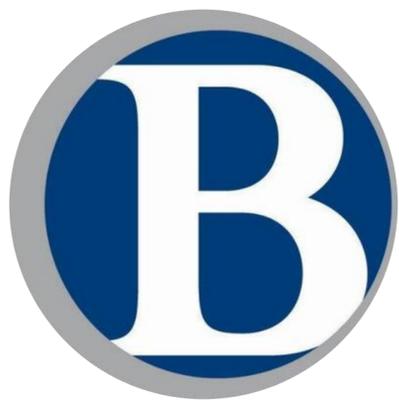


# Leading Change for Student Success

Summary of 2021 Research Findings

Prepared by Pacific Research and Evaluation, LLC



## GOALS

- Improve student retention
- Increase completion rates
- Close the opportunity gap for historically underserved students

## STRATEGIES

- Simplify and clarify Guided Pathways model at the college
- Implement integrated student supports
- Redesign pre-college math courses

**\*These efforts are being funded by a Title III Strengthening Institutions grant (2019-2024).**

## Research Methods

(Data collected in February 2021)

**11**

Project team interviews (incl. Title III Project Director, college administrators, and faculty and staff project leads)

**395**

BC student responses to an online survey



## General BC Student Feedback

▶ **80%** of surveyed students agreed they would recommend BC to others, are generally happy with their BC experience, and are confident in their ability to complete online coursework.

▶ Students were most likely to report their intent to transfer as the reason they do not plan to enroll in BC courses next year and/or do not plan to complete a BC degree.

▶ Students provided mixed feedback about whether BC prioritizes diversity, equity and inclusion and regarding their access to faculty with shared lived experience, with a notable number of students indicating they were neutral.

## General BC Student Feedback

- ▶ Students were divided about peer engagement, with about one-third of respondents indicating they are not connected with BC peers. Among those who are connecting online, students appear to rely on academic-based platforms such as Canvas.



## Student Experiences with Online Learning

- ★ Though students provided mixed feedback about whether online learning is a good fit for their learning style, a notable number of students reported benefits to online education and expressed they hope it will continue after the pandemic. College leadership suggested hybrid models will likely be sustained.
- ★ Students reported some difficulty with online learning in terms of engaging with instructors and printing physical course materials.
- ★ Students indicated additional challenges such as teachers appearing to be unprepared for online instruction and experiencing issues with technology.

## Welcome Center and Student Orientation

- ◁ Welcome Center staff reported that demand for admissions advising and info sessions has increased notably over the last year. The transition to virtual options has increased access for students and their families.
- ◁ The project team noted successes with developing online orientation videos over the past year and expanding the student intake form.



## Integrated Student Supports

- ▶ Advising staff indicated that Target X is a powerful tool for improving case management, increasing communication between departments, and producing better, cleaner data management and reporting.
- ▶ Over the past year, advisors were able to utilize an Early Alert pilot campaign to successfully provide a crisis management response to the pandemic and have implemented new strategies to improve response efficiency.
- ▶ Advisors noted the biggest issue moving forward remains capacity to follow up with students about Early Alerts. An additional lift includes maintaining faculty buy-in by following up with faculty that have issued alerts to provide an update on student outreach and close the communication loop.

## Redesigning Pre-College/College Level Math

- ★ Math faculty reported they are on track in terms of developing math pathways and planning math tutoring services. Faculty groups have formed to support students with pre-college math, to explore STEM careers, and to center equity in the department.
- ★ Students were more likely to report they prefer individual tutoring over small group tutoring and tutoring during after-class time instead of within-class time, with some students preferring both.

## Guided Pathways

- Faculty buy-in is a key strength of Guided Pathways and virtual, recorded Pathway team meetings have increased faculty and staff attendance and access. Course mapping teams were reported to be on target to complete a draft of all maps by end of Spring 2021.
- A key strength of First Year Seminar (FYS) development has included contributions to the curriculum by over fifty faculty members. Project team members piloted free FYS courses in 2020 and are in the process of training a pool of FYS instructors to be at full capacity by Fall 2022.
- The peer mentorship program spotlighted student voice by gathering feedback from students about the peer mentor job description before soliciting. Peer mentors continue to provide valuable input on the FYS pilot and early alert services.



## Target X (Title III CRM)

- A key success included the ITS department's ability to customize Target X features to accommodate what project team members and students need most.
- Another related strength has been ITS involvement since early on in the planning and development stages. The ITS department built an understanding of the grant components and context first and were therefore better able to support project needs.

## Student Survey Demographics

- ★ The top four self-reported race/ethnicity groups represented in the survey data include White/European (55.9%), East Asian (11.4%), Southeast Asian (7.8%) and African American/Black (5.3%). Students could select more than one race/ethnicity group. Students who identify as African, South Asian, Native American/Alaska Native, North American (i.e. Mexican), Central American, South American, and Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander each represented an additional 5% or less of survey participants. The remaining 11.6% of students indicated they preferred to not answer or specify their identity.
- ★ Almost half (45.3%) of students who responded to the survey reported they first enrolled in class at BC in Fall 2019, Winter 2020 or Fall 2020 quarters.

