the student services division. The college's numerous committees may

also offer a place to engage instructors, student support professionals, deans, and directors in cross-functional conversations about how they can collectively facilitate student progress and goal attainment, such as completion and monitoring of academic plans.

In these and other ways, the college can begin to engage faculty, student services, and administrative leaders in identifying theories of change designed to improve student success and achieve articulated college goals. Once a few college-wide goals and strategies are chosen, Yuba should examine current access and success strategies and determine, based on data, if they are adequately contributing to those goals in light of financial and staff resources dedicated to the strategies. Such an analysis can drive conversations about adjustments to existing strategies, adoption of new approaches, and what the college should stop doing to free up resources for new efforts. The Quick Registration and new early alert pilot offer promising areas within which to begin such inquiry. Regardless of the contexts in which they are implemented, establishing standard processes for collecting and reflecting on data will be vital to assessing their effectiveness for students and determining next steps.

At the same time, college leaders should adopt a standardized set of questions for consideration when new programs are proposed. Key questions that can support a shift in planning and budgeting for student success efforts might include:

- > What specific measureable institutional goal(s) is this strategy designed to improve?
- > Which student groups are we trying to serve, and how many students within that group will be served, initially, and over time as the college scales the approach?
- > How will we fund this strategy now, and what will be the cost per student?
- > Where will the money come from to scale this effort (and if grant funded to sustain it)? How likely are those resources to materialize?
- > What professional development and/or ongoing support will be required?
- > How will we know if it works? On what specific timeline will we assess effectiveness? On what data will we decide whether to continue this effort? In addition to student outcomes, what other criteria will we use to make that decision?

As discussed in the overall recommendations, we recommend that Yuba College consider joining Achieving the Dream (ATD) to facilitate its shift toward a culture of inquiry and data-driven decision-making and to develop the systems and leadership required to carry out this approach to achieving institutional effectiveness and student success. ATD offers campus-based consultation and coaching that can help Yuba rapidly understand where it has deficiencies in its systems, what

infrastructure needs to be further developed, and what professional learning the college needs to provide to foster this culture, and provides access to a national network of expertise, support, and resources to address these gaps. By investing in this membership, possibly by tapping IEPI funding or securing an outside grant, Yuba will have immediate access to well-established technical assistance and a source of institutional accountability that can help it promptly establish the systems, processes, and capacity that will be so foundational to carrying out all of the suggestions for improvement made in this feedback report.

WHERE TO LOOK for institutional exemplars

Harper College and City Colleges of Chicago. Both Harper College and the City Colleges of Chicago have set concrete goals for student success that are regularly reviewed as a way to allocate resources, measure against key performance indicators, and focus conversations about how proposed and ongoing student success initiatives will or are contributing to specific goals.

Everett Community College. Everett has established milestones in the first year for transfer students to select a program of study and four-year destination. By sharing with faculty data about poor outcomes, the institution began a decade-long process that has resulted in a culture through which faculty frequently ask questions of and advise students about choice of program and destination.

Central Piedmont Community College. Central Piedmont's institutional research office has done notable work in institutionalizing a culture of evidence—faculty throughout the college understand and use data to improve student outcomes. The Center for Applied Research [\[link\]](#) on campus provides services to the college and others around the country.

WHERE TO LOOK for resources

Achieving the Dream (ATD) [\[link\]](#). This national reform movement offers a network of support including campus-based coaching; exemplars, resources, and tools; and professional development designed to champion evidence-based improvement.

Completion by Design Inquiry Guides [\[link\]](#). These guides offer support for guided inquiry and evidenced-based decision-making, grounded in the student experience; they include (1) *Building a Culture of Inquiry: Using a Cycle of Exploring Research and Data to Improve Student Success*, (2) *Understanding the Student Experience Through the Loss/Momentum Framework: Clearing the Path to Completion*, (3) *The Nuances of Completion: Improving Student Outcomes by Unpacking the Numbers*, and (4) *Principles of Redesign: Promising Approaches to Transforming Student Outcomes*.

Action Guide: Exploring Ways to Strengthen Student Support at You College [\[link\]](#). This interactive guide from the RP Group's Student Support (Re)defined study offers tools and strategies for engaging cross-functional teams in inquiry about how to help more students achieve their educational goals, particularly through the provision of intentional, integrated support that reaches students both inside and outside the classroom, from entry to exit.

AACC Pathways Key Performance Indicators [\[link\]](#). These indicators offer colleges guidance on measuring performance based on student progression and completion.

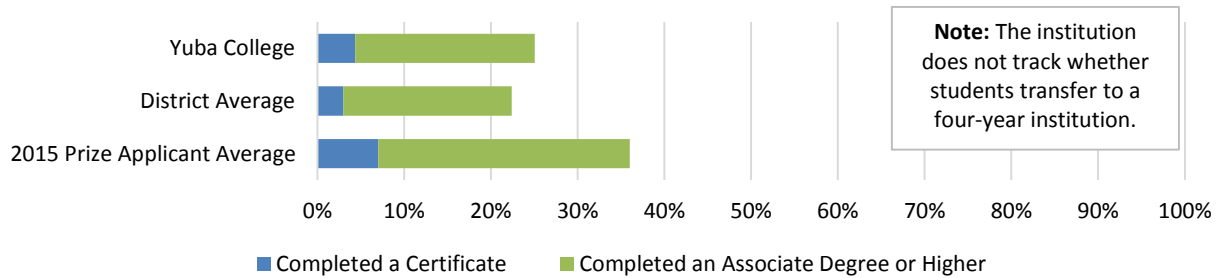
What Excellent Community Colleges Do: Preparing All Students for Success. This book by Aspen Institute College Excellence Program Executive Director Josh Wyner draws on examples from exceptional community colleges to identify key attributes of institutions focused on student success.

Bridging Research and Institutional Culture Inquiry Guides [\[link\]](#). These tools, produced by the RP Group, offer support for a variety of functions across the institution as they engage in selecting research questions, gathering and analyzing data, and using it to make programmatic and institutional change.

