LAO 75 YEARS OF SERVICE

M ISLATIVE ANALYST • SEPTEMBER 20

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

L I F S O C C C (CCC).

e Legislature has taken several actions to address low student completion rates at the community colleges. In 2010, it enacted legislation directing the CCC Board of Governors (BOG) to adopt a comprehensive plan for improving student outcomes. Toward this end, the board created a task force and, in 2012, endorsed the task force report, which contained 22 recommendations designed to improve student achievement. Chapter 624 of 2012 (SB 1456, Lowenthal) codi ed four of these recommendations, including one to establish the Student Success and Support Program (SSSP).

is program provides various intake and guidance services to students and requires colleges to coordinate these services with a separately required "Student Equity Plan" (SEP), whose purpose is to identify and close access and achievement gaps among demographic groups.

L C P R . Chapter 624 called for our o ce to complete biennial progress reports, beginning in 2014. is is the second biennial report. In this report, we focus primarily on how colleges have used signi cant state funding increases for SSSP and student equity.

Ke F d a dA e e

- ***G P R H H L E*** e recovering economy and several years of notable enrollment growth funding have meant students generally can enroll in desired courses without priority registration. As a result, priority registration provides little extra encouragement for students to complete required core activities.

- ***E G A H T M P*** Under current guidelines, a college can get con icting answers as to whether an equity gap exists for a particular group depending on which methodology the college chooses. In addition, a college may misidentify inequities, such as nding that a uent students are disadvantaged because they are underrepresented at a college.

- ***R L H L A M R*** CCC's online Student Success Scorecard displays systemwide and college outcomes for a cohort of entering students six years a er initial enrollment. Accordingly, the scorecard would not document any results for students who entered in fall 2014 until 2020-21.

- ***C A W S E P S N W*** In our 2014 progress report, we identi ed the alignment of course o erings with student education plans as one of three key areas needing focused attention. CCC has made little progress in this area.

Rec e da

We make ve recommendations designed to improve the implementation and evaluation of SSSP and student equity moving forward. Speci cally, we recommend the Legislature:

S R S C A O E P We recommend the Legislature direct the BOG to revisit how to make these services mandatory for students, while mitigating any disproportionate impact on groups of students.

S E G A We recommend the Legislature direct the Chancellor's O ce to identify a consistent way of measuring disparities for each of the speci ed student outcomes and provide additional training for campus personnel on analyzing disparities.

R S -Y S S S is scorecard would permit the Legislature to evaluate outcomes prior to 2021, when the regular six-year scorecard would become available. We recommend the Chancellor's O ce release the three-year scorecard by October 2017 and include data for the cohorts entering in 2014-15, as well as in 2013-14 and 2012-13 for comparison. We further recommend that the three-year scorecard provide outcome data disaggregated by whether students received each of the core SSSP services.

P E -B P SSSP S E We recommend the Legislature direct the Chancellor's O ce to identify, by October 1, 2018, a list of practices shown to be e ective in improving student success and reducing equity gaps in community college settings. Over time, the state could direct the use of SSSP and student equity funds toward e ective practices.

R D H C O M S' E G We recommend the Legislature direct the Chancellor's O ce to identify, by January 1, 2018, strategies to monitor and

types of services provided. Another 30 percent is based on student enrollment, and 10 percent is for a uniform base grant to each college. Within the 60 percent component, the formula weights the various services to re ect their costs. A comprehensive student education plan, for example,

foster youth, students with disabilities, low-income students, and veterans.

C R S E F B S E C R F . Budget legislation in 2014-15 required the BOG to develop an allocation formula for student equity funds that provides more resources to districts with more “high-need” students. e legislation includes some criteria for calculating the number of high-need students in a district, such as the number of students receiving federal Pell Grants and the number of students from ZIP codes in the bottom two quintiles of college attainment, but the BOG also may use other criteria. e BOG-adopted student equity allocation formula distributes 40 percent of funds based on overall student enrollment, 25 percent on the number of students receiving a Pell Grant, and the remaining 35 percent

student equity. Other smaller funding increases went to the following existing categorical programs: Extended Opportunity Programs and Services, Disabled Student Programs and Services, Basic Skills Initiative, California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids (CalWORKs) student services, and the Fund for Student Success. e state also funded a new professional development

the Chancellor's Office provides periodic feedback to colleges on how to improve their SSSP plans and SEPs, and it sponsors conferences and other professional development opportunities for college personnel to learn and share best practices.

C[illegible]'s O[illegible] I[illegible] D[illegible] -Y[illegible] T[illegible] P[illegible] N[illegible] SSSP A[illegible] M[illegible]. [illegible]e Chancellor's Office set forth a new allocation formula in a 2014 SSSP handbook. Because of concerns about the accuracy of initial data reports from colleges, the handbook sets forth a gradual transition to the new formula, intended to limit redistribution of funding before data systems were fine-tuned. Under the transition plan, the Chancellor's Office would calculate each college's funding using the new formula, compare it to a specified percent of the college's 2014-15 funding (which used the old enrollment-based formula), and provide the higher of the two amounts to the college. For 2015-16 and 2016-17—the first two years the new formula was to be implemented—colleges were guaranteed at least 80 percent and 50 percent, respectively, of their 2014-15 funding. The new formula would be fully implemented beginning in 2017-18, but, to prevent large year-over-year changes, colleges would receive at least 95 percent of their prior-year's funding

All Directors' Training and an annual Student Success Conference. rough these convenings, the Chancellor's O ce prepares new college administrators and sta to implement SSSP, provides colleges with new program guidance and updates on implementation e orts, and provides an opportunity for colleges to share e ective practices. In addition, the Chancellor's O ce provides specialize (e p)14.8r (l)-24d4 (T(3 (l)-6)-21.4 (m.(l)-24d4 (T(3 (5 (p)-3.7(m.(l))10.9 (d)]TJ0 -1.4.1 (, t)-24.

completed the necessary steps. Students with a registration hold cannot sign up for courses until they meet certain conditions. We found that few colleges have opted to use registration holds.

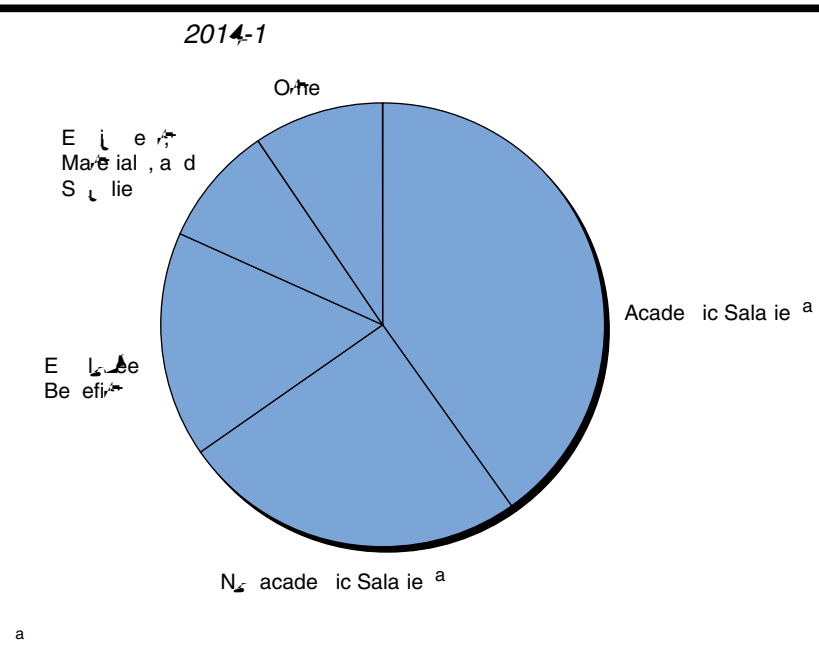
C R U M SSSP F C E P .

Required expenditure reports classify expenses by core SSSP service as well as for program coordination, which refers to the coordination of services across departments as well as the development and implementation of SSSP budgets and plans. According to the 2014-15 year-end reports, colleges spent more than half of their SSSP allocations providing students with counseling and education planning services. (e reporting template combines these services.) Figure 4 shows reported SSSP spending by core service.

C R S M SSSP F S . e colleges' expenditure reports also break down operating expenses into categories such as salaries, bene ts, and equipment. According to the 2014-15 year-end reports, colleges spent 81 percent of their SSSP allocations on salaries and bene ts, as shown in Figure 5.

Figure 5

Staff Salaries and Benefits Comprised Four-Fifths of Colleges' SSSP Spending



F A S E N S . Colleges are using SSSP funds to support existing sta who provided services in the old Matriculation Program. In addition, as Figure 6 shows, colleges reported hiring about 1,800 new full-time equivalent (FTE) employees with SSSP funding in 2014-15 and 2015-16 combined. (For reference, one full-time employee or two half-time employees equal one FTE.) e new hires include 800 FTE counselors—44 percent of the total. Program assistants and student workers represented nearly all remaining new hires. Of the approximately three-quarters of CCC's 113 colleges that responded to our survey, three-fourths reported hiring new sta with SSSP funds. Colleges, however, di ered somewhat in the types of sta they hired. About one-third of colleges hired no new counselors, 39 percent hired no new assistants, and 59 percent hired no new student workers.

F -T C H I . Whereas 38 percent of new counselor FTEs hired in 2014-15 were full time, 48 percent of those hired in 2015-16 were full time. Colleges report needing as much as one year to complete the hiring process for a full-time, permanent counseling position. Accordingly, we expect colleges will re ect additional full-time counselor hiring related to the large 2015-16 SSSP augmentation in their 2016-17 reports.

C C H P -T C . While our sta ng survey showed colleges are increasing their hiring of full-time counselors, a majority of colleges continued to hire primarily or exclusively part-time counselors. Some colleges indicated that part-time counsetinue. Soti r513.1 (a)10 ( )19.1 (u)5 (

C R P C SSSP

nancial assistance) to program coordination and planning. Figure 9 (see page 16) shows 2014-15 expenditures in each of these eight categories. Colleges spent more than 60 percent of their

hiring new sta with student equity funds. Some colleges reported hiring fewer sta in 2014-15 to give themselves more time to complete their SEPs and determine how best to use their funding. Several colleges cited gaps in their research on student disparities as another reason to postpone hiring. Others waited to decide how to administer the program, with some colleges combining their student equity and success programs under one administrator and others maintaining separate leadership.

E S E A . Figure 12 (see page 18) provides some examples of common student equity activities implemented in 2014-15 and 2015-16. Several colleges used student equity funding for expenditures such as targeted student support services, additional research and evalp6T632(o)1116.4 6h 0.9 (d a)-20(i)10

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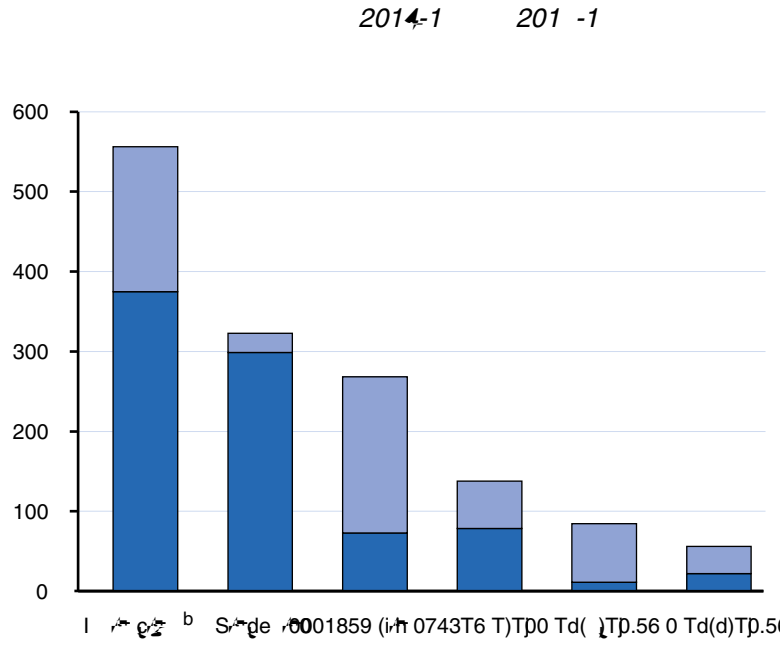
groups. Some colleges funded programs and services, such as math labs and writing workshops, shown to improve overall student achievement on their campuses. Other colleges funded programs and services for speci c student groups, such as learning communities for underrepresented minorities and student services sta dedicated to serving veterans, disabled students, or other student groups.

Figure 11

Instructors Most Common Staff Hired With Student Equity Funding



[a] Reflec f ll- e e i ale (FTE) hi e . F e a le, aff ki g half- e c a e hi e.
[b] Al h gh de e i f d a t c ha ge e a e a e f di g, i a i g a d le e al i c .

e orts, some colleges use detailed crosswalks outlining which types of services and expenditures each program can provide and when plans and reports are due. Some colleges also have tried to

problem, colleges have to complete or update annually at least a dozen other plans, including their strategic, educational master, facility master, basic skills, institutional e ectiveness, and other categorical program plans, as well as a number of other operational and division plans, program reviews, and accreditation self-studies. Colleges must coordinate their student success and equity

that these students have equal access to community colleges but more options to attend other colleges. Some colleges used additional information, such as their knowledge of the community, to help interpret the results of equity gap calculations. Others, however, took the results at face value and developed strategies, such as increased outreach to white and a uent students, to address the identi ed equity gaps.

C ’ O P A O SSSP S E I . e Chancellor’s O ce has made notable progress in the systemwide implementation of SSSP and student equity, especially with respect to clarifying program rules, re ning administrative procedures, and o ering professional development conferences to disseminate best practices. ese activities have been well received by colleges, with conferences routinely lling to capacity. College and district e orts at implementation, however, are more di cult for the Chancellor’s O ce to oversee. e o ce must rely on data review and retrospective audits to ensure accountability for program funds.

R L H L ’ A M R . e CCC’s online Student Success Scorecard is one of the main ways the Legislature can monitor CCC student outcomes.

e scorecard displays systemwide and college outcomes in eight key performance measures for a cohort of students (disaggregated by age, race/ethnicity, and gender). e bene t of the scorecard is limited, however, in that it reports outcomes for the cohort *six years after initial enrollment*.

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and provided more sections of high-demand courses at various times to improve students' ability to progress toward their goals. In addition, several colleges are creating highly structured two- and three-year course schedules based on the education goal a student identi es. ese colleges guarantee availability of the necessary courses in the right sequence for cohorts of students in a program.

ese colleges are the exceptions, however, and much work remains to identify additional best practices and disseminate them across the system.

S E, S G C O C S .

Colleges, in general, used student equity funding for the intended purposes of identifying and attempting to reduce disparities among student groups. Many colleges, for example, funded sta to identify gaps, provide instructional support and student services to help reduce these gaps, and train faculty and sta on equity issues. At several colleges, equity spending complemented SSSP spending by providing more core SSSP services to groups with identi ed disparities in outcomes. One college, for example, created a number of separate resource centers where students from target groups could access core services as well as additional support services. At other colleges, equity spending provided services not supported by SSSP funds to all students. Some colleges, for example, expanded math and writing labs that are ineligible for SSSP

N ab e P e T P e Ide ed O 2014 Re

In addition to improving course alignment, our rst progress report on implementation of Chapter 624 of 2012 (SB 1456, Lowenthal) identi ed two other key areas in need of improvement: (1) basic skills instruction and (2) professional development. As highlighted below, we found substantial progress in two of these areas since our last report.

I B S I . Over the past two years, the state has taken notable actions to improve basic skills instruction. In the 2015-16 budget, the Legislature funded two competitive, one-time basic skills grant programs to transform how community colleges (in collaboration with public schools and universities) provide basic skills instruction. ese programs emphasized the use of evidence-based strategies for improving basic skills outcomes, including using multiple measures for student assessment and placement, better aligning remedial and college-level curriculum, and integrating proactive student services with basic skills instruction. In the 2016-17 budget, the Legislature amended the longstanding Basic Skills Initiative program, adding the emphasis on evidence-based practices and increasing funding from $20 million to $50 million annually.

P E P D . Over the past two years, the state also has taken notable actions to foster more e ective professional development. Speci cally, the Legislature provided $12 million in ongoing Proposition 98 funding in 2015-16 and an additional $8 million ongoing in 2016-17 to improve the statewide professional development system. As part of the enhanced system, the Chancellor's O ce is hosting a series of annual, regional training workshops and has created an online professional development portal (called the Professional Learning Network). Workshop topics in 2015-16 included student success research and practice, basic skills transformation grant planning, and enrollment management. In our interviews, participants consistently gave high marks to the workshops, describing them as timely, informative, and engaging.

funding but shown to improve success for all students. e greater exibility in allowable student equity expenditures facilitated the braiding of student equity funds with SSSP funds.

S C S F M S O . Typically, we found the more strategic e orts at colleges that have strong leadership and already had been working on how to change their institutions to improve student

CONCLUSION