LETTERS FROM LEADERSHIP
GREGORY STOUP, BOARD PRESIDENT, THE RP GROUP
What is the biggest challenge facing California Community Colleges today? I have posed this question to trustees at the annual Community College League of California (CCLC) conference for the last 10 years. Over that time, the responses didn’t change much. New issues bubbled up from time to time, but there was remarkable consistency... continued on p. 2

STUDENT SUPPORT (RE)DEFINED CORNER — HOW ONE COLLEGE IS CHANGING THE CONVERSATION
OLIVIA HENRIKSEN, DIRECTOR OF COMMUNICATIONS, THE RP GROUP
In an era where colleges are driven by equity, Guided Pathways (GP), and student-centered models, Coastline College — an institution with a high frequency of... continued on p. 2

DASHBOARD CREATED TO HELP STUDENTS AT CRITICAL TRANSFER JUNCTURES
OLIVIA HENRIKSEN, DIRECTOR OF COMMUNICATIONS, THE RP GROUP
After hearing a presentation on Phase I of the RP Group’s Through the Gate Transfer Study during Bakersfield College’s (BC) flex week, former BC Research Analyst,... continued on p. 4
...in what trustees felt were the biggest challenges. Among the recurring favorites: insufficient resources, lack of innovation, and slow pace of change. However, at this year’s conference, I noticed that a perennial favorite fell off the list: not having a shared vision of the future.

While the systemwide implementation of the Chancellor Office’s Vision for Success and the new Student Centered Funding Formula are still in their adolescence, their impacts are being felt in almost every area of college operations.

The deep impact of the Vision for Success is in large part a consequence of the implicit change in the theory as to how colleges improve. In the past, the operating theory was largely built around local innovation — the idea that all colleges have some such exceptional practices, with the mission to bring those local practices to scale and then share what is learned with colleagues at other colleges. Through that prism, the state’s primary role is to support capacity building, provide initial funding, and encourage professional development.

The Vision for Success offers a different prism. In this paradigm the state supports the colleges by providing strategic initiatives and frameworks for reaching a set of systemwide goals.

Under the new paradigm, innovation remains important, but is no longer unbounded. Rather, it is incentivized to occur in places where it best supports the implementation of state initiatives that further progress toward systemwide goals. The challenges for colleges today appear to be how to implement the Vision for Success in a manner that best accords with existing local policy and infrastructure, and navigating the representation model at the state level to ensure different voices are being heard.

The consequences of this shift are far reaching, impacting everything from hiring practices to program design to the relationship between college presidents and trustees.

Similarly, institutional research, planning, and effectiveness (IRPE) professionals will be navigating some significant changes. Reading tea leaves and making educated guesses can make fools of all of us. However, a shift in emphasis from research-driven innovation to implementation of adopted initiatives would likely place a greater premium on institutional planning. Research will remain important, but planning would require more attention. The old saw with the RP Group has been that it was big on the “R” and small on the “p.” Well, the future may foster an ascension of planning, bringing greater parity between our R and P.

We have not remained idle as the landscape has evolved. The RP Group has spent the last two years closely examining our mission and organizational structure to make sure we remain aligned to the evolving needs of our members. We hope you can see this due diligence reflected in our new 2019-2024 Strategic Plan (see page 4). The plan captures some significant adaptations including a revised mission statement, much needed clarification around the dual role nature of our organization, and greater integration of goals and our organizational structure.

I and other members of the RP Group Board will be speaking to these changes at our upcoming 2020 RP Conference in Long Beach this April. We look forward to seeing you there and continuing the dialogue of how to support ever greater student success.

Truly,
Greg (RP Group Board President)
So far, one of the farthest reaching proposals focuses around restructuring advising support such that it is much more specific, intentional, persistent, and includes intervention responsibilities.

However, nurturing and implementing these big ideas may not have even been possible five or 10 years ago. In order for a college to truly care about its students, it has to care about its faculty and staff, says Blair and Zentner.

"Organizational change doesn’t happen overnight," says Zentner. "You have to help people understand it and make it palatable." In fact, Coastline was built on the foundation of agility and adaptation, and has been in a culture shift pattern for years.

"We have a number of great faculty who were already there with the mindset ... but they were outliers pushing ahead..."
In 2018, we embarked on a journey to help us better serve students and our members. Through robust and strategic discussions, a dedicated task force, surveys, and a listening tour, the organization developed a plan that refines our mission, clarifies the dual nature of our organization, and includes attainable goals aimed at better supporting our IRPE community, our students, and those that wish to use data to help students succeed. Learn about our new plan here.

(continued from p. 3) of the pack, so now we have more of a collective pushing for the same thing,” says Blair. “It was a long road in the beginning. We’re really cross-functional, which means a lot of different opinions, so there’s a lot of level-setting.”

Instead of pushing an agenda, like around Guided Pathways, Blair says they just provide places and opportunities for conversation including difficult conversations, and try to lighten the mood whenever possible. (Watch this video spoof on GP). These conversations as well as opportunities for growth and learning (for and by faculty) are manifesting now all over campus.

New professional development opportunities to support this work include a new, first-year faculty academy; faculty-led Webinar Wednesday; and an all-access leadership program. Now, says Blair, the most requested professional development topic by faculty is student retention strategies. “[The faculty] are asking what more they can do [to help students].”

Coastline’s Design Teams’ proposals will be implemented by fall of this year.

For more information, email oloy@rpgroup.org.
(continued from p. 4) community college college students entering, passing transfer-level math and English as result of landmark law," which reports that more African-American and Latino students are passing transfer-level classes. Read it here.

The RP Group’s early findings report is also included in an article by The 74 Million national publication, “As California law looks to end remedial education, new studies show state’s community colleges showing uneven progress in adopting math & English reforms,” but that more work is needed. Read it here.

College of the Canyons’ Leading from the Middle team, Canyons Completes, identified the need to improve communication about the organization and operation of the organization’s efforts. The team developed an organizational chart showing how Canyons Completes operates. Learn more here.

The Public Policy Institute of California report, “What Happens When Colleges Broaden Access to Transfer-Level Courses? Evidence from California’s Community Colleges,” discusses results of community colleges placing new students in transfer-level courses rather than remedial courses. RP Group research and surveys pertaining to AB 705 legislation and implementation guidance efforts are referenced and discussed. Read the report here.

The RP Group was cited in the National Academy of Sciences report, “Increasing Student Success in Developmental Mathematics: Proceedings of a Workshop” report, intended to assist the group in exploring students in postsecondary math, with a particular focus on access and equity issues. Read it here.

To see more examples of how colleges have utilized our research and college-focused services, go here.

What I Learned about California Community Colleges from Reading 149 Proposals
By Rose Asera, Ph.D., Program Co-chair for SSS19

This perspective by Dr. Rose Asera reflects on the “impressionistic map” of our CCCs based on the 149 proposals submitted to the 2019 Strengthening Student Success Conference. Discover higher education trends in this piece and learn more about our flagship event here.