



Dear Esteemed Colleagues,

Looking back at 2016, it is accurate to say it was both a demanding and fulfilling year for us at the RP Group, marked by serious growth and plenty of learning – to be expected as we expand and evolve to meet the changing needs of students, researchers, and practitioners in our California Community Colleges (CCC).

Some key highlights from last year include the following:

**We (more than) quadrupled our professional development programs, made possible by the...**



- Expansion of our Leading From the Middle (LFM) Academies, in large part due to recent funding from the Institutional Effectiveness Division of the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office (CCCCO)
- Launch of the first three Applied Solutions Kits (ASK)
- Expansion of our Strengthening Student Success and the RP Conferences, both sold out in 2016

Our Research and Evaluation Division saw a greater diversity of clients from the CCC system, along with a heightened interest from colleges in the RP Group's Student Support (Re)defined work. We are also honored that...

- Our **Multiple Measures research received plaudits from the federal Department of Education** and national higher education groups
- We earned support from key foundations for some of our most innovative professional development, research, and evaluation programs

**We hired six full-time staff (almost doubling our size)** and established a brand new Communications Division, which has and continues to usher forth a new era in outreach and engagement. To this effect, we have...

- **Created a modern, new RP Group website**
- Established a new look and feel with refreshed logo, messaging, and branding
- Crafted a strategic communications plan that now guides our external outreach efforts and includes students and their communities as key stakeholders

**Through all of this tremendous growth and opportunity, we have learned that...**

- Face-to-face and online knowledge-sharing opportunities are proving to be increasingly important for embedding student success strategies in California's community colleges
- Leadership focusing on institutional effectiveness within the CCC system will be front and center in 2017 and beyond
- Research and planning are blending into all areas of the institution, so we need to ensure that faculty and administration are actively engaged in the conversations and decision-making on campus and across our system

In 2017, we look forward to new projects and initiatives from each of our three divisions. These efforts include:

- Continued development of evaluation and research associated with the Common Assessment, Educational Planning, and Online Education Initiatives
- Support of initiatives designed to bolster knowledge-sharing and community across CCC silos
- Participation in the implementation of pathway projects that are emerging at community colleges across the state

Truly,  
Michael Howe  
Executive Director

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[Leading from the Middle: The Story of Dean Papas](#)

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[Student Voices Are a Powerful Motivator: Student Support \(Re\)defined Lives On](#)

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[Pilot Colleges Lead Us into the Future of Student Success: Multiple Measures Assessment Project](#)

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[Is Your Disproportionate Impact Method a Little Sensitive? News From the Data Disaggregation Applied Solution Kit \(ASK\)](#)

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[Looking Back, Looking Ahead: Conversations with Former RP Group Board Members](#)

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## Articles

[Leading from the Middle: The Story of Dean Papas](#)



**Authors: Laura Hope and Dr. Robert Gabriner**

The Leading from the Middle (LFM) program was developed in 2013 by the RP Group to address a gap that is just now widely being recognized -- the need for strong, capable leadership that outlasts the turmoil of shifting budgetary, political, and

educational landscapes.

A recent LFM evaluation revealed several important results and ***yet one finding emerges as most significant: practitioners indicate they are initially reluctant to assert a leadership identity, resulting in an overall lack of strong, middle leaders at the faculty, staff, and administrative levels.***

Through a series of team-based convenings focused on local projects and applicable readings and activities, participants in Leading from the Middle can realize the immense impact they can have on their colleges and students.

One participant from the 2013 LFM academy, Dean Papas, noted that before the program, he didn't have any formal leadership background, and that after, he gained the "clarity and confidence" he needed to see himself as a leader.

"LFM helped me to understand what was happening at the college through the lens of change management and strategic planning, and it helped me to develop mental models to understand the landscape and constituencies better."

**With the help of this new lens, Dean was able to:**

- Influence the way his college understood and approached professional development efforts
- Serve as co-chair on the Student Success and Engagement Committee
- Serve and increase equity for two identified Disproportionate Impact (DI) groups -- students with disabilities and veterans -- through the creation of a powerful program that incorporated literature by a disabled veteran into the basic skills curriculum. Dean and his colleagues then invited to speak and participate on campus in a Q and A with students, faculty, and the community at large.

The LFM evaluation also revealed that data and storytelling are powerful tools for emerging leaders, that optimism and quiet determination are needed to lead change, and that these qualities can be derived from connectivity developed through working with others and more. Go [here for more information](#) on Leading from the Middle.