COMPLETION

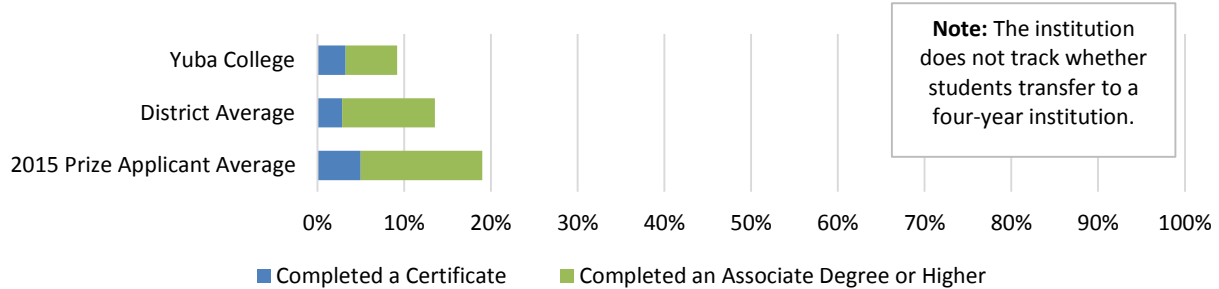
Cohort Analysis: Full-Time Students

Source: Institutional Data Template



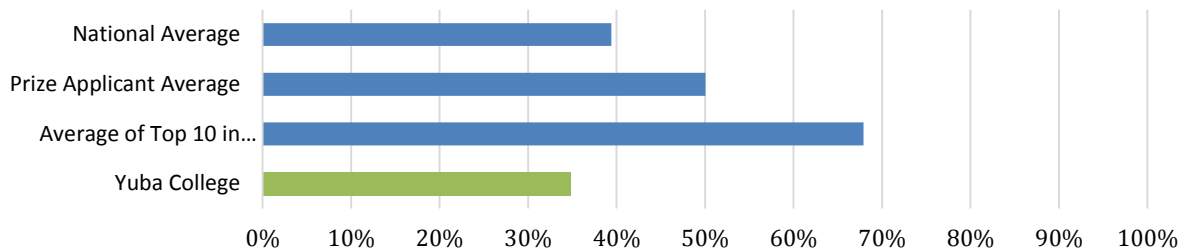
Cohort Analysis: Part-Time Students

Source: Institutional Data Template



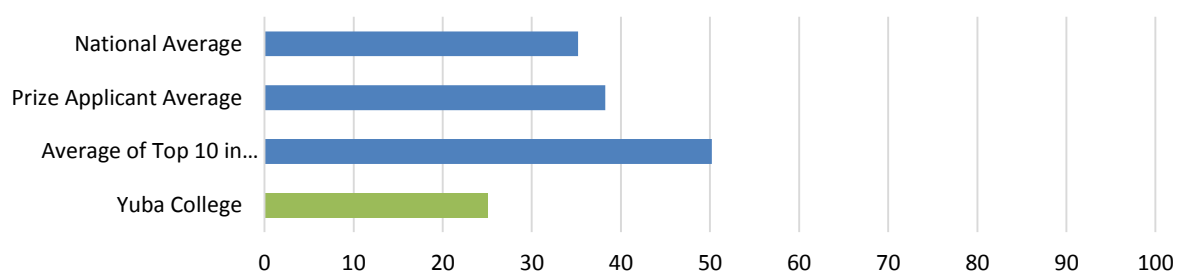
Three-Year Graduation and Transfer Rate

Source: IPEDS; Aspen Prize Data Model, 2017 Cycle



Degrees Awarded per 100 FTE

Source: IPEDS; Aspen Prize Data Model, 2017 Cycle



COMPLETION continued...

Areas of opportunity:

- > Establish shared completion goals and communicate them widely across the college
- > Forge more coherent, clear pathways through the institution and provide the supports to keep students on track goal attainment

Strategies to consider:

- > Develop specific completion goals for a cohort of students and monitor and reflect on progress
 - > Improve advising, emphasizing Associate Degrees for Transfer (ADTs)
 - > Advance developmental education reform
 - > Increase delivery of both academic and nonacademic supports, tailored to the Yuba population
-

Develop completion goals for a specific cohort of students

As noted above in the overall recommendations and the Institutional Culture section, we strongly recommend that Yuba set specific goals related to completion, based on an examination of existing completion rates, conversations with students, and consideration of what increase is reasonable and attainable over the next five and 10 years. With these explicit and well-articulated goals, the college will have a foundation on which to establish a comprehensive approach to increasing completion. Without such goals, community colleges across the country have struggled to achieve sustained increases in attainment rates, which as the figures above reflect, is very much needed at Yuba.

As discussed above, we suggest that YC select goals for and commit to following a discrete cohort of students (e.g., new first-time, full-time students, as indicated above) as one immediate way of stepping into this process of goal setting, tracking, reflecting, celebrating improvement, and course correcting. By focusing on a specific group of students and testing this process, Yuba can begin to generate an open dialog about completion goals; reveal gaps and identify where new structures are needed to monitor progress; and create better systems around data collection, reporting, and analyses related to tracking student goal attainment. The college's Student Success Committee and/or College Council offer natural venues for cohort selection and goal identification. The suggestions below focused on advising, developmental education reform, and the provision of nonacademic supports offer additional considerations for this goal-setting discussion.

Improve advising, emphasizing Associate Degrees for Transfer

Strategic advising plays a critical role in setting students on a course toward completion and helping them stay on track. Site visit interviews revealed that advising currently happens primarily at Yuba's

front door, but advising can best serve students if viewed as a function relevant to the entire trajectory of a student's journey with the college. Accordingly, the advising model needs significant improvement.

Advising can be improved throughout the process, beginning with what happens during recruitment. Upcoming high school graduates often enroll through the Quick Registration process which takes place on their high school campus and which focuses on helping students complete the assessment test, engage in group counseling, and establish a short-term education plan that takes them only through the first semester. Students who utilized the Quick Registration process reported taking part in order to get priority registration; however, they found the experience lacking the support and guidance they were seeking. In the words of one student, "It is supposed to be helpful but it was 10 times worse. Everyone was in a rush, we were just pushed toward certain classes." Students who do not enter the college through the Quick Registration process must pass through a series of nine steps to enroll, including a mandatory online orientation, a follow-up face to face orientation with a counselor, and completion of an abbreviated education plan. No data presently exists to determine how many students actually make it through this process to enrollment. While students engaged in special programs such as EOPS or CalWORKS receive more targeted support upon connection and entry and through the initial phases of progress, the groups touched by these programs are just a small fraction of the overall population.

Moreover, educational planning does not reliably or strategically connect students to specific programs of study that efficiently guide them to completion. Rather, the prevailing approach to counseling appears to be advising students toward taking an unstructured set of general education (GE) courses in their first semester at the college, promoting GE degrees, and encouraging students to accumulate as many credits and credentials as possible—potentially compromising students' long term access to financial aid due to unit limitations, especially for those aiming to attain a bachelor's degree. Over the long-term, we recommend that Yuba take steps to build clear programmatic pathways for all programs of study. In the short term, students can benefit from being counseled into 10 ADTs that, if attained, would provide students priority acceptance and enrollment at a California State University (CSU). These degrees are not currently emphasized in the counseling setting. Students with whom we met who reported telling their counselors that they wanted to transfer also reported that they received no information on these ADT options learning only from peers that these degrees (a) existed at the college, and (b) led to priority acceptance in the CSU system. While the college may well have on its website or provide in other forms information about the ADTs, if students are not aware of them, something needs to be done differently. In the words of the president of one Aspen Prize winning college, "we have adopted as a core belief and operating assumption the conclusion that the college is what student experience."

Site visit discussions also underscored that beyond an initial conversation with a counselor upon first-semester enrollment, students must take the initiative to return for advising and additional planning. Counselors can technically block a students' ability to enroll in courses once they complete 15 units if they have not returned for an advising session. However, the division currently does not have a system in place to identify students who have achieved that unit threshold and/or trigger a follow-up for additional counseling on major selection and completion of a comprehensive education plan.

Yuba can build on the principles of CBD to begin constructing a system of pathways through the institution that leads students efficiently and effectively to completion. By "pathways," we include not only helping students on the front-end make connections and enroll in coursework aligned to their degree goals, but also providing the structures and supports that guide them along a lane that leads more clearly and directly to credentials and degrees aligned with the expectations of jobs or transfer with junior standing in a major at a four-year institution. Given that many of Yuba's students aim to transfer, the college may want to focus initial efforts on getting students onto, progressing through, and completing ADTs. The college should identify which ADTs students are most likely to pursue and begin to define a default package of GE courses for students on those paths. As part of this effort, the college should seriously consider providing professional development about the value and mechanics of these degrees to student services professionals, including counselors, financial aid personnel, staff in the registrar's office, and anyone else who plays a role in transfer student advising. Moreover, we recommend that YC consider the adoption of additional ADTs. Currently, Yuba offers 10 of these degrees, but more than 32 are available.

We recommend that counselors promote to students the merit of selecting an ADT option and then provide the requisite advising needed to work towards and achieve this goal. Such advising would aim to minimize generic first-semester educational courses and prioritize the selection of a major area of study and enrollment in a package of default GE courses that align with this major, recognizing that students can change direction if desired. Moreover, we strongly suggest shifting from abbreviated first-semester planning to the creation of a comprehensive plan that leads to ADT completion. The college could leverage the Quick Registration process as a place to test out this type of advising with a targeted population, following students through their first semester at the college, and proactively reaching out by the end of the first term to encourage completion of a long-term, multi-semester education plan before the end of their first year, including (preferably by the end of the first semester) selection of both a program of study or major and a destination four-year university. Accomplishing this goal will require that counselors work closely with the Student Services division and outreach coordinators, who are, we understand, responsible for organizing Quick Registration.

Additionally, Yuba should be more systematic about ensuring that students return for support as they move through their plan, structuring student check-ins with an advisor all the way to graduation, and arming advisors with information about student progress on their plans. This approach to advising will help counselors determine if/when students are falling off track and provide what students need to regain a foothold and make progress, either through the application of services and supports and/or the revision of their course selection. The adoption of tools and systems discussed in the overall recommendations including education planning and degree audit systems will be critical to delivering this type of sustained advising, particularly given limited human resources for and the high demands on counseling.

Advance the pace of developmental education reform

Pathways to completion should not just be reserved for those who come to Yuba college-ready, particularly given the significant percentage of students who require some form of developmental education. To improve completion outcomes significantly, the college should expand its efforts to clarify the skills and knowledge required for college-level coursework and adopt strategies that accelerate preparation for students who need remediation in math and/or English. Importantly, these strategies should be devised with an eye towards getting students who start in developmental education all the way through to a degree or other credential, not only getting them college ready.

The college is currently exploring a number of efforts designed to address the needs of developmental students; some of which have been more promising than others. Notably, YC's English department has made commendable progress in rethinking its basic skills course sequence and strategically reducing developmental coursework from five to two levels before 1A, using the California Assessment Project (CAP) model. Faculty with whom we met report having a regular conversation about if/how this new structure is supporting student readiness for college-level coursework, and are making adjustments accordingly. For example, the department is presently piloting an effort that integrates the two levels of developmental coursework into one course, and is collecting data on the impact of this effort to determine next steps. In another example, English faculty reported that this process surfaced the need to rethink the English as a Second Language (ESL) program with their ESL colleagues. ESL is now leveraging Adult Basic Education Grant (ABEG) funding to overhaul course offerings and sequencing, aligning some courses with the English developmental sequence, developing a mix of credit and noncredit options, and establishing new Vocational ESL (VESL) options. In addition, the college is currently in the process of streamlining developmental math, reorganizing content to enable a reduction in the number of courses offered below the 52-course level from three to two.

This departmental leadership provides an excellent model on which to build additional

developmental education reform. Now, we recommend extending reforms by looking more deeply at the data on student success both in the revised sequence and after they leave these basic skills English courses to determine impact on readiness and progress. Who does this revised sequence best serve? Who is left behind? Disaggregating this data for different student groups (e.g., assessment level, demographic, full-time versus part-time, etc.) will likely reveal additional opportunities for improvement.

In the area of math, more needs to be done. Specifically, reform of developmental math has not reached the same level as has the Yuba approach to English or as has many other colleges' reform efforts in math in California. In the words of one faculty, "There has been some progress, but it has been a long, arduous process of getting math on board." The college has discussed but not yet embraced multiple measures assessment (MMA) for math placement, despite emerging statewide evidence supportive of this approach. Faculty reported that, in some cases, their peers are confused about MMA, and in other cases, believe that it will lower the bar on who gets to participate in college level work.

To be clear, a lot of work is currently underway. The department has piloted several math boot camps to help self-selected students prepare for the assessment test and improve their placement; is discussing the viability of combining courses to enable acceleration; has met with high schools teachers from the feeder system to review placement exams and discuss expectations; and will pilot a new assessment using multiple measures in the upcoming academic year.

Given the backdrop of these efforts already underway, we believe, as part of the college-wide push to improve completion outcomes, the math department has an opportunity to (1) move immediately toward data-driven conversations about what is currently working to promote progress and how the most promising pilots can be scaled, and (2) further explores the numerous examples of efforts throughout California and the country to fundamentally change the models in delivering education in math. Using data and student focus groups (as outlined above) to show how poor outcomes currently are can inspire a new sense of urgency around which the pace at which strategies are explored, adopted, and measured for effectiveness can be accelerated. Then, faculty can consider what math pathways make the most sense given the credentials Yuba students pursue, what goals it should have to move a substantive number of students more quickly to college-level math in those pathways, and what additional evidence-based strategies the department should adopt given these goals and the population it serves. Ultimately, Yuba's leadership, in part through its Basic Skills Initiative, may need to hold the department accountable for improvement, starting with conducting an assessment and developing a coherent evidence-based reform plan in the coming academic year.

Strengthen delivery of both academic and nonacademic supports, tailored to the Yuba population

Importantly, the college has recently piloted a voluntary early alert program to engage faculty in identifying struggling students and coordinate outreach by a counselor to those students through an email and phone campaign by their second and/or fourth week of the semester. In the upcoming year, the college can take a more strategic approach to program implementation, considering (1) how to engage both part-time and full-time faculty from high-demand courses and programs in identifying struggling students, (2) creating a more sustainable way of reaching out those students and offering curated set of supports, (3) reporting back to faculty about which of their students was reached, (4) and capturing data on how those student perform during the remainder of the semester. Do they access any support after the early alert contact? Complete the course? Drop the course? YC should also consider contacting students who were flagged for early alert and who ultimately left the course (or college) to inquire about their barriers to staying and completing. This assessment of the early alert process and participant feedback may allow YC to surface other barriers to progress and completion, particularly for a vulnerable population of students (e.g., those already at risk of leaving), and begin exploring other academic supports that can increase their persistence.

Conversations with Yuba faculty, student services professionals, administrators, and students themselves underscored the need to consider supports for YC students beyond academic interventions as part of the college's effort to increase completion. Many stakeholders referenced the nonacademic needs of the numerous low-income learners attending YC, the financial burden many of these students shoulder, and the impact of this burden on their achievement. Students interviewed talked about having to make tough choices about staying in school and leaving for full-time work because of the cost not only of tuition but of food, books, and transportation, given virtually no financial support at home.

Recent resources from the Lumina Foundation's *Beyond Financial Aid* initiative offer specific guidance on how to conduct college-wide conversations about the specific needs of this population and how to engage in planning and action designed to strengthen the financial stability of low-income students and improve their outcomes. This initiative offers an institutional assessment tool to jumpstart this process and identify where Yuba might build on existing practice and where it will need to explore new strategies and approaches.

Keys to the success of all of this work to improve student support—including adopting and/or scaling academic and nonacademic approaches—will be:

- (1) Building urgency that status quo outcomes and services are lacking through student conversations and data analysis;
- (2) Linking each initiative to the student success agenda recommended in the Institutional Culture section;
- (3) Determining which populations to target with which approaches, and how the college can scale services to all students who need it in a sustainable way;
- (4) Identifying which supports should be considered optional and which mandatory;
- (5) Increasing promotion of these services to students and educators; and
- (6) Putting in place systems to assess the effectiveness of each part of the reform effort.

Again, the college’s Student Success Committee offers one venue for conducting these sorts of this analyses given the focus of and funding behind the group and the opportunity it offers for cross-functional conversations and planning. YC’s new Vice President of Instruction and Student Services will be well positioned to lead this discussion in this and other venues and committees at the college.

WHERE TO LOOK for institutional exemplars

Hostos Community College and Kennedy-King College. Hostos and Kennedy-King have each intensified case-management advising, ensuring that students connect with counselors on a regular basis and setting expectations for what is addressed in the advising.

City Colleges of Chicago. All students at the City Colleges of Chicago are required to choose one of 10 program “focus areas” and to follow default course sequences mapped out by the colleges in partnership with Chicago employers and universities to prepare students for jobs in demand in the key industries of economic importance [\[link\]](#).

Miami Dade College. In 2012–13, Miami Dade College convened a task force of faculty members who, in consultation with their departments and college-wide instructional committees, mapped out default sequences of courses for students in the college’s largest program areas, in which 80 percent of students enroll [\[link\]](#).

Florida State University Academic Interest Mapping System [\[link\]](#). FSU was a pioneer in using program maps to guide students' progress. Created by faculty, these maps lay out course schedules for students and other nonacademic milestones they must achieve over every term. Students who are undecided are required to choose an "exploratory major" in one of four broad fields. Even with the program maps and tracking, FSU found the need for a robust system of advising and other supports, with advisors embedded in specific academic departments who meet regularly to identify barriers to student success and assist with program planning and course scheduling [\[link\]](#).

Walla Walla Community College, Sinclair Community College, and Santa Fe College. Walla Walla's Advisor Data Portal [\[link\]](#) and Degree Estimator [\[link\]](#), and Santa Fe's Degree Audit [\[link\]](#) provide students, faculty, and staff with user-friendly technology that clearly delineates the student pathway and provides feedback on progress toward credentials.

WHERE TO LOOK for resources

Learning From High-Performing and Fast-Gaining Institutions [\[link\]](#). This practice guide from the Education Trust, based on the analysis of practices at eight improving universities, lays out 10 essential data-centered questions for colleges to frame a completion conversation around.

From the Community College Research Center:

- > *Redesigning America's Community Colleges: A Clearer Path to Student Success* [\[abstract\]](#)
- > *Get With the Program ... and Finish It: Building Guided Pathways to Accelerate Student Completion* [\[link\]](#)
- > *Start with the End in Mind: Guided Pathways to Student Success* [\[link\]](#)

Students are more likely to complete when they enter a specific program of study their first year. These three resources from the Community College Research Center at Columbia University—a book, working paper, and webinar—help colleges understand how to develop guided pathways to improve outcomes and help them tackle the work.

Designing a System for Strategic Advising [\[link\]](#). This CCRC brief explains the merits of a more intensive approach to student advising.

Evaluating Your College's Readiness for Technology Adoption [\[link\]](#). This readiness assessment based on research from the Community College Research Center helps colleges that are considering adopting early alert systems and other new technology, and emphasizes the importance of thinking through how policies and support services will be redesigned to take advantage of such technology.

Integrated Planning and Advising Services. IPAS systems leverage technology to enhance and

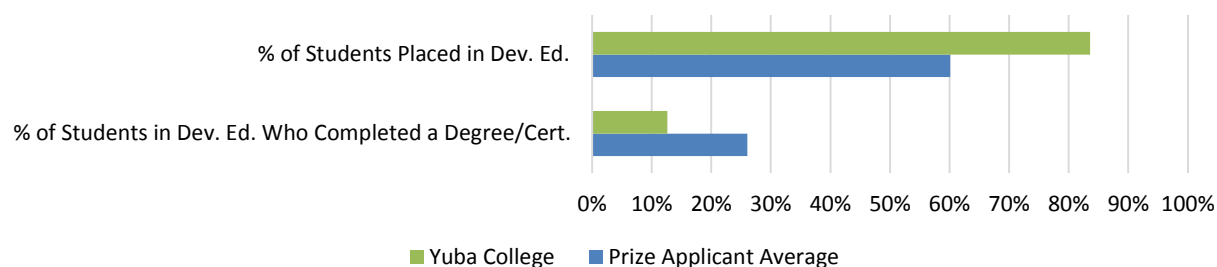
streamline course advising, selection, and registration; tracking of student progress; and targeting of support services in order to improve student academic decision-making as well as institutional strategies to help students stay on track to degree attainment. Active Achieving the Dream Leader Colleges are eligible to apply for IPAS funding.

Beyond Financial Aid: How Colleges Can Strengthen the Financial Stability of Low-Income Students and Increase Student Outcomes [\[link\]](#). This toolkit from the Lumina Foundation provides a self-assessment so colleges understand steps they can (and must) take to build a comprehensive set of supports to make school affordable for students, beyond traditional financial aid strategies.

LEARNING

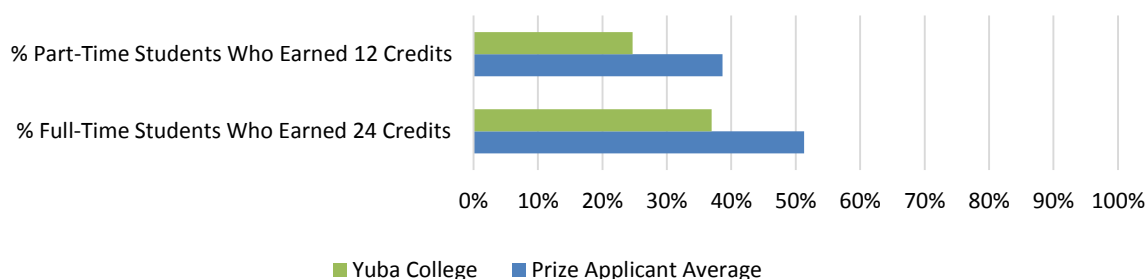
Developmental Education Placement and Success

Source: Institutional Data Template



Credit-Hour Accumulation Within First Academic Year

Source: Institutional Data Template



Areas of opportunity:

- > Move from student learning outcomes (SLOs) tracking to authentic assessment
- > Utilize outcomes assessment to guide decisions about which programs to prioritize, discontinue

Strategies to consider:

- > Provide professional development to systematically expand the use student learning outcomes to explore and improve pedagogical practice
- > Better align outcomes to expectations of transfer institutions
- > Make additional revisions to the program review process

Provide professional development focused on using SLOs assessment to improve pedagogical practice

The Yuba site visit revealed that the college had established a process for and system of tracking outcomes at the institutional and course levels, and is at the beginning stages of doing so at the program level. The practitioners feed SLOs and assessment information into the college's TracDat system, ensuring compliance with the requirements of the regional accrediting agency. A student

learning outcomes committee exists to support faculty participation in the assessment process, and the college recently revised the program review process to deepen the focus on student success and incorporate an examination of challenges and disparities in performance into annual updates.

There exists some evidence that SLOs assessment leads to improvement in teaching practice and student learning. At the institutional level, YC has established a process for assessing ILOs using a shared common final exam for all sections of a transfer-level composition course, and faculty leadership reported working with these results to make some adjustments to coursework. At the program level, the ESL department started a community of practice to discuss teaching; this COP began with collectively looking at and aligning course rubrics, which has subsequently led efforts to align courses and refine the course sequence. The English department has developed an active Faculty Inquiry Group and has adopted the use of Reading Apprenticeship as a strategy to improve reading skills college-wide. Instructors who work in both the English and ESL departments are creating cross-program connections and report engaging in informal collective dialog about student learning. Math faculty report an active practice of “assessing everything,” regularly looking at and discussing how to improve specific learning outcomes.

Yet, when asked about SLOs, many faculty, staff, and administrators could not identify elements of an intentional, college-wide approach to broadening and deepening the use of SLOs for authentic assessment, advancement of practice, and, ultimately, measureable improvement of student learning. One IT staff indicated that people request data to plug in to TracDat but that she does not believe that many are supported so that they can fully explore and understand what those data mean. Some instructors we interviewed described occasions when they made adjustments to their teaching practice, but when asked how they were supported in making those adjustments, their answers suggested that their work stemmed from individual initiative rather than an identifiable systematic program of professional development on using student outcomes data for change.

Based on site visit interviews, our sense is that there is an opportunity to better connect the funding of faculty professional development to how individual faculty improve student learning in their classrooms and across programs. There are currently two sources of professional development funds: Flex funds, which are administered on a first-come, first, served basis, and campus-wide professional development funds, for which faculty (and staff) have to indicate how a request professional development activity will relate to improving student outcomes. Moreover, there are two committees that administer these funds. In the end, funding decision seems to be made *ad hoc*, without reference to a broader strategic professional development plan focused on advancing student outcomes.

Given this context, we recommend moving toward a systematic and systemic approach to helping individuals and departments across the institution see the value in and make *meaningful* use of SLOs assessment to improve student learning. A first step must be developing a sense of urgency and purpose for improving student learning. Convening faculty across the college and within programs to discuss and decide on the greatest student learning needs is a good place to start. Once a few specific learning challenges are identified, examining course completion data that relate to those outcomes may reveal a strong need for change, and identify a few places to start. Senior leaders must play a role making the case for using SLOs assessment (rather than as a necessary element of accreditors expectations), but faculty leaders must ultimately be at the center of identifying specific student learning challenges and deciding what might enable faculty to address them.

With an approach identified, the college can either utilize a current funding stream and/or secure an outside grant to promote professional learning around purposeful SLOs assessment. Action research conducted by a number of faculty inquiry groups offers one specific approach, building on the existing work of the ESL COP and English FIG. We recommend that Yuba devise a plan that ultimately includes both adjunct and full-time faculty in any such effort, given the considerable number of programs at the college run by part-time instructors. Also, given that some programs have only one or two faculty assigned, the college might consider forming faculty inquiry groups or communities of practice around a cluster of related programs. Moreover, we encourage the college to think about different delivery modes and options for convening faculty and staff, given the far-flung nature of the district and those working at the college.

Better align outcomes to transfer expectations

How well Yuba students perform at four-year colleges and universities after transferring offers an important window into the rigor and alignment of student learning to expectations at receiving institutions. However, it does not appear that anyone at the college routinely looks at post-graduation success of students, particularly those who transfer. Moreover, faculty told us that they do not regularly connect with peers at nearby institutions to determine if coursework and programming align with their expectations of students after they leave YC.

As part of an effort to improve student learning outcomes, we encourage the college to take a specific look at what happens to students *after* they leave the institution and consider what these post-graduation outcomes mean about the rigor and alignment of their learning. One place to start would be looking at bachelor's degree attainment at four-year institutions to which significant numbers of Yuba students transfer, both overall and among those who earn ADTs prior to transfer. The college can then reach out to deans, department chairs, and faculty at those destination institutions to discuss the data and what they suggest about students' readiness and opportunities for

improvement. What strengths do YC students have when they transfer to their programs and/or institutions? What skills, knowledge, or preparation are YC students lacking? What outcomes should YC prioritize? Yuba can then use this input to consider how to improve instruction and advising.

See the Transfer and Bachelor's Degree Attainment section for further discussion.

Make additional revisions to program review process

The recent changes to connect program review to SLOs and student success issues are a positive step toward leveraging existing structures in the college to promote a regular examination of student learning and program-level discussion about how to make improvements. Yet, conversations with faculty and administrators revealed that more work needs to be done to ensure that Yuba is strategically using the program review process to align its offerings with student needs, goals, and next steps; determine priorities; and invest its limited resources. With roughly 50 instructional programs, in some cases staffed by only a few part-time instructors, it is time for the college to take a step back and consider whether it has the right program mix in place. In the words of one administrator, Yuba “has not arrived at a place where it looks at its entire program portfolio [in order to] decide what will really serve students best.” Furthermore, there appears to exist no routine process for discontinuing programs that no longer serve a critical mass of students or serve students effectively, outside of attrition through faculty retirements and departures. Emerging discussions in the Student Learning Outcomes committee about how to consolidate or combine programs and recognition among Academic Senate leadership of these concerns show promise that the college is primed to grapple with this issue. We recommend that the college review other examples of program review and program viability/program discontinuance processes that exist in California community colleges, such as the program review process at Butte College and the recently updated “Program Improvement and Viability” policy at the San Mateo Community College District.

WHERE TO LOOK for institutional exemplars

West Kentucky Community and Technical College. West Kentucky's faculty-led approach to measuring, and responding to, student learning outcomes is a national model. Every section of every class has common assessments graded according to common rubrics; professors measure not only college-wide learning outcomes but also key course and program learning outcomes, and they adjust instruction accordingly. Also, after the college defined improvement in reading skills as students' foremost need, faculty were organized into learning circles to learn and test out teaching strategies to institute in the classroom. [What Excellent Community Colleges Do: Preparing All Students for Success (chapter 3), [link](#); “Faculty Learning Circle helps teachers connect with each other, students,” [link](#)].

Community College of Baltimore County [\[link\]](#). CCBC developed guidelines and practical tools and exemplars to support course- and program-level SLOs development.

San Mateo Community College District recently established a program viability policy as part of the curriculum and program development and program review processes [\[link\]](#), and **College of San Mateo** [\[link\]](#) and **Skyline College** [\[link\]](#) have both developed tools, including process checklists and forms, to guide instructional programs in practically implementing this policy.

Butte College [\[link\]](#) has developed an extensive program review process and system of supports for program faculty and staff to conduct a data-driven self-study and for a validation team to provide a recommendation on actions related to expansion, improvement, or contraction of the program.

WHERE TO LOOK for resources

California Community Colleges Success Network (3CSN) [\[link\]](#). 3CSN develops leaders in California community colleges who have the capacity to facilitate networks of faculty, staff, and students for curricular and institutional redesigns in support of increased student access, success, equity, and completion. 3CSN provides communities of practice and professional development around key reforms and approaches including acceleration, habits of mind, and reading apprenticeship.

RP Group Student Learning Outcomes [\[link\]](#) and **Assessment** [\[link\]](#) Listservs. The SLOs listserv offers an online venue for student learning outcome coordinators to share experiences, ask questions, and learn about effective practices; the Assessment listserv features effective practices, relevant studies, and useful resources on assessment issues.

TRANSFER AND BACHELOR'S ATTAINMENT

Areas of opportunity:

- > Track and begin acting on post-graduate outcomes
- > Establish closer relationships with key transfer institutions to develop transfer pathways

Strategies to consider:

- > Gather and reflect on transfer and attainment data from clearinghouse and institutional sources
 - > Identify and outreach to key institutions and top transfer majors for outreach
 - > Follow students in ADTs through their transfer experience
-

Gather and reflect on transfer and attainment data

Given the substantial focus on transfer and bachelor's attainment among YC students, we suggest that Yuba prioritize its efforts to collect good data and foster a culture of inquiry about transfer rates and outcomes. The site visit revealed that faculty, staff, and administrators have a limited understanding of transfer outcomes, not surprising given the absence of a structure for gathering information on what happens to students after they leave the institution. Establishing a process of regularly tracking and reporting on transfer student movement post-Yuba and identifying their achievement of a bachelor's degree within a defined period of time (e.g., six years from entering the community college) is a critical first step.

To begin building this system, we recommend securing National Student Clearinghouse data on transfer mobility and outcomes, focusing on the top three-to-five destination universities. Additional data can be collected from those institutions. We recommend the new VP of Instruction and Student Services direct this process; support the college's research analyst in developing and analyzing these data sets; and then lead reflection on and discussion about the results. Basic questions to consider when constructing and exploring these data sets include:

- > What are our students' rates of transfer to four-year colleges and universities within three and four years of entering Yuba?
- > Which institutions are the top receivers of our transfer students?
- > In what programs do our transfer students most commonly major?
- > How many YC credits, on average, fail to transfer to the four-year institution?

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- > How do our students perform in the first two semesters following transfer (GPA, credit accumulation)?
 - > What portion of students attains bachelor's degrees within six years of entering YC?
 - > Which institutions graduate the highest number and percentage of YC transfers?
 - > Which graduate the lowest number and percentage?

With this data in hand, Yuba leaders can begin to facilitate an internal reflection on what these data mean and how they can inform strategies to strengthen the likelihood that the college's students will succeed in attaining bachelor's degrees. For example, questions to consider might include:

- > What do our transfer rates say about how we are helping students choose paths and develop plans upon entry?
- > Are the top transfer destinations those that we expected? What do these data say about programs and partnerships we might consider creating?
- > What are the four-year schools with the best outcomes for YC students? Do any of them take large numbers of YC students? What does this say about where to focus efforts on expanding transfer partnerships?
- > What do the performance data say about students' readiness for the first few semesters after transfer? What areas of improvement in student learning should we begin to explore?

These data can be useful to the college's effort to improve student learning outcomes (as discussed above in the Learning section), strengthen student advising upon entry and as they progress through Yuba, and strengthen academic and other supports throughout their journey to and through transfer.

Follow students in ADTs through their transfer experience

The California Community College and the CSU systems have done important work to help colleges organize and strengthen pathways through the establishment of ADTs. Yuba's adoption of a core group of ADTs degrees offers a positive foundation on which to improve transfer outcomes. As noted above in the Completion section, we encourage the college to take better advantage of these pathways by developing advising systems that help more students take advantage of these options. In addition to the specific shift in counseling practices and reorganizing of GE coursework into default packages connected to major areas of study (as noted above), we recommend that the college follow a core group of students through their ADT experience. Yuba could select a sample cohort of students

pursuing the top three ADTs and follow them along their educational journey at the college, in their receiving institution post-transfer, and through completion of their baccalaureate. This long-term exercise will surface a number of issues students face, providing direction to YC on issues such as how to improve student readiness for transfer, preparation for degree attainment, ability to transfer credits, and financial aid planning for a four-year degree.

Identify and outreach to key institutions

Finally, we strongly recommend that Yuba leaders partner with district and Woodland College leaders to initiate conversations with universities that receive substantial numbers of district students. Presenting findings from the National Student Clearinghouse, leaders can discuss with their four-year counterparts how to improve transfer migration and bachelor's attainment rates. We recommend that these conversations focus on identifying a few key priority areas that would strengthen the transition of students taking advantage of the ADTs, such as the completion of accurate education plans, maximizing the transfer of credit in major, developing strong 2+2 financial aid plans, and the identification of key student outcomes required for success in the receiving institutions. As a second stage effort, Yuba can leverage these executive leader-level conversations to then broker connections between program leaders and faculty at YC and proximate CSUs. YC can choose a few ADTs and/or programs in which high volumes of Yuba students currently transfer, or in which data suggest that more should transfer. In the end, these conversations cannot only help improve transfer outcomes, but enable Yuba to market successful pathways to bachelor's degrees to prospective and entering students.

WHERE TO LOOK for institutional exemplars

Northern Virginia Community College's Pathway to the Baccalaureate [\[link\]](#). This program—whose student outcomes are excellent—identifies at-risk high school students who express an intent to earn a bachelor's degree and admits them upfront into NOVA and a four-year school. They proceed as a learning community with specialized support services, such as placement testing, mandatory academic advising, early course registration, extra progress reports, and dedicated retention counselors.

Valencia College. The DirectConnect partnership between the University of Central Florida, Valencia College, and three other community colleges is a national model for a large-scale partnership that dramatically increases the number of students who transfer to and earn bachelor's degrees from four-year schools. Valencia publishes clear curriculum maps that lay out the skills required in each program and in what classes they are developed, has an annual summit with UCF and other DirectConnect schools to analyze outcomes for transfer students, and is developing a tool with

Civitas Learning to allow faculty at all institutions to see where students struggle and work together to create better alignment.

Miami Dade College and Florida State University. When they adopted guided pathways, Miami Dade and Florida State University also restructured advising so that students develop academic plans based on the pathway maps and have structured contact to stay on track. There are clear expectations for who sees students when and what topics they are to address.

Everett Community College. ECC's transfer degree programs are supported by advising and counseling, curriculum guides, regular transfer fairs and campus visits and the state's "Washington 45" general education articulation agreement.

WHERE TO LOOK for resources

National Student Clearinghouse [\[link\]](#). This organization offers access to a range of data sources and resources to support community college reporting, evidence-based decision-making, and success.

University of California [\[link\]](#) and the **California State University** [\[link\]](#) offer community colleges data sets to explore transfer rates and post-transfer success.

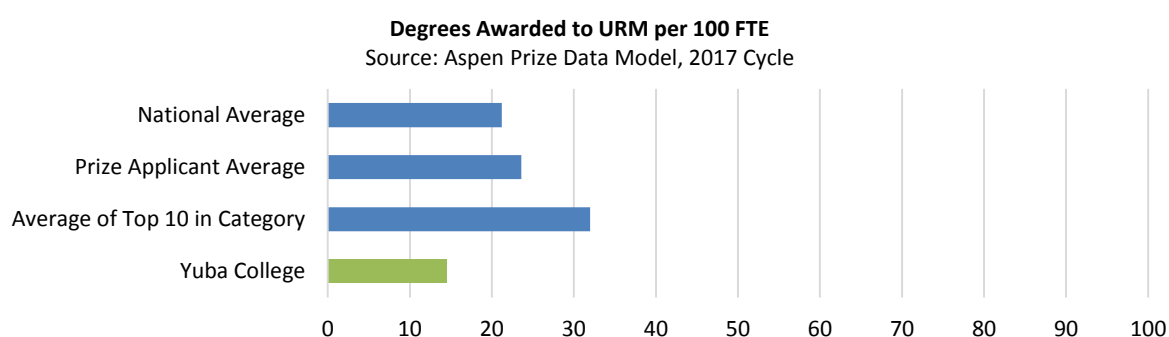
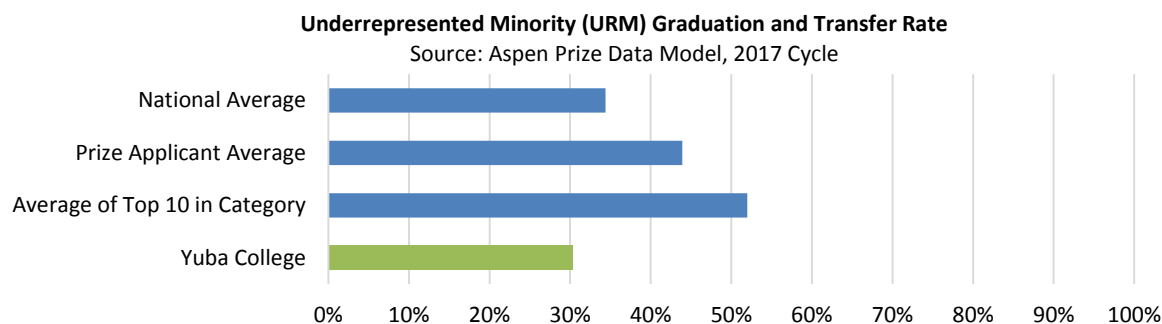
The Business Case for Regional Public Universities to Strengthen Community College Transfer Pathways (With Guidance on Leading the Process) [\[link\]](#) and **The Promise of the Transfer Pathway: Opportunity and Challenge for Community College Students Who Seek the Baccalaureate Degree** [\[link\]](#). These reports, from the Maximizing Resources for Student Success initiative and the College Board, explore the barriers to transferring to four-year institutions and analyze ways that colleges can improve the process for students.

Improving Transfer Pathways for California Community College Students in CTE Programs [\[link\]](#). This RP Group paper focuses on the impact of CTE pathways that facilitate transfer to four-year programs in California community colleges.

What We Know About Transfer [\[link\]](#). This report from Achieving the Dream examines recent research on transfer from community colleges to four-year.

Transfer Students in Higher Education: Building Foundations for Policies, Programs, and Services that Foster Student Success [\[link\]](#). This book, from the National Resource Center for the First-Year Experience at the University of South Carolina, explores the role of the community college (as well as other partners) in ensuring strong transfer pathways.

EQUITY



Areas of opportunity:

- > Develop an understanding of how different student groups access and succeed at the college

Strategies to consider:

- > Disaggregate student data by subpopulation
 - > Gather the perspectives of different student groups
 - > Rejuvenate connections with K12 partners
-

Disaggregate student data by subpopulation

Yuba is taking measures that have the potential to improve the access and success of at-risk populations. The Quick Registration program, offered onsite in the community at feeder high schools in the spring prior to the fall semester, takes students through the application, assessment, and initial educational planning process. EOPS offers comprehensive approach to onboarding low-income and educationally disadvantaged learners, proactively recruiting at high schools and engaging participants in a summer readiness program that delivers, prior to fall enrollment, courses applicable to student degree goal, a college success course, and embedded tutoring. Yuba will use Student Equity funding to launch Puente and Umoja programs in fall 2016, and is currently

reworking the ESL program to provide more strategic offerings to students including VESL and credit courses that lead into the English course sequence.

At the same time, our site visit revealed an opportunity for a more comprehensive strategy for advancing equity for different student groups at the college. Current efforts appear somewhat isolated from one another and, taken together, they serve a relatively small portion of the Yuba students who could benefit. Moreover, the college does not have systems in place to routinely assess the impact and costs of these approaches, determine who they are serving and how, and revise them accordingly.

Looking at disaggregated data for student subgroups, reflecting on their unique experiences at the college, and determining gaps in their success is fundamental to developing a comprehensive and coherent approach to equity. At present, Yuba does not have a practice of working with and utilizing data in this way. Looking at student data by subpopulation is a first step toward making more grounded and strategic decisions about what interventions, approaches, and supports to pursue for these different groups (e.g., race/ethnicity, age, gender, financial aid status, developmental education placement, etc.). As discussed in the Institutional Culture section, the CBD loss/momentum framework can be used to assess the movement of students, by subgroup, from entry to completion. Who are the key student groups at our college? Where do they seem to be leaking out of pathways through the college?

Once the analyses of loss/momentum data reveals significant gaps in student outcomes, it is important to create the time and space for considering why the biggest challenges exist. Why do a certain percentage of students who enroll never show up for class? Why do students fail to complete college level math and English in their first year? What in our financial aid, onboarding, course registration, or other systems might explain attrition from the fall to the spring semester of the first year? Then, the college can consider how to change core systems, structures, policies, and practices that might disproportionately impact at-risk populations. As mentioned in the Completion section, the self-assessment and discussion guide provided by *Beyond Financial Aid* can help Yuba may be particularly useful to Yuba as it can help facilitate these conversations about what approaches to pursue, given its significant population of low-income learners.

Yuba can also test out assessing the impact of current equity-minded strategies by gathering and discussing data on this year's Quick Registration participants. For example, which high schools have the most participants? Which sub-populations of those enrolled at the college took advantage of the Quick Registration process? How does that compare to the student demographic make-up of feeder high schools? Who makes it through all steps of the process? Who actually enrolls in the fall? Who persists from fall to spring? Who returns to complete a full comprehensive education plan by the end

of their first year? These and similar analyses may reveal opportunities to proactively reach out to new students groups and/or consider revisions to the process to prevent certain from leaking out of the pipeline into the college.

Gather the perspectives of different student groups

To expand on and bring to life this quantitative analysis, we strongly recommend that YC devise ways to gather student perspectives that reveal their experiences at key moments. As mentioned above in the Institutional Culture and Transfer and Bachelor's Attainment sections, the student voice can provide an important window into what students actually experience, inspiring faculty, student services, and administrative leaders to understand that what they devised and deliver is often is not what students are experiencing. That understanding can serve as a powerful motivator to make change and help shift the focus away from staff and faculty behavior to what *students* experience, thus diffusing potentially difficult and charged conversations about low outcomes.

The college should consider implementing a series of student focus groups, reviewed by multiple faculty and staff and guided by a well-curated set of questions, orchestrated around the different loss/momentum points of connection, entry, progress, and completion. The college might also consider engaging a “secret shopper” study whereby students are tapped to share what happens when they try to enroll in the college, engage in the matriculation process (including educational planning), seek out information on how they are proceeding from semester to semester, and/or how they experience key introductory courses in the first two weeks at the institution. These types of research efforts will reveal both strengths in practice and areas of opportunity for better serving specific populations at the college. Yuba can then pair the findings from this student experience research with data to discuss about how to build pathways to success for all populations enrolled at the college and advance student movement accordingly.

WHERE TO LOOK for institutional exemplars

Bunker Hill Community College. Bunker Hill is known for its efforts to track cohorts over time and plan improvements based on the data.

Georgia State University [\[link\]](#). Georgia State dug deep into its data to understand weaknesses in retention among minorities.

WHERE TO LOOK for resources

Beyond Financial Aid: How Colleges Can Strengthen the Financial Stability of Low-Income Students and Increase Student Outcomes [\[link\]](#). This toolkit from the Lumina Foundation provides a self-assessment so colleges understand steps they can (and must) take to build a comprehensive set of supports to make school affordable for students, beyond traditional financial aid strategies.

Do Support Services at Community Colleges Encourage Success or Reproduce Disadvantage? [\[link\]](#). This report, from the Community College Resource Center, shows how the students who need support services the most are often the least likely to seek them out.

College Promise Advisory Board [\[link\]](#). A newly formed independent College Promise Advisory Board directed by former U.S. Under Secretary of Education Martha Kanter plans to identify strategies and best practices for individual institutions seeking to create “promise programs” on their campuses.

Ensuring Equitable Access and Success [\[link\]](#). This guide produced through a partnership between the California Community Colleges Chancellor’s Office and the RP Group provides practical insight and guidance on how to assess and mitigate disproportionate impact in student support and success programs.

Student Support (Re)defined [\[link\]](#). This RP Group study offers insights from students on what they think support their success, with a particular focus on the experience of African-American and Latino learners; the full research report *Using Student Voices to (Re)define Support* [\[link\]](#) shares an in-depth analysis of student responses and research brief *What Students Say they Need to Succeed* [\[link\]](#) offers practitioners high-level implications and considerations for policy and practice.

LABOR MARKET SUCCESS

Areas of opportunity:

- > Ensure a coherent and comprehensive portfolio of career technical education (CTE) programming, responsive to regional workforce needs

Strategies to consider:

- > Ensure program selection and development is based on labor market value
 - > Convene with employers in a few sectors of growth and/or replacement in the region and translate findings back to college decision-making about program portfolio
 - > Improve student career exploration and job placement
-

Ensure program selection and development is based on labor market value

Yuba College offers a smaller portfolio of CTE programs than typically found in community colleges nationwide. This is not surprising given the historic focus of California community colleges as transfer institutions and limited labor market opportunities in the surrounding region. That said, CTE certificates, degrees, and career-oriented transfer pathways can provide students significant opportunity, and some Yuba stakeholders recognized the value of these offerings to their students and suggested that Yuba could offer more opportunities. In the words of one administrator, “A portion of the college’s population is seeking CTE...is very skills focused.”

Faculty and administrators report that the college is currently engaged in an “overhaul” of its CTE programming as part of the reorganization of the campuses and centers across the district, facilitated through new funding streams such as a recently acquired Career Pathways Trust (CPT) grant. Positively, one administrator indicated that the college is using CBD terminology and guided pathways principles to inform this examination and reorganization of the CTE curriculum and portfolio. The college is also leveraging CPT and other grant money to make connections with local K12 partners and to begin pathway development in high schools that leads directly into Yuba CTE programming. Moreover, some college faculty are involved in emerging regional sectoral initiatives.

Colleges that achieve excellent workforce outcomes for students often take a step back to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the region’s workforce demands (both replacement opportunities and in high-growth occupations). Doing so entails reviewing regional labor market data about areas of projected growth by sector and within specific jobs, connecting with employers by sector to discuss the meaning of the data and how projected demand can be met, and an analysis of student employment and earnings data to understand whether the jobs being discussed offer employment with family-sustaining wages. CTE faculty noted that while some conversations about labor market

outcomes happen in CTE departments and within the Perkins Committee structure, the college lacks a CTE council to hold conversations about how such outcomes across the entire set of workforce programs.

