

# perspectives

## RP Group | JANUARY 2014

Dear *Perspectives* reader,

Happy 2014! I, along with the RP Group Board and staff, hope that you had a relaxing holiday and wish you much fulfillment and success in the year to come. I am very excited about joining the RP Group as its Executive Director and look forward to opportunities to connect with you through our monthly publication of *Perspectives* and at the diversity of regional meetings, conferences, academies and institutes we offer throughout the year.

The RP Group has achieved a great deal in its more than 20-year history. The growth and development of Institutional Research within California community colleges has resulted in a significant benefit to students throughout the state. Because of IR, California community colleges are far better positioned to carry out their own research as well as share that research with RP-networked colleagues across the State.

Since joining the RP Group in mid-October, my respect for the organization's Board and members has continuously increased as I have come to know many of you and better understand the fine work that has been accomplished by you under the auspices of the RP Group. Likewise, I see more to be done and I am excited to be part of an organization and community that is ready and willing to carry out needed and necessary research to benefit the future of California community colleges.

I encourage you to pay close attention to this issue of *Perspectives* as well as those that follow to learn of the groundbreaking work happening in our community. In upcoming issues, we will also share with you some changes to the ways the RP Group will provide you with timely, concise and interesting information about innovative research, planning and evaluation work emerging from the California community colleges.

Although I did not know Jim Barr, it is clear to me that his passing was one of great loss for his family, his colleagues and our community. We asked Carolyn Arnold, an RP Group Board Member, if she would write a remembrance about Jim, as she knew him well. You will find her tribute to Jim to be both moving and reflective of what we all aspire to in life.

Mike Howe  
RP Group Executive Director

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## Announcements

### **Register for the 2014 RP Conference**

The 2014 RP Conference will take place on Thursday and Friday, April 10 and 11 at the Kellogg West Conference Center and Hotel in Pomona, CA. This conference creates a space to exchange local institutional research and planning approaches and resources addressing common issues, learn about the latest developments in the field and strengthen relationships within our community. The list of sessions will be announced in mid-February. Register for the conference [here](#).

### **Working to strengthen student success at your college? Explore these practical resources from Student Support (Re)defined**

The RP Group's Student Support (Re)defined study asked 900 students at 13 California community colleges what supports their educational success. A key theme surfacing from this research centered on the critical role faculty play in students' achievement—in the classroom and beyond. Check out [10 Ways Faculty Can Support Student Success](#) to learn what study participants suggest instructors can do to help students experience "six success factors"—focused, directed, nurtured, engaged, connected and valued—during their community college enrollment.

Not a faculty member? Study participants suggest you can also contribute to strengthening student success at your institution. No matter what your job title may be or where you may sit in your organization, students say you can help them reach their goals. Learn about [10 Ways Everyone Can Support Student Success](#), including how non-instructional faculty, student services professionals, staff and administrators can help students experience the six success factors throughout their community college journey.

### **Regional Group Update**

The fall 2013 Bay Area Regional RP meeting was held October 18th. The meeting included a panel on enrollment management with four local presenters. Of particular interest were the consequences of impaction. Carolyn Arnold's analysis made the case that students swirled into other non-essential classes when closed out of classes, which were initially closed to them. Oded Guarantz's data showed that many courses were closed to new first matriculated and non-matriculated students by the time their registration slots were activated and that students who were unable to enroll in any classes were less likely to return to college in following semesters. Rick Fillman and Terrence Willett provided excellent tools and examples for presenting and visualizing enrollment data. Materials from the panelists are available online at this [link](#).

### **New Orange County Regional Group**

Researchers in the Orange County area are interested in starting up a Regional RP Group. If you work or live in or around the area (or just want an excuse to go to Orange County) and might be interested in joining an OC Regional RP Group, please send your contact information to South Orange Community College District's Director of Research, Planning & Data Management, Denise Inciong at [dinciong@soccd.edu](mailto:dinciong@soccd.edu) or 949-582-4997, or Nicole Ortega, Research and Planning Analyst, at [nortega@socccd.edu](mailto:nortega@socccd.edu) or 949-582-4451. All those interested will be contacted shortly with meeting dates and times.