# What does it look like to implement with an equity lens?



Evaluators are currently working with the Title III Project Director and the Executive Director of Effectiveness and Research to align data collection and reporting for race/ethnicity subgroups with BC's latest data policies and best practices.



Leadership reported they prioritize having students, faculty and staff of color deeply involved in the work and indicated the college has affinity groups to hold them accountable. Project team members noted they are being mindful about disaggregating student data.



The Welcome Center has built partnerships with local schools, has provided bilingual Spanish resources and special accommodations, and prioritizes mindfulness, not making assumptions, and a shift away from the deficit model towards a strengths-based approach.



The Center for Advising hired an extended hours advisor and increased availability for after-hours appointments, which has been positively received by students. Further, staff are trained in topics such as implicit bias, and there is an emphasis on asset-based advising and leading with racial equity.



The math department has formed a math faculty group that is committed to advancing equity. Further, project team members noted that project-based learning has been shown to reduce equity gaps for women and historically underserved students. Additionally, BC's Achieving The Dream data team is regularly tracking math indicators for the college by subgroups to determine the best intervention strategies.



Project team members are intentionally seeking representation from African American and Black students as well as Hispanic/Latino/a students in the peer mentorship program and have been actively recruiting through BIPOC networks on campus. Project team members are also considering the unique needs of, for example, part-time students and students with children in their program development.



Project team leads indicated that accessibility is at the forefront of their minds when developing software and web tools for the grant and noted it is an ongoing process to ensure that specific student subgroups are the focus for change. Further, college administrators noted they are thinking strategically about equity in terms of the digital divide and increasing technology access for students.

# Evaluation Insights



**The focus of Title III efforts on integrated student supports, redesigning pre-college and college-level math, and Guided Pathways is responsive to student needs that emerged repeatedly in the survey data.**

Survey findings suggest there is room for growth in BC helping students to connect course options, academic programs, and career trajectories and the Guided Pathways model is responsive to this need. There also appears to be a need for math supports like tutoring for students, which is currently in the planning stages. Additionally, while students were generally satisfied with advising, many surveyed students have not accessed these services, and there appears to be a need for more access to advisors with shared lived experiences and identities. Further, some students expressed they would appreciate talking to a program-specific advisor and assigning advisors to specific Guided Pathways will address this need.



**Title III and ATD efforts at BC are deeply intertwined, which makes both efforts stronger and more sustainable in the long-term.** A repeated strength of the Title III grant that emerged across project team interviews includes the integration of Title III efforts with ATD efforts. College leadership noted the close ties between Title III and ATD are a brilliant design of the grant. Both Title III and ATD are focused on similar student achievement indicators, closing the achievement gap, increasing data transparency at the college, and prioritizing mindful data disaggregation for student subgroups. These ties will help ensure Title III efforts are not siloed and will contribute to sustaining the services and student supports beyond the grant.



**The emphasis on data-driven decision making is another theme that multiple project team members echoed as a success of Title III efforts.** While utilizing data remains an area for more growth and potential, all interviewees across all grant components raised the importance of accessible, transparent data in their work.



**An additional strength of Title III efforts is related to campus-wide engagement in the work.** Multiple grant components mentioned the deep involvement of faculty and staff teams in for example, developing course maps, contributing to FYS curriculum, and piloting Early Alerts. A related area for growth appears to be ensuring there is clear and consistent communication across departments about interrelated grant components. Evaluators suggest sharing out evaluation reports with all project team members to facilitate shared learning and utilizing the executive summary infographic as a discussion tool to celebrate successes over the last year and to prioritize next steps moving forward.

# Evaluation Insights



**Survey findings reveal two related trends – faculty, staff and students are experiencing challenges with online-only education and many have a preference for in-person learning and connection, and, at the same time, there are notable benefits to the online experience.** Across grant components, project team members indicated how they have pivoted to an online environment in dynamic ways and commented that virtual options have increased access. There appears to be a need to continue to offer hybrid instruction, as well as virtual staff meetings, academic advising, and other grant-funded services after the COVID-19 pandemic.



**An area for growth for the Title III grant includes establishing a shared definition of student success.** While the grant efforts all fall within the project titled “Leading Change for Student Success”, this title did not come up in interviews and multiple project team members refer to it as ATD/Guided Pathways. Several interviewees expressed that there seemed to be multiple, and sometimes conflicting definitions of what student success looks like at the college. There appears to be agreement across the team, however, that student voice and practices that center actionable steps toward equity are both pivotal for determining a shared definition of student success. Evaluators recommend that the project team work together to determine shared definitions of key terms like “student success” and “historically underserved students” for the purposes of the Title III grant, as this in turn will shape common metrics of success.



## Questions or Comments?

If you have comments or questions about these efforts or are curious about the more detailed survey and interview findings included in the March 2021 Bellevue College Title III Evaluation Report, please contact Title III Project Director, Esteban Maldonado, at [esteban.maldonado@bellevuecollege.edu](mailto:esteban.maldonado@bellevuecollege.edu).