

Student-Ready: Degree Completion for the Flexible Learner Grant Summary

Santa Barbara City College is submitting for this Title V Part A competition an individual development grant: ***Student-Ready: Degree Completion for the Flexible Learner***. The underlying idea for the project is that as colleges and universities continue to lament low success and retention rates for underserved student populations, especially Hispanic students, the pervasive strategies employed miss the mark because they focus on full-time status as the essential ingredient for success. We must reject this focus, because part-time status is a dominant demographic characteristic of Hispanic college students nationwide, and 66-69% of Hispanic students at SBCC. Acceptance and adaptation to this reality is imperative because, as part-time students, Hispanic students are on average 30% more likely to drop out of SBCC. Through internal systems analysis we have also learned that few students complete their education without fluctuating between full and part-time status. These flexible students (those who sometimes enroll full-time and sometimes part-time) make up about two-thirds of SBCC's population and are therefore the majority, calling for a change in how we serve them. If we continue to focus funding structures and support systems on students who have full-time status only, we will disenfranchise the majority of our students and nullify our community college open access mission. It is imperative that we do the hard work to create programs, services, and pathways for flexible students so that they succeed in achieving their academic goals. It is essential to SBCC that we understand the reasons students become flexible so that we can support them in moving back to full-time status whenever possible, as well as to support them to persist and succeed when they are part-time. We believe that many part-time students can complete a bachelor's degree within six years considering the time most also spend enrolled full-time, if our systems, support services, and educational culture is adapted to serve them. In this way we break the old formula of demanding that students come "college ready" to SBCC, and instead, we determine to become a college that is "student ready."

Student-Ready: Degree Completion for the Flexible Learner will include two components:

1. Pathways and Support for Flexible Students: SBCC will utilize existing internal and external research on the needs of flexible students in addition to focus groups to gain a clear picture of the needs of flexible students to create programs including a college for working adults, non-traditional course schedules that include nights and weekends, degree completion pathways, a transfer partnership with Antioch University, case management counselling, and student support advocates.
2. Professional Development and Faculty Support for Curriculum Redesign for Maximum Impact: SBCC will utilize best practices in working with underserved populations to create a culture of flexible student belonging on campus through extensive faculty professional

development that will include workshops on cultural relevance and wealth, on-campus institutes, travel to nationally-recognized conferences and the implementation of Faculty Inquiry Groups (FIGs), and support for faculty to redesign course content for cultural and career relevance.

The budget request for this project is \$2,701,696 over a five-year period.

Key Grant Leadership:

Dr. Joshua Ramirez, Psychology Department Chair will serve as Grant Director, a 50% time grant funded position

Dr. Vandana Gavaskar, Director of Learning Support Services will serve as Activity Director for Student Learning Support and Supplemental Instruction, a 25% grant funded position.

Dr. Elizabeth Imhof, Faculty Resource Center Faculty Director will serve as Activity Director for Professional Development and Curriculum Design, a 25% time grant funded position.

Dr. Z Reisz, Research and Assessment Analyst will lead grant Internal Evaluation (not grant funded)