



FOOTHILL COLLEGE
Institutional Research and Planning

DATE: February 11, 2013

TO: Senior Staff, Foothill College

FROM: Mallory Newell, College Researcher
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RE: Themes from Student Support (Re)defined Study (2011-12)

Overview

The RP Group for California Community Colleges recently published its first year results from a three-year study titled: _____, which involved nearly 900 students across the state. De Anza College was one of 13 participating colleges.

- Students spoke of their struggles to understand what they needed to do to succeed in college.

Students suggested several ways colleges could help learners see the benefits of these activities:

- Require that first-time students enroll in a high-quality student success course
- Widely advertise services, supports and activities designed to facilitate success
- Have faculty inform students about assistance, resources and extracurriculars available both at the college and in the local community
- Encourage faculty and staff to share with students their own success stories and what makes them feel connected to the college

- This research suggests that colleges must also offer students the chance to experience all “six success factors”—directed, focused, nurtured, engaged, connected and valued—throughout their time with the institution. Students described how different factors interacted with each other to contribute to their success. They also identified relationships between the factors and noted how experiencing one factor often led to realizing another, or how two factors were inextricably linked to each other.

This research indicates that colleges should:

- Ensure all students have the opportunity to experience each success factor - directed, focused, nurtured, engaged, connected and valued
- Coordinate efforts to address specific success factors
- Build opportunities that intentionally integrate multiple success factors
- Tailor the combination of interventions based on the needs and strengths of the student population and stage in their educational journey

- Colleges should consider investing in structures that connect more African-American, Latino and first-generation learners to existing services. While it may not be feasible to expand existing special populations programs, colleges must find a way to provide a significant proportion of these student groups with comprehensive support—at scale. If they do not, the equity gap will likely continue to grow.

African-American, Latino and first-generation students highlighted the following as keys to success:

- Connecting with necessary and available financial assistance
- Receiving explicit insight about how the experiences provided and approaches taken by their instructors, programs and institutions contribute to their achievement
- Experiencing

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