



Budget Criteria

Decisions about resource allocation are based on evidence that they have the ability to advance and improve student success and equity as per the college's strategic priorities as outlined in the institutional planning documents*. Using quantitative and qualitative data to inform its decisions, the college will focus its resources most prominently on its strategic priorities as follows:

1. Acceleration

Accelerated basic skills courses in Math, English, and ESL represent a structural and cultural change in traditional approaches to developmental education. Acceleration is a structural change in that it eliminates "exit points" for students who are identified as underprepared for college-level work by replacing multi-course developmental sequences with single semester basic skills courses and concurrent-enrollment basic skills support for transfer-level gateway courses. Acceleration is a cultural change in that educators shift from a student deficit mindset to a student capacity mindset. At Cuyamaca College, our approach to acceleration is based on the five core principles of the California Acceleration Project (CAP): backwards design from college-level courses; relevant, thinking-oriented curriculum; just-in-time remediation; low-stakes, collaborative practice; intentional support for students' affective needs. Acceleration has been shown to reduce achievement gaps in basic skills success rates for disproportionately impacted groups, but only if changes to basic skills sequences and placement are part of a broader, comprehensive reform effort. Thus, Cuyamaca's acceleration reforms will be tied closely to other college attempts to improve student equity outcomes.

2. Guided Student Pathways

Cuyamaca College has embarked on the establishment of a Completion by Design guided pathway for each student attending the college. According to Completion by Design (www.completionbydesign.org), a Guided Pathway is "a descriptive and easy-to-use plan that guides a student INTO and THROUGH college to the successful COMPLETION of a credential and the transition to a baccalaureate program or the labor market. A Guided Pathway integrates academic and student services together in a coherent and intentional system of curricular and co-curricular experiences that match a student's interests and goals, and better prepare him or her for success in a rapidly changing global environment."

Key steps in the guided pathway include (a) Structured onboarding processes that provide students with clear, actionable, and usable information they need to get off to the right start in college; (b) Academic maps that detail the scope and sequence of courses required to complete a credential efficiently and transition to baccalaureate degree programs or the labor market; (c) Proactive academic and career advising from the start through completion and/or transfer, with assigned point of contact at each stage; (d) Early alert systems aligned with interventions and resources to help students stay on the Pathway, persist, and progress; and (e) Instructional support and co-curricular activities aligned with classroom learning and career interests.

3. Student Validation & Engagement

In addition to scaling up acceleration in basic skills and providing clear pathways for students to achieve their educational and professional goals, Cuyamaca College is committed to developing a culture and learning environment that supports student success through validation and engagement. This priority, while less quantifiable than the first two, is nonetheless an essential component of this initiative. Students from disproportionately impacted populations are very often first generation college students with socio-economic backgrounds that preclude familiarity with the culture and expectations of higher education. It is common for such students to feel stigmatized and alienated in an educational setting, in no small part due to unsuccessful experiences at the secondary level and the broader effects of systemic racism or poverty.

It isn't enough to simply provide these students with access to classes, and then leave them to "sink or swim." In order to significantly and positively affect the retention, completion, and success rates of these students, we need to build bridges that connect our expectations and requirements with their social and cultural realities.

4. Organizational Sustainability

In order to ensure long-term growth and viability—with a focus on the aforementioned priorities or "Big Bets"—Cuyamaca College must build a sustainable organization that meets the changing needs of the diverse community it serves. In order to do so, the college must: (a) optimize and support its human resources, (b) leverage current and new financial resources, (c) strengthen college systems, infrastructure, policies, and procedures, and (d) strengthen external relationships.

**Please refer to the Cuyamaca College 2016 Achieving the Dream Implementation Plan and the 2016-2022 Strategic Plan for more information.*