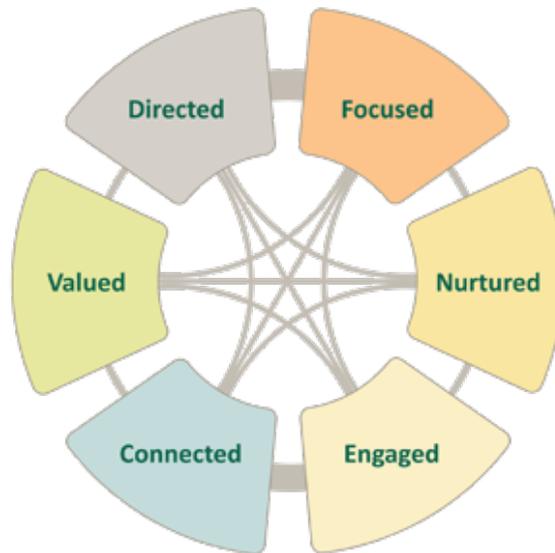
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## Student Voices Are a Powerful Motivator: Student Support (Re)defined Lives On

**Authors: Kelley Karandjeff and Dr. Darla Cooper**

The nationwide push to increase community college completions and California's own Basic Skills Initiative, and Student Success and Support Program (SSSP), and student equity planning have many practitioners seeking the most effective ways to help all students attain their educational goals.

Student Support (Re)defined (2011-2014) aimed to understand how community colleges can feasibly deliver support both inside and outside the classroom to improve success for all students, with a particular focus on African-American and Latino learners. Student perspectives drove this research, uniquely focusing on what *students* said they needed to succeed.



Six Success Factors

Though the project is complete, the application of it lives on. Since 2013, the RP Group has delivered over 70 presentations to thousands of educators and policymakers on the "[six success factors](#)" framework and [five key themes](#) resulting from the study.

Ultimately, we have learned that student voices are a powerful motivator and driver for change. The project sparked a movement across our system, with institutions using the findings to facilitate dialog between "silos," engage in strategic and equity planning, and take action! Explore examples of these [individual college innovations](#), here.

We are also seeking to conduct additional research based on the project, with a focus on the online environment and how to apply the success factors framework to faculty, staff, and administrators in order to understand what helps *them* succeed.

*For more information or to share your own institution's work with the study's findings, contact Dr. Darla Cooper Director of Research and Evaluation, the RP Group, at [dcooper@rpgroup.org](mailto:dcooper@rpgroup.org).*

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## Pilot Colleges Lead Us into the Future of Student Success: Multiple Measures Assessment Project

Authors: Dr. Mallory Newell and Dr. Darla Cooper

The Multiple Measures Assessment Project ([MMAP](#)) is in its third year of using high school transcript-based models to guide placement, with the assistance of a diverse group of participating California Community Colleges.

While systematic change such as re-configuring a college's placement system takes time and a campus-wide commitment, our pilot colleges have proved to be deeply dedicated to this ground-breaking work. Thus far, the pilot colleges have taught the MMAP research team a lot about what it takes to effectively implement multiple measures, including:

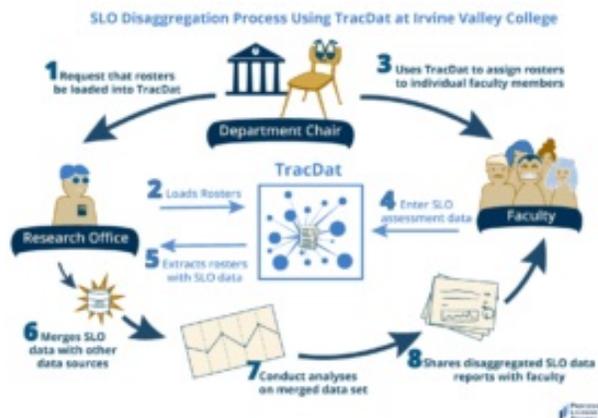
- **California Community Colleges are committed to changing the culture around assessment, placement, and matriculation.** Sixty-two community colleges are participating, locally determining their pace and method of adoption.
- **Collaboration is essential.** Successful colleges have built teams with representatives from across the campus and collaborated with local high schools to align and improve curricula (both K-12 and community college), increase participation in CalPASS Plus, and bring assessment to the high schools.
- **Participation facilitates increased communication.** The process has triggered dialogue within departments around course sequences, student learning outcomes, student ability and success that had not existed before.
- **Students placed by multiple measures are succeeding.** Results from pilot colleges show stable or improved success rates in transfer-level English and math, even with additional students placing at that level, in comparison to students placed by previous methods.
- **Multiple measures helps close achievement gaps.** Multiple participating colleges have reported reduced disproportionate impact in developmental education placement for students of color.
- **Student supports remain important.** Some colleges have implemented additional support structures for students including counseling, advising, co-requisites, and tutoring, reporting that this holistic, capacity affirming approach is leading more students to take math and English in the first year.
- **MMAP does not cover all students.** Colleges continue to need to locally implement and validate multiple measures for students who may not have high school data available (e.g. international students, older non-traditional students, or students that have not graduated high school).

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## Is Your Disproportionate Impact Method a Little Sensitive? News From the Data Disaggregation Applied Solution Kit (ASK)

Author: Dr. Craig Hayward

The Data Disaggregation (DD) project of the Institutional Effectiveness Partnership Initiative (IEPI) began in spring 2016 and since then has produced a number of papers and tools for the field. We have learned that our most popular tools tended to speak to developing needs in the field regarding areas with a high degree of accountability. These tools and areas include:



- [Disaggregating SLOs](#)
- [Disaggregating employment in the field by program of study using the CTE Outcomes Survey](#)
- Disaggregating loan default risk by program of study

At the heart of the DD ASK is series of papers (coming soon) that review one or more case studies illustrating how to use data disaggregation techniques to resolve a specific issue of particular relevance to the field, like the three areas listed above.

