



theRPgroup

Research • Planning • Professional Development
for California Community Colleges

Strengthening Student Success Conference Lead Job Opportunity

The RP Group is looking for a dynamic player to join our team as the Strengthening Student Success Conference Lead. This position is a part-time consultant.

Join a highly creative, collaborative, and multi-faceted RP Group team working to deliver professional learning resources and opportunities designed to support California Community Colleges. The RP Group provides statewide leadership and research, planning, and professional development services that support inquiry and evidence-based decision-making to advance the success of all students. Quality, authenticity, equity, and collaboration are central drivers of all our organization's work.

About the Strengthening Student Success Conference

The Strengthening Student Success Conference (SSSC) began in 2006 to provide a setting where community college educators could share the work they were doing around student learning outcomes and assessment. In the last 11 years, the conference has grown from the approximately 300 participants who attended in 2006; more than 750 educators attended in 2016. The focus of the conference has continued to highlight the wide range of efforts to advance student equity and success, including teaching practice in the classroom; the integration of academics and counseling; institutional development; leadership in the community college setting; and the pursuit of collaborations with other educational partners. The conference attracts a range of faculty, staff, administrators, and others in the extended community who support community colleges to jointly share professional learning. Colleges often send teams, reflecting a changing view that professional development is a collaborative activity.

The Strengthening Student Success Conference spans two full days, with half-day post-conference workshops on the third day. The conference is organized into 12 strands, which vary over time in response to changing issues and state context. SSSC is highly regarded across the system, shown by the large number of proposals submitted and the high attendance; the conference has sold out every year since it began, and generates an extensive waiting list.

Three organizations -- the RP Group, Career Ladders Project (CLP)/LearningWorks, and the California Community College Success Network (3CSN) -- partner to deliver the conference. A group of volunteers and paid staff work together to plan for and implement this event. A steering committee includes representatives from these organizations as well as other practitioners in the field, and provides overall vision for and direction to the conference's development. A program committee of volunteer educators, chaired by a steering committee member, reviews proposals and helps select the sessions. An Event Manager (paid staff member) coordinates conference logistics in collaboration with an event management company.

To view information on the 2017 conference as well as materials from past SSSC programs, visit <http://rpgroup.org/Events/Strengthening-Student-Success>.

About the Strengthening Student Success Conference Lead

The SSSC Lead is responsible for developing content for the conference program. S/he serves as a central hub for and broker between the numerous individuals and organizations involved in delivering this annual event, including leading the conference steering committee, supporting the program committee, working in partnership with the Event Manager, and collaborating with the conference evaluators. The foundational structure and calendar for planning the annual conference is already in place with well-documented activities and timelines. The SSSC Lead has the opportunity to be creative with the process of shaping each year's conference content.

The SSSC Lead is a part-time, consultant position. The conference planning is a cyclical, yearlong process with heavier work in some months than others. The workload tends to be more intensive during the planning period (December through June) and right before, during, and after the conference (September-November). The commitment averages about 0.35 FTE over the course of the year (approximately 14 hours/week). The ideal start date for the position is early November in order to be part of the planning process from the beginning of the cycle. Compensation is dependent on experience.

The Opportunity

Conference Development

1. Steering Committee
 - a. Lead/facilitate monthly steering committee meetings made up of practitioners and leaders of partner organizations.
 - b. Facilitate discussions and navigate decisions about themes, keynote speakers, strand topics and post-conference workshops (e.g., balance when to ask committee for input and when to ask for a decision).
 - c. Draw on expertise and knowledge of the field (e.g., examples of evidence-based practice, emerging issues) to provide conference theme and strand ideas to committee and help frame conversations.
 - d. Collaborate with Event Manager to prepare committee meeting agendas and notes.
2. Program Content
 - a. Coordinate with Program Chair and program committee to oversee development of program sessions.
 - b. Read and review all proposals received, and attend all conference calls with the program committee. Reading the full range of submissions gives the big picture of what is going on in the field.
3. Communications
 - a. Work with Event Manager and Director of Communications on strategic and timely messaging and outreach leading up to (including Call for Proposals) and after the conference.
 - b. Work with Event Manager and Director of Communications to prepare scripts for conference master of ceremonies.
4. Project Management
 - a. Collaborate with Event Manager on aligning content and logistics, outreach, publicity, communications, evaluation, and other details.
 - b. Respond to unexpected small and large concerns that arise and follow-up as needed.

Ideal Skills

Facilitation and Project Management

- Strong and effective facilitator
- Accomplished project manager
- Effective collaborator
- Ability to problem solve and deal diplomatically with challenging issues, situations, and people; ability to navigate multiple players/personalities/agendas
- Ability to discern when steering committee needs to make decisions or simply provide input
- Ability to hold both big ideas and details
- Demonstrated experience as a creative contributor to the development of programs, initiatives, and/or professional learning opportunities
- Experience with designing and delivering professional learning and development
- Comfort with occasional ambiguity
- Ability to work with little direct supervision
- Ability to work in a virtual setting, both independently and collaboratively

Communications Skills

- Strong writing skills for conference content and messaging
- Strong verbal communication skills and experience, including listening and speaking

Required Qualifications

- Must live in the state of California
- Must have a graduate degree (master's or doctorate) in education, social sciences, research, or an academic field taught in community colleges
- Must be grounded in California Community College practice, including experience working within college(s) and/or participation in community college projects
- Must have a deep understanding of the key issues, the big movements, and the networks that are in place within the California Community College system
- Must have the relevant history, visibility, and reputation, to work with a range of community college leaders within the state, and be known among community college practitioners

Application Process

- If interested, please send a letter of interest and resume to jobs@rpgroup.org. Applications will be accepted until the position is filled.
- With any questions, please contact Rose Asera at roseasera@gmail.com.

The RP Group is an Equal Opportunity Employer. The above statements are intended to describe the general nature and level of work being performed and are not intended to be construed as an exhaustive list of all responsibilities, duties, and skills required.