

HEWLETT

Leaders in Student Success

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Columbia College Named “Hewlett Leader in Student Success”

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Columbia College received state-wide recognition today for its innovative efforts to increase the success of students in basic skills. Columbia and three other colleges were named “Hewlett Leaders in Student Success” at an educators’ conference in Anaheim, and received a stipend to support efforts to share their strategies with other schools.

Hewlett Leaders in Student Success selected the four schools from among 109 California community colleges. The program seeks out schools that have made significant progress in basic skills education, offering inspiring models of institutional commitment to this issue in their mission, planning and practice. Hewlett Leaders is in its inaugural year. The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation will support it for two more years.

“These innovative teaching strategies and systemic overhauls in basic education are model programs that are proven to help students build the needed foundation in core subjects. They enable students to gain valuable study skills, as well as connect them with orientation programs, tutoring, counseling, and other student support services that will help them to stay in school and succeed,” said Dr. Linda Umbdenstock, the program’s executive director.

A dedicated core of Columbia College faculty and staff began a systematic overhaul of basic education three years ago. In addition to innovations in teaching math and writing, the school strengthened counseling, tutoring, and other student services.

The effects of these efforts are far-reaching. Retention is at 85 percent, well above the state average, and the percentage of students who pass pre-collegiate courses is rising. Most inspiring, perhaps, is that reforms conceived for developmental education have energized the campus-wide culture. Professor Ann Cavagnaro infuses writing challenges

into every level of her math classes, “I defy you to find a strategy effective with basic skills that is not effective for *every* student,” she said.

Basic, or “pre-collegiate,” skills education is designed to help underprepared students master the skills required for success in transfer-level courses. The need is vast. Every year roughly half a million students arrive at a California community college with the goal of transferring to a four-year college. But at least 70 percent are not prepared.

Education experts from across the country contributed to the Hewlett Leaders in Student Success program selection process. They analyzed data on student progress and made site visits to the colleges, interviewing faculty and administration. The values the Hewlett Leaders program looked for included:

- Curriculum aligned and organized for effectiveness
- Learner-centered classroom practices
- Integration of academic support and student services
- Equity, pursued by assessing learning and progress rates by cohort
- Institutional leadership and support, reflected in mission, planning, evaluation and investment

Hewlett Leaders in Student Success is administered by the Research and Planning Group of the California Community Colleges and funded by The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation. The program also honored Santa Barbara City College, and De Anza and Southwestern colleges at the Strengthening Student Success conference in Anaheim.

For more information, visit www.HewlettLeadersinStudentSuccess.org and gocolumbia.edu.