We strongly encourage the college to assign to a working group the important tasks of gathering data on labor market outcomes, working with senior leaders to convene conversations with employers by sector, and then thoughtfully and strategically considering how to improve employment and earnings rates for Yuba's students. For example, the college's new Vice President of Instructional and Student Services might partner with the Dean of Applied Learning to rejuvenate a CTE council that engages key faculty and student services leaders in how to close gaps revealed by the data.

Data this group might consider are outlined in the Institute for Higher Education Policy Guide, *Classroom to Career: Leveraging Employment Data to Measure Labor Market Outcomes*. Details about how to utilize state-level data are provided on pages 19-21 of the Aspen guide, *Using Comparative Information to Improve Student Success*. In addition, this group might consider participating in the statewide CTE Outcomes Survey process and looking at the new SkillsBuilder metric recently added to the state's Student Success Scorecard data. These metrics and data sets can help Yuba better understand outcomes for both completers and those who enter the workforce before completing a college credential.

Moreover, the college can engage in its own investigation of student leavers—both those who departed the college with a certificate and/or degree and those who left without. Interviewing those students by program can provide an important window into why they left Yuba and how doing so affected their earnings and employment history. To start, the college might pick two to three programs within a handful of CTE departments with significant numbers of students enrolled and substantial numbers of projected job openings (e.g., allied health, welding).

As noted in the Learning section, the college should also consider including a process for deciding what programs to keep or remove as it engages in this CTE portfolio review. If employment and/or earnings reveal student outcomes that are comparable or only slightly better than those of high school graduates, we encourage Yuba to have the hard conversations about how to fundamentally change those programs and whether some should be reduced in size or eliminated. This will enable the college to expand programs that have strong outcomes and thus position itself as an even more responsive and trusted workforce training partner, delivering programs that have real value to students and the community.

Convene with regional employers and translate findings back to the college

We additionally recommend that Yuba executives join YCCD leadership and their Woodland peers in a process designed to deliver expanded workforce opportunities in a few sectors. Specifically, we recommend that Yuba:

- > Looking at data, clearly identify one to two sectoral areas across the region that are projected to expand jobs and/or seek large numbers of replacement workers; and
- > Hold strategic conversations with groups of employers, based on these data, about projected needs from the data and how this relates to their particular talent needs.

Community colleges have a unique opportunity to convene sectoral employers—who often see themselves as competitors with one another—to discuss the implications of the labor market data for talent development. Conversations should be constructed to discern whether the data ring true to employers and to drill down into details on the specific jobs that will be needed (a level of detail often not in the data) and the specific skills employers believe those jobs will demand.

The college can then take this detailed information and dig into what it would take to prepare the talent these sectoral employers require. These discussions can help YCCD comprehensively assess its portfolio of offerings across its campuses and centers and enable Yuba to work with the district to focus on its greatest value to students and the community. Yuba can then share these results back with CTE faculty and direct the alignment of programming accordingly, either through the promotion or revision of existing programs, the initiation of new ones, or the elimination of offerings that are no longer relevant to the region.

We understand that, at Yuba, many of these conversations are already happening at the program level, for example among deputy sector navigators and department chairs leading thriving programs with strong industry connections. Now is the opportunity to extend such conversations across sectors. Indeed, the college might consider starting this process with sectors that hire students out of some of the college's highest performing programs.

Engage students in career exploration

As the college works to revamp its CTE offerings and makes strides toward articulating their specific labor market value, it also has the opportunity strengthen how it informs students of these options and guides them toward program selection. Excellent community colleges across the country take the opportunity to engage students in career exploration early in their educational trajectories. Yuba can join these colleges by exploring and adopting concrete, predictable structures and systems that allow

students (1) to explore careers in areas of projected job growth, (2) consider which areas match students' interests, and (3) explore the pathways available at the college (and where appropriate four-year schools) that lead to those careers (both short-term certificates that qualify completers for specific jobs or longer-term preparation in a pre-transfer pathway leading to a career-oriented bachelor's or master's degree).

Yuba has several venues in which student could explore career options in this way, including the college success course, existing programs such as EOPS, and new programs such as Puente. In addition, the college might explore reaching students before they arrive, leveraging the new CTE pathway experiences in partnership with local high schools. One excellent model the college might consider is the *Get Focused, Stay Focused* program originated by Santa Barbara City College (SBCC). This model starts at the high school level, engaging freshmen in developing interest inventories and exploring careers *before* they arrive at the college, which is then reinforced in the onboarding process at SBCC. Other community colleges have adapted the *Get Focused, Stay Focused* approach and used it as a first-semester course to serve the same function in the community college setting.

Yuba's Student Success Committee offers a place to determine the approach that makes the most sense for the college, and SSSP and Student Equity funding can be leveraged to support this effort. As Yuba adopts a more systematic and systemic approach to career exploration for its students early in their community college experience, it should evaluate whether students are able to make more informed choices and set more specific educational goals, and whether the pathways students choose are more likely to include CTE pathways.

WHERE TO LOOK for institutional exemplars

College of the Ouachitas. College leaders target specific employment sectors and regularly gather data on labor market outcomes by program.

Broward College. For each program field, Broward's new college catalog [\[link\]](#) lays out jobs in demand in the region using a variety of data sources.

Lorain County Community College, Ohio. LCCC has built state-of-the-art programs and training centers around specific high-demand sectors, including advanced manufacturing and microelectromechanical systems (MEMS).

Santa Barbara City College Get Focused...Stay Focused Program [\[link\]](#). This program offers a classroom-based approach to guidance that includes the development of a 10-year, online, skill-based career and college plan starting in students' freshman year of high school and following them

through their educational journey.

WHERE TO LOOK for resources

Classroom to Career: Leveraging Employment Data to Measure Labor Market Outcomes [[complete document](#)]. This May 2016 IHEP document offers a comprehensive listing of federal and state sources of data that can be used to analyze labor market outcomes to higher education.

Using Labor Market Data to Improve Student Success [[complete document](#)]. This Aspen Institute report highlights how several colleges help students choose a realistic career path.

Workforce Preparation and Employment Outcomes [[complete document](#)]. This Completion Arch research brief from RTI International illustrates how community colleges in Tennessee and California report labor market outcomes of their graduates in certificate and degree programs.

California Community Colleges' CTEOS Survey. Administered by Santa Rosa Junior College, this survey instrument tracks post-graduate outcomes in CTE programs at community colleges throughout California.

Career Coach [[link](#)]. This online tool allows students to explore the job prospects, earning potential, and current openings for a variety of careers, and colleges can use the amassed data to analyze student interests.

CONCLUSION

Yuba College is at an important juncture. With new leadership in multiple positions, a positive accreditation review, and new funding streams coming into the college, Yuba has the opportunity to hone in on a success agenda that makes sense for its students and the surrounding community, and begin the path towards exemplary student outcomes. There is an urgent need for this change; data suggests that the success of many Yuba students is not what it could be. Vital to this evolution will be helping all stakeholders across Yuba realize the immediate need for action, based on a deeper awareness of the college's current low outcomes and students' own perspectives about what impedes their access to and success in the institution.

With this understanding in place, the college can identify a collective vision for its students, setting near- and long-term goals and benchmarks for assessing progress toward these outcomes. The Completion by Design principles can help facilitate this discussion, and this document offers several suggestions for specific concrete areas in which reform efforts can be focused.

In the end, leaders across the campus—from senior administrators, to program leads, to faculty and staff—must define and implement this new direction so that the positive change that could occur in the coming years matches the hopes and desires of the Yuba community for their students. This evolution will need to be supported with good data; targeted investments; professional development; and strong buy-in from educational institutions, employers, and others that will enable students' success. We hope this document offers some valuable ideas that can help the college achieve those goals and look forward to learning of your progress in the coming months and years.

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