Panel Handout: Future of Community Colleges - Long Beach College Promise Campaign
Long Beach College Promise

Education is a lifetime commitment. This idea is central to the Long Beach College Promise’s mission, a program which derives its success and prestige through the seamless collaboration of the Long Beach Unified School District (LBUSD), Long Beach City College (LBCC), and California State University Long Beach (CSULB).

Launched in 2008, the Long Beach College Promise was designed to transform the lives of individuals, families, and the city’s economic and civic future by placing higher education within reach for all students. To do this, the program aims to fulfill the academic potential of all youth starting in K-12, and continuing to offer academic guidance and support throughout their advancement into higher education.

Driven by a formal memorandum of understanding (MOU) signed by the leaders of the LBUSD, LBCC, CSULB, and the mayor of Long Beach, the partnership’s seamless collaboration is unique, innovating and sharing new ways to help students succeed. The program is committed to guaranteeing college admission for all qualified LBUSD students and a tuition-free academic year at LBCC. This removes barriers to higher education, reduces gaps in achievement, increases student retention and four-year graduation rates, and prepares students for the global economy.

Further, this MOU includes a commitment to expanding access to preschool, giving college tours to every fourth and fifth grade student, and promoting a college-readiness pledge for middle school students and their families. Other key components for success include expanding enrollment in Advanced Placement (AP) courses and reducing fees of AP exams, connecting youth to business internships within the community, a focus on college completion, and a three-year public engagement campaign to increase participation among Latinos, African Americans, Cambodians, and socio-economically disadvantaged students.

"Helping students succeed is not an easy task," said Terri Carbaugh, associate vice president of legislative & external relations at CSULB. In total, the Long Beach College Promise serves a community of over 500,000 people with diverse needs, and with high rates of poverty and first generation students. Higher education leaders joined with business and government to stop the blame game and build trust, working together to combat the high dropout rates and low graduation rates of the 1990s. Long Beach City College President Eloy Oakley remarked: “Each of the Long Beach College Promise partners is committed to work together to ensure that students are prepared to persist and complete their degrees and certificates, despite the many challenges that our students and families face.”
Since its inception in 2008, Long Beach has seen over 63,000 students and their families take the Long Beach College Pledge. Nearly 12,000 students have received a free semester at LBCC, with students graduating from CSULB at far higher rates today (20 percent higher for Latinos, 22 percent higher for African Americans and 23 percent higher for Asian Americans).

The success of the Long Beach College Promise has inspired other school districts and their higher education, business, and government partners throughout California and the nation to build Promise programs in their communities. The movement for the College Promise is growing!

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For more information, or to learn more, go to:
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