## SSSC13 Presentation Spotlight: Starting the Race from Behind



**Authors:** *Jim Haynes, Anu Khanna, Mary Pape & Toño Ramirez, De Anza Community College*

De Anza College has come from behind in the SLO race. In a 4-year period, a revised planning cycle was developed, pushing the College from 0% completion of Student Learning Outcomes to 100%. As a product of this work, in January of 2013 the ACCJC declared De Anza College at the level of "Proficiency" in the outcome process.

The achievement of so much work in such a short time is a testament to the effective organization of the campus community. The outcomes assessment process at De Anza is primarily driven by faculty, who developed the current system with strong support of the SLO Steering Committee (comprised of the VP of Instruction, Assistant VP of Instructor, College Researcher, Academic Senate President, representative Dean and Director of Professional Development). From this larger group, the Core SLO team comprises the chair of the curriculum committee, the Academic Senate VP, two instructional coordinators and one student/administrative coordinator.

The success is attributed to two guiding principles:

- This is work faculty have always done – now it is simply being documented.
- The value of the SLO process is in the reflection, collective thinking and dialogue that result from assessing learning outcomes.

Faculty are engaged in the process with training workshops, opening day departmental meetings for SLO development, SLO Newsletters, Annual SLO Convocation days and a web of SLO Liaisons that work with faculty on SLO Assessment work within their respective divisions.

Embarking on the road from proficiency to sustainability, the College has incorporated course-level assessment of student learning outcomes into the school's culture. Assessment work is now a "given", in a manner akin to creating syllabi and submitting grades. It is a core component of the fundamental work faculty, staff and administrators.

The college has integrated SLO work into the annual resource allocation process, the annual program review process and the curriculum review process through the 6-year planning cycle model, represented above as "the quilt." The quilt is an integrative planning document that grew from early discussion of the SLO process in preparation for the 2012 accreditation visit. The quilt illustration has become a tool/framework for the College Planning Committee and Governance pathway to decision making. It started simply with the ACCJC timeline, the 5-year cycle for curriculum revisions, and the planning and budget teams. The learning outcomes assessment process was then added to the quilt, but if the learning outcomes process was going to make a difference, the organization of the institution would need to be restructured.

And restructure it did. Student learning outcome statements are now part of all course outlines. The data collected from the assessment of student learning outcomes at the course, program and institutional levels, along with assessments for student services and administrative units, become the factual basis for completing the program review document

in each area. This information then drives the decision-making process in each of the planning and budgeting teams. The College Planning Council is informed and the program reviews inform the guiding documents of the college, including all ACCJC reports. For a complete picture of the quilt, please visit the resource link below.

**Resource:**

[De Anza College Detailed Planning Cycle 2011-2017](#)

## Research: NSF Pilot Trains Community College Team in How to Scale and Sustain Education Models



**Author:** Eva Schiorring, *RP Group*

How many times have you gotten to the section in a grant proposal where you are supposed to explain how, after the requested funding sunsets, you will sustain the program and take it to other campuses where your colleagues will eagerly begin to replicate your innovation? And you think.... "What can I possibly say here? I really don't know."

The National Science Foundation (NSF) is engaged in a bold new experiment to change this situation. For decades they have been funding promising innovations only to see them fold at the end of the grant cycle; their achievement and legacy soon forgotten. Then, recently, the NSF asked: Why not try to apply to educational innovations the Innovation-Corps (I-CORPS) entrepreneurial model we have used to help deploy NSF-funded technology innovations?

The first I-CORPS for educators was just launched and Cañada College's Dr. Amelito Enriquez was invited to form the only community college-based team included among nine I-CORPS teams selected nationally to participate in a two-month long intensive NSF pilot training program. Dr. Enriquez is a serial NSF-innovator, engineering and math faculty instructor and recipient of a national award from President Obama. He invited Cañada Dean of Science & Technology Janet Stringer and RP Group Staff Consultant Eva Schiorring to join his team. After an intense kick-off session in Washington DC, all three members of the Cañada Team agreed that they wished they had learned decades earlier the I-CORPS model (developed originally at Stanford University). "I would have applied it to virtually every project I have ever designed and developed," said Dr. Stringer.

At the core of the I-CORPS model is testing through at least one hundred interviews a series of hypotheses about: who will want and use your education innovation; what problem the innovation solves; how you will get the innovation to the users; how the users will find out about the innovation; who will want to partner with you; what the innovation will cost to launch and operate; and who will support the project. A key message is: "Get out of the building and talk to people: students, faculty, support staff, employers and other stakeholders." You will not know who your users are and what your innovation solves until you talk to those you *think* are the users. The Cañada Team has already tested and discarded dozens of hypotheses, and the initial idea of who would be the main users of the innovation, MathJam, has gone through multiple revisions; or in I-CORPS language: "pivots."

At the end of the two-month training period, the NSF teams will return to Washington DC to present their business plan to the NSF. However, the ultimate goal is for the I-CORPS

graduates to go home, apply the model in all future projects and teach the model to others engaged in education innovation.

For more information about I-CORPS and MathJam, please contact:

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## Planning: Culture Eats Strategy for Breakfast

**Author:** *Gregory M. Stoup, Ph.D.,  
Contra Costa Community College District, RP Group*

In any battle that pits organizational culture against institutional strategy, there's a very safe bet regarding the outcome. You're facing some rather long odds if you're siding with strategy. In fact, culture eats strategy for breakfast. This is particularly true in higher education, where good leadership is a consequence of influence more than edict.



And yet most colleges spend far more time on the development of their strategies than on the nurturing of their cultures. That's understandable; the former is more pliable and less mysterious. But why not leverage the more familiar and tangible facets of strategic planning to explicitly address the college culture?

There's an almost palpable belief in the air at many colleges that, if given the right opportunities and tools to leverage the collective wisdom and passion of the institution, there are few challenges that can't be overcome. There is powerful energy in that sentiment; what if it could be harnessed, even in some small way, to address key challenges.

While it offers no guarantee of success, there are some practical advantages to calling out organizational culture as either the target of strategic interventions or a tool for change in your college strategic plan.

The traditional strategic plan illuminates several broad goals related to student completion, effective partnerships and equitable outcomes among others. It typically identifies certain structures and processes that will be used to nudge the institution toward those goals. Culture, if mentioned at all, is a prevailing force in the ether that the college will strive to make more evidence-based or collaborative. But rarely is culture identified as a vehicle for change.

As an example consider that nearly every college in the land has some set of strategies intended to address the achievement gap in student performance. We set a college goal of closing the gap on the implicit belief that having that goal will focus our efforts, enable us to gauge our progress and lead to incremental improvements.

No Child Left Behind mandated that schools close the achievement gap in a specified number years under the threat that, if you fail, the government will close your school and

fire your staff. Years later, the gaps remain.

Imagine now that in addition to calling out a college goal to address the achievement gap you also create a strategic imperative to build cultural awareness of that challenge at your college, encourage experimentation intended to uncover clues to the nature of that problem and commit to regular convening to review scholarship, share findings (including failures) and discuss insights.

We tend to see these structures and process as means to an end. But in some important ways an institution's ability to tackle tough problems and drive change is a byproduct of a healthy culture.

Given the ephemeral nature of culture, it is difficult to make defensible claims on the tangible benefits of a positive culture. But the literature on organizational performance suggests more and more that the institution that nails the culture equation has a much better chance of making progress toward their goals.

## Assessment: Well, whad'ya know? Profiles and Passports to Learning



**Author:** Robert Pacheco, Ed.D.  
Miracosta College, RP Group

What learning is needed to be productive in the coming century and which methods best assess these requisite knowledge sets, skills and beliefs?

Through trial and error, efforts continue to capture and connect the broad discussions taking place about the larger learning outcomes with clear ways to know with confidence that lasting learning has indeed occurred.

Competency based education (CBE) offers a new value proposition in learning assessment by changing the *currency* used as a medium of learning exchange. Rather than focusing on clock hours and unit accumulation as proxies for learning, CBE examines concrete demonstrations of learning mastery regardless of the seat time needed to become proficient.

Colleges continue to experiment with CBE as a way to resolve nagging issues such as learning assessment at transfer and upon program completion.

