

Bridge To Success Newsletter

May 2012

A Partnership Between the City and County of San Francisco, City College of San Francisco, San Francisco State University, and the San Francisco Unified School District



What is Bridge to Success?

Bridge to Success is a partnership between the City and County of San Francisco, City College of San Francisco, San Francisco State University and the San Francisco Unified School District to double the number of youth, particularly African American and Latino youth, who achieve college credentials. This effort, funded by the Gates Foundation, invests in changing policies, practices, and partnerships to ensure that more San Francisco youth earn college degree or credential.

Changes in Leadership

San Francisco Unified Superintendent Carlos Garcia is retiring at the end of this school year, and Deputy Superintendent Richard Carranza has been appointed to take his place. We appreciate the leadership Superintendent Garcia has taken in the Bridge to Success initiative and we will miss his commitment, drive and humor. We look forward to working with Deputy Superintendent Carranza to continue this important work.

City College of San Francisco Chancellor Don Griffin is retiring earlier than planned due to health issues. We are pleased to share with you that Dr. Griffin's health continues to improve and he is appreciative of the community's well wishes and prayers. For those interested, in lieu of flowers or gifts, a scholarship has been established in Dr. Griffin's honor. Please send checks to the Scholarship Office, MUB 130-B, City College, 50 Phelan Dr., San Francisco, 94110, payable to City College of San Francisco, designating Dr. Don Q. Griffin Scholarship in the memo field.

The City College of San Francisco Board of Trustees has named Dr. Pamela Fisher as its Interim Chancellor. Dr. Fisher served as Chancellor for the Yosemite Community College District from 1992 to 2004, where her career at Yosemite started as an instructor in 1974. Throughout her career, Dr. Fisher has received numerous awards and accolades, including the Association of Community College Trustees' (ACCT) national "Diversity Award," the ACCT's regional "Equity Award," the NAACP's "Woman of Courage Award," the Latina Leadership Network's "Honorary Madrina Award," and the California State Board of Governors' "John Rice Diversity Award," among others. We look forward to Dr. Fisher's engagement with Bridge to Success effort.

City College Retention Assessment Project Nears Completion

In April 2009, City College's Board of Trustees passed a Student Achievement Gap and Social Equity Resolution. While progress has been made through the Bridge to Success initiative to improve access for these groups, a more concerted effort needs to be made around retention and completion.

Stemming from City College's Equity hearings, last year, Bridge to Success identified a need to examine how City College supports college completion, especially for Latino and African American students. City College data has revealed that at City College, students who identify as African American, Native American, Filipino, Latino, Pacific Islander and Southeast Asian are 10-20% more likely to say their educational goal is completing a 2 or 4 year degree than their Asian and White counterparts, yet their transfer at rates that are 19-21% lower, even six years after they begin their career at City College.

Through Bridge to Success and support from the Evelyn & Walter Haas Jr. Fund, resources were garnered to assemble the following organizations to assess City College's existing approaches to support retention and college completion: LearningWorks, the Career Ladders Project, Harder and Company, and Stanford University's Gardner Center. The project aims to gather staff and student input on what additional measures may need to be taken to address the completion gap at City College.

Harder and Company took on the task of organizing student focus groups while LearningWorks and the Career Ladders Project interviewed more than 50 City College faculty, staff, and administrators. The organizations working on this project are looking forward to continuing their work to finalize a comprehensive set of recommendations that will be reported to Bridge to Success and the broader City College community.

Student Perspective: Why This Work Matters

Karen is a driven young woman who benefited from participating in Bridge to Success' Summer Bridge Program during the summer of 2011. Before participating in the summer program that helped prepare her for success at City College, she was not sure she would complete college. Now she dreams of becoming a nurse.

Karen grew up in San Francisco and went to SFUSD schools, where she struggled to find herself, and academics was the last thing on her mind. "I cut classes a lot and failed a lot of classes. During my senior year, I finally got my act together and did amazingly well, but of course that didn't balance out the rest of my grades. It was only then that I figured out who I wanted to be." When Karen decided that she wanted to become a nurse, she realized that she needed to change her approach to academics and to post-secondary success, but she was not quite sure how. The Summer Bridge program gave her the tools to map out what she needed to do to be successful at City College. She learned about the support services on campus, how to make the most of financial aid, and built up her confidence in her academic skills by taking her first college course.

When Karen started at City College in the fall of 2012, it was a proud moment for her. "It is proof that I can make something of myself against all odds. Everybody thought I'd be a high school dropout, and I was going to be another college statistic. By being here, I am proving to everybody and to myself that I can do it. Some kids just don't think they can make it, but if I can make it, anyone can."

Karen strongly believes that college is for everybody. "It doesn't have to be just for the 3.0 student or 4.0 student or the kids in the honors classes, it's for anybody. If you want to guarantee yourself a good future, go for it, because right now, any job requires at least a high school diploma or at least a bachelor's degree. It's ultimately for your future, so you should take it seriously." Karen plans to transfer to Dominican University to pursue a career in nursing. "I want to become a nurse because there's something about helping people that gives purpose to your life, you feel good about it, it's something to look forward to when there's a smile on their face."

Students Making a Change – Submitted by Chelsea Boilard, Coleman Advocates for Youth

Students Making A Change (SMAC) is a student club that started at City College of San Francisco in 2010 with the mission to advocate for City College's underrepresented student populations, including African American, Latino, Pacific Islander, and Filipino students. SMAC's primary focus is to increase retention and transfer rates for underrepresented student populations, provide skill building and leadership development for its members, promote civic engagement amongst underrepresented students of color, and make policy changes which work towards closing the achievement gap at City College. SMAC is currently an organizing program under Coleman Advocates for Children and Youth.

Since building SMAC, student leaders have won the creation of an immigrant/AB540 student retention center, lobbied state legislators for education funding, effectively halted the proposed student parking fee increases, held student forums on education funding and progressive revenue ideas, worked with administrators and faculty to create equity hearings on campus, and participated in the equity task forces at City College. Most notably, SMAC leaders this spring worked closely with former Chancellor Don Griffin, members of the Board of Trustees, and several Shared Governance committees, and other stakeholders to pass a historic policy allowing students more choice in placement in non-college level English and math courses. The proposal would allow students, after taking the placement test, to meet with a counselor and choose to place themselves in an English course one level higher than the level they tested, and students would also be able place a level higher in a Math course based on a set of criteria.

Studies demonstrate that students are more likely to be successful when they have ownership over their education and are academically challenged. Conversely, studies show that students are less likely to successfully transfer or even complete their Associate's Degree if they are placed at the bottom of a lengthy course sequence. Students of color, in particular African American, Latino and Pacific Islander students, have been the most negatively impacted by placement tests at City College. Many other community colleges across California do not use placement tests as the sole measurement of student ability, and instead include multiple student assessments to determine placement. A key study from Columbia University has proven that placement tests have very little predictability for assessing a student's ability to be successful in a particular course. This policy shift has been long due, and the support of Bridge to Success was critical in making it happen. SMAC is excited about the opportunity to work closely with Bridge to Success and continue to build with its partners!

Overview of Accomplishments This Year from Bridge to Success Action Teams

As the school year wraps up, we wanted to share with you a summary of the accomplishments of each of this year's Bridge to Success Action Teams, and to thank everyone who contributed to the work of these teams.

- **Early Warning Indicators Action Team**

The Early Warning Indicators (EWI) Team is composed of district staff, researchers and representatives from city departments and community stakeholders. The team reviewed academic and attendance data for students who were identified through the EWI system, and surveyed staff from those high schools about how they supported identified students. Harder+Co. interviewed leadership staff at two high schools to gain a deeper perspective on how those schools used the EWI data and supported identified students. The team will be analyzing all data collected to recommend best practice strategies to school sites for next year.

- **CBO Partnership Action Team**

This team, comprised of SFUSD, City College, DCYF and nonprofit service providers, aimed to explore how City College and SFUSD could strengthen its partnerships with CBO service providers who primarily focus on post-secondary success. During this school year, the team has successfully developed recommendations for better communication and collaboration between CBOs and SFUSD or City College. In addition, the team created a website to encourage sharing information among all partners working on postsecondary success in San Francisco (<https://sites.google.com/site/btscbopartnership>). The team will also be partnering with the College Success Network, a group of CBOs focused on post-secondary success, to develop a directory of CBOs focused on post-secondary success that can be used by SFUSD, City College, and other stakeholders. The team also developed a descriptive timeline that outlines the soft skills and other competencies a high school student should develop to be successfully by the time they graduate high school.

- **Counseling Action Team**

The Counseling Action Team reports another great year of collaborative work and thoughtful conversations. The team, which includes counselors from SFUSD and City College, planned a professional development meeting for counselors that focused on transparency between institutions within the counseling realm. Counselors from both institutions on the team also convened to plan the first annual City College Parent Night on April 26th at City College. The event was a huge success, and numbered in about 50 participants. The event included a resource fair with more than 12 City College programs and departments represented. The Team is now working on ways to institutionalize these events, including documenting the planning processes and lessons learned.

- **Concurrent Enrollment Action Team**

The goal of this Action Team was to increase student access and district-wide coordination of dual enrollment opportunities for high school students. The team's focus included examining college credit opportunities through Career Technical Education courses aligned with high school pathway and academies, and opportunities for high school students to participate in credit recovery options. This year, the team increased enrollment in City College Transitional Studies courses, which include credit recovery options: previously, 159 students enrolled, and now, 359 students are enrolled and take a total of 508 courses. The team also helped define and implement a Transitional Studies application process, and distributed a Credit Recovery and Concurrent Enrollment program guide and schedule to all high schools. The team led a semi-annual joint SFUSD/City College counselor professional development session, and created an A-G course mapping for City College Transitional Studies credit recovery courses. Finally, the team successfully implemented a monthly SFUSD/City College communication meeting, a quarterly attendance review, a semi-annual credit recovery course needs analysis, and an annual progress report.

- **Workforce and Career Pathways Action Team**

This action team, composed of representatives from SFUSD, City College, DCYF, the City's Department of Public Health, and other city or district initiatives, collected data the demographics and numbers of youth participating in various SFUSD, CCSF and city-funded workforce programs. Results of the analysis indicated not all programs are successfully reaching African American and Latino youth. Based on these trends, the team developed strategies to improve outreach to those targeted students. The team is also developing student-friendly overviews of career pathways, including information on the industry, points of entry and opportunities to get involved in SFUSD and community based training. The team also contributed to the development of a summer pilot that will allow high school youth enrolled in the Mayor's Youth Education and Employment program and in YouthWorks will be able to participate in SFUSD's Career Technical Education summer seminar and receive high school academic credit.

- Math Action Team

The Math Action Team, which is comprised of faculty from City College and SFUSD who were involved with last year's Math Professional Learning Community, worked on several efforts to enhance students' success in math. One of their major projects was working with staff from the Stanford University Gardner Center to design alternative methods for placing SFUSD graduates into City College math courses. The team reviewed data analysis on how SFUSD graduates enrolled at City College performed in high school and how they placed in math courses at City College, in the context of national research related to placement methods. The team recommended that City College pilot an alternative to the existing math placement test, which involves using students' high school GPA, high school attendance rate, and/or their high school standardized test scores. Through the pilot, all students, current and entering, who place below college-level math may choose to enroll in a City College course one level higher than their tested placement level if they meet at least two of three criteria related to their high school performance. The math pilot, which has been approved by the City College Board of Trustees, will be implemented at City College this fall and evaluated next year.

- Summer Action Team

The Summer Action Team, which is comprised of representatives from City College, SFUSD, DCYF and the San Francisco Ed Fund, worked on evaluating the initial Summer Bridge program delivered to 124 SFUSD graduates from 20 high schools during summer 2011. The team developed two types of Summer Bridge programming that build on lessons learned from summer 2011 and can be sustained over time within the City College infrastructure. Two summer offerings will be piloted this approaching summer. The first is a set of interactive one-day College Orientation workshops. These credit-bearing courses will serve 30-40 students per 6-hour workshop, provide students with opportunities to participate in small group discussions on educational equity, learn about empowerment and college success strategies, hear from City College students who will talk about their own transitions from high school to college, and learn about the matriculation process, financial aid and support services. The second offering is a week-long set of Health, Education and Equity courses. These courses will each serve 30-40 students for a week and provide students with an experience of success in a college-level course, in addition to exposing them to college success strategies. Students will participate in a contextualized learning opportunity through which youth will select a specific issue of interest to research, analyze the causes and consequences of the issue, and identify strategies to address the issue.

- FRISCO Day Action Team

The second annual FRISCO Day was held on April 13, 2012, assisting 2,300 graduating seniors from SFUSD. At this event, students acquired tools for college success and learned to navigate the pathways for two and four year college systems. This all day event was designed to double the number of San Francisco youth who earn a college degree. The FRISCO Day Action Team successfully organized a multitude of useful activities for students at three venues: City College, St. Mary's Event Center, and the University of California San Francisco (UCSF). At City College, students were greeted by remarks by Mayor Ed Lee, Chancellor Don Griffin, SFUSD Superintendent Carlos Garcia and Deputy Superintendent Richard Carranza. Students were then guided through workshops, college tours, demonstrations for class registration, and a resource fair with over 50 tables hosted by faculty, staff, clubs, organizations, and other school related entities. St. Mary's Event Center hosted almost 600 students who planned to enter either a California State University campus, private college, or an out of state school. Students were grouped by college geography and got to know other students attending the same school or schools within the same region. Students attended three workshops on campus resources, strategies on how to deal with common obstacles faced in college, and how to keep and budget financial aid. The third site at UCSF hosted almost 500 students who received workshops in financial aid, social and family transitions to college, academic competencies, campus resources and self-advocacy. This Team is also working on offering 4-5 "Early Registration" events on June 26 at SFUSD high schools and at City College, so that SFUSD students can learn how to register online for City College classes with the assistance of on-site counselors on the day of priority registration.

For more information, please contact:

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