Each paper also provides a "how-to" checklist and set of caveats and [resources](#) for those who will be adapting the outlined processes to their local context. Additionally, the ASK links to presentations, [animated movies](#), and [infographics](#).

In the first phase of this project, the DD team developed white papers, presentations, and tools for several content areas including disproportionate impact analyses, the basic skills cohort progress tracker, and more. In the DI analyses, we learned that the three methods of analysis, listed below, have varying levels of sensitivity.

- The 80% rule appears to be the most sensitive
- The proportionality index (PI) is the least sensitive (at least when the PI is set at .8 or lower)
- The percent gap index lies somewhere in between

These findings are generalized to some degree and affected by many factors, such as the cutoff used by the PI method and how large of a percent gap is required to trigger a finding of DI.

So, where is the DD ASK, you ask? It is coming soon to the [Professional Learning Network](#). In the meantime, learn more and engage with us, [here](#).

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## Looking Back, Looking Ahead: Conversations with Former RP Group Board Members

Below, in a Q and A type of format, we would like to take a moment to honor and recognize three former RP Group Board Members and thank them for their service. You may recognize some of the names from the articles above and as instrumental forces in the field!

### **Dr. Robert Gabriner**

**Years served and roles?** Mid-1990s until a few years ago... Treasurer, Vice President, and President.

**What was it like back then?** When I first joined the Board in the 1990s, the biggest debate of the day was about the lunch menu for the RP Conference, but other Board members were always receptive to our ideas and were willing to try them out, and consequently, the RP Group emerged as a leading state organization in the 2000s.



Laura Hope, former Board Member

**What is something we may not know about you?** Today, I spend my time building Leading from the Middle. I have spent over 20 years with the RP Group and will continue to until I can't remember what the RP Group is anymore.

**What words of wisdom would you give to those of us working to promote student success?** Take the long view. This is a long haul effort. Also, research and planning are both now everyone's domain, so we better bring them – faculty, administration, staff – in.

**What cool things are you working on now?** We are excited that Leading from the Middle received a grant from the State Chancellor's Office and that we have the opportunity to work with them to develop a plan to bring leadership development to every corner of the colleges to enable a new courageous and committed generation to lead.

**Laura Hope**

**Years served and roles?** I served on the RP Group Board from 2014-2016 as a Strategic Advisor on leadership issues. I am not a researcher, though most of my work has been closely guided by IR at my own college.

**What is something we may not know about you?** Currently, I am the co-chair of the RP Group's Leading from the Middle. Most people don't know that I am not only the product of CCC, but I work at Chaffey College, the same college I attended over 30 years ago. People probably also don't know that it took me three years to get over my paralyzing and intimidated fear of Bob Gabriner. I was so inspired and motivated by Bob's intense knowledge about the system and his probing and articulate questions, I used to have to psyche myself up to have a phone conversation with him because I was afraid of looking stupid.

**What words of wisdom would you give to those of us working to promote student success?** Consider the long view. We are always responding in the moment, but few things worth doing are built instantaneously. In addition, worry more about building a culture that can respond to change -- one that is resilient and collaborative. With the right cultural conditions, nothing -- not recessions, initiative fatigue, or changing administrators -- can shake the foundation of the college's values.

**What cool things are you working on now?** In addition to LFM, I am also deeply committed to inmate education efforts. Chaffey was one of the few colleges working in state prisons over the past 10 years, and now that the laws have made those endeavors more possible, I am dedicated to ensuring that programs grow with integrity and sustainability in mind.

### **Dr. Robert Pacheco**

**Years served and roles?** Gee, 2007-2016. I was 'elected,' though I demand a recount. I served on the 'created just for me' Assessment Chair position on the exec committee for eight years and loved it.

**What was it like back then?** It was the 'roving band of researchers' doing everything from stuffing conference packets to building initiatives. While I sure miss the back of the napkin discussions in neighborhood pubs after the Board meetings (where new ideas were hatched)... it has been great to see the group take on its leadership role in the state.

**What is something we may not know about you?** My goal is to bring intentionally iterative learning found in software development and systems to colleges' learning environments as well. It is not the way the academy thinks naturally, but what is happening in systems learning -- and it's where it's at.

**What words of wisdom would you give to those of us working to promote student success?** Follow your passions. Your loves. That's all that matters in the end. Dante said, "L'amor che move il sole e altre stelle," (it is love that moves the sun and the other stars). Boy, was he right.

**What was one of the most rewarding moments in your time as a Board Member?** The biggest was meeting the great Irish poet, [former board member] Ken Meehan. Some have Yeats, some Joyce... my favorite is Meehan. He had a wistful, but melancholic way about our work and life. Could listen to the guy for hours. One of the handful of people you meet in your life that you truly remember.

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Connect to your peers, resources, and knowledge: join us on social media!