[The Interstate Passport Initiative \(IPI\)](#), an effort of the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE), connects 16 public colleges and universities with a mutually agreed upon set of outcomes and competencies.

Review of the learning in the lower division general education courses takes the place of traditional credit unit computation, yielding a better linked and more fluid movement to the four-year institution. Under the IPI, transfer assessment is more learner-centered and less

absorbed on time spent in the classroom.

Another competency based measure garnering more than a second look is the Degree Qualifications Profile (DQP), a Lumina Foundation effort to create areas of learning beyond traditional disciplines, including broad integrated knowledge, intellectual skills, applied learning, civic learning and specialized knowledge.

The [November/December issue](#) of *Change* magazine highlighted eight partnerships between Lumina and state higher education systems and accrediting agencies to bring cross-divisional dialogue and reflection about what learning is needed for success in the coming century and what it looks like. DQP establishes clear expectations of performance using aligned assignments across the curriculum to assure that the wider proficiencies are met.

Pilots like the IPI and the DQP demonstrate the efficacy of experimentation to discover better ways to know what is important for students to learn in order to recognize mastery.

## Remembering Jim Barr: 1943-2013

**Author:** *Carolyn Arnold*  
*Chabot College, RP Group*

The RP Group, the American River College community and the California Community College system lost a great spirit when Jim Barr passed on December 19, 2013. An outpouring of love and affection and memories of Jim filled the RP Listserv. This memorial to Jim weaves together of many of your words.

Jim was the Senior Research Analyst at ARC for 21 years. He had come to teach Psychology, but he stayed in IR because he loved it. With Dick Rasor, his ARC colleague for ten years, Jim did groundbreaking research on instructor grade variability. He went on to become outspoken about the capacity of community college students to succeed and the college systems—including the way research was used—that thwart them. He created a model research office and then found the perfect balance between using the research office in service to the people and students at his college, using his research position to see and express the big picture of what the research showed, and using his passion to incite us all to do something about it.

As one colleague said, "In institutional research, it is easy to fall into a thought process that turns people into numbers and to create a job that is primarily concerned with 'moving a needle.' Jim...never saw the work that way. To his core, he cared about changing the pedagogy of higher education so that individual students—with all their differences, gifts, and flaws—could succeed in community college."

Researchers saw him as "a true researcher-as-social-activist," who helped us see "the possibility for advocacy and change inherent in planning and research." "His ideas and thoughts were rooted in the reality of everyday work in IRP offices and yet he also understood the student's struggles with getting through the college." A champion for student success, "he was a rebel with a cause—he helped build the RP/IR community with his unwavering fervor and clarity of thought." "Jim represented the new type of RP professional, someone who knew his craft but also could address the big picture issues with passion and engagement."

"Passionate" was the word most often associated with Jim. Colleagues also valued his

integrity, wisdom, enthusiasm, warm smile, twinkling blue eyes and kind sense of humor. IR newbies found him welcoming and encouraging; long-time colleagues found his input insightful and encouraging. He was a mentor and friend to many and “a truly good guy.”

Tom DeWit, Chabot English Instructor, gave a faculty view of Jim as a researcher: “Jim Barr was so in love with faculty, and our work with students, that he dreamed for us. He dreamed us to be our own Best People. Jim said that there never have been Best Practices, only Best People (who make a practice shine)... The Data-Man, at the heart of our students’ capacity; shouting, with lyricism and such a gorgeous passion in his timbre, about everything the students can do and want to do and deserve to do. He stirred numbers into the ferment of the true meaning of our community college mission. He knew the value as well as the ruse of data collection, and he hurt when our belief in the evidence-basedness of it all blurred our intuition. He presented evidence that begged us to consider and reconsider, commit and recommit ourselves to our students.”

Jim, thank you for asking us all—faculty, students, researchers, administrators—to be our own Best People. The CCC system is now much less without you, but we will continue with your spirit in our hearts.

We will be holding a celebration of Jim Barr’s life at the RP Group conference in April. Please bring your memories, stories, and pictures of Jim to share. See Dick Rasor’s speech at the ARC Jim Barr Memorial Service [here](#).

The Research and Planning Group for California Community Colleges | [www.rpgroup.org](http://www.rpgroup.org)