Strengthening Student Success Conference 2017
Proposal Submission Guide

PROPOSALS ARE DUE BY 11:59 PM ON WEDNESDAY, MARCH 15 AT:
https://rpgroup.formstack.com/forms/sssc17

Theme: Committing to Our Future

We face uncertain times. Recent changes in our nation’s political leadership have left many people, including postsecondary educators and advocates concerned about the future and in turn, about the prospects of our students. This challenging time compels us to reflect on what we value and what action we can take to maintain positive changes in our colleges and our communities. As a system, as institutions, and as individual educators, we have the opportunity to demonstrate our deep belief in the potential for every learner to succeed. We can commit to our own continued learning to strengthen our colleges. By making these commitments we stand resolute: we can impact not only the future of our students, but our communities, our state, and our society as a whole.

The 2017 Strengthening Student Success Conference will focus on our commitments to our students, to our colleges, and to our communities. Equity will be an integral and integrated value of all aspects of the conference, not separated into a session or strand. All sessions will have the opportunity to demonstrate implications for equity in relationship to the whole range of student populations who have been marginalized or whose needs have been systemically overlooked.

Conference Goals

• Strengthen understanding of critical issues that shape student success in California community colleges

• Share practical examples of how colleges are helping to improve student success

• Apply concepts highlighted at the conference to participants’ own work

• Deepen ties to colleagues and build networks with other community college educators

• Strengthen connections and collaboration between community college practitioners and K-12, adult education, higher education, and community partners; students; and other stakeholders
• Increase participant capacity to lead, to participate in collaborative leadership, and to support others in growing as leaders

Developing a Successful Proposal

Proposals will be selected using criteria reflecting the conference goals and theme. The application form will ask you to address the following:

1. A title and 125-word description for use in the conference program
2. Which one or two strands your session addresses (one primary and one secondary, if applicable)
3. Which time format you would prefer for your session (60- or 80-minute)
4. Contact information for the presenter(s), including email addresses and phone numbers during the summer, if different from the academic year
5. If you are submitting a proposal for an Open Format the questions you respond to will be different
6. Learning outcomes for your session
7. A description (75-125 words) of how your session provides practical examples of how colleges can improve student success
8. A summary (75-125 words) of the evidence that supports your presentation, including any analysis of disproportionate impact or positive effects on identified populations
9. A description (75-125 words) of specific strategies that you will use in your session to help participants strengthen connections between the topic(s) discussed and their own practice
10. A short statement (75-125 words) about the relationship of your session topic to equity

Session Formats

Presenters should design all sessions—60 minutes and 80 minutes—for active learning. Through narratives, demonstrations, conversations, and/or hands-on activities, participants should be able to consider how concepts, models, and possibilities could be applied to their own practices and settings. Presenter resources are available at: http://rpgroup.org/Events/Strengthening-Student-Success/Session-Materials-Presenter-Resources

SSSC 2017 will feature sessions of two lengths:
• **60-minute sessions:** These shorter sessions may focus on conveying content, offering analysis of the strand topic, or reporting research findings, however, they should still plan to have an interactive discussion or activity.

• **80-minute sessions:** With longer time slots, these sessions should include hands-on activities and interactive discussions that help participants relate concepts to their own experience and practice.

**Helpful Hints:**

• You may have questions about which strand to choose for your proposal. You will have the opportunity to have your proposal reviewed in two strands. Because so much of the important work is interconnected, and because so much of the work is about making connections, we recognize that many strong proposals don’t fall into only one area. For example, work on developing meta-majors may be viewed as part of both the *Creating Coherent Pathways* and *Leadership and Transforming the Institution* strands.

• This year we have added an *Open Format* strand for conversations, questions, brainstorming sessions or book discussions. Rather than preparing a presentation, this will be an opportunity for open dialogue. You can start with a topic, a question, or a dilemma and invite colleagues to join you in thinking about it. When you choose *Open Format*, you will be directed to different questions and you won’t have the opportunity to name a second strand.

• For questions that you intend to return to but which require answers to allow you to proceed, please write "draft" in the answer field.

• If you wish to save and come back to your proposal later, click the "save and resume" button. You will be given a personalized link. You can also opt to have the link sent to you by email. *You MUST use this link in order to return to your partially completed form.*

• If you would like to start a new proposal you can do so at anytime using the original link (listed at the top of this form).

• Once you submit your proposal you will receive a confirmation email with a copy of your proposal.
Strand Descriptions

(1) Creating Coherent Pathways

How can students have more coherent educational experiences? Well-marked pathways may provide continuity and seamless transitions between courses; between departments and divisions; across educational institutions; and among institutions, community organizations, and employers. Pathways models are now characteristic of work in Career Technical Education (CTE), Adult Education Block Grants (AEBG), and transition programs such as dual or concurrent enrollment.

Whether across departments and divisions on a campus, across educational institutions, or between institutions and community organizations and employers, cross-institutional pathways rely on strategic partnership, communication, and effective collaboration. In addition, the Community College Research Center book, *Redesigning America’s Community Colleges*, provides research support specifically for “guided pathways,” as a way to transform the community college educational experience. Instead of students moving through an arbitrary collection of courses in whatever order they are available, guided pathways provide students with a consistent programmatic approach that allows students clear direction to completion.

We are seeking presentations that describe how to fundamentally rethink and restructure the ways that students connect to, enroll in, progress through, and successfully complete their educational experiences. Presentations will focus on the partnerships and pathways that support strong transitions and the achievement of key milestones as students move through their educational journeys.

Examples include:

- Coordinated programs and preparations for students attending or completing K-12 schools, such as dual enrollment efforts, alignment initiatives, bridge programs, etc.
- Programs that address the basic skills needs of adult education students entering community college
- Career Technical Education pathways that facilitate robust connections among students, educators, and employers for regional workforce development
- Associate degrees for transfer that align curricula with the requirements of baccalaureate-level institutions
- Course sequences designed to help students choose a field of study and/or career
- Processes for program mapping and preparation to create pathways focused on a major or theme
(2) Supporting College Readiness

Since the state legislature and California Community College Chancellor’s Office established the Basic Skills Initiative, colleges have recognized that the common developmental sequence did not effectively serve students. In the last eight years, this critique has led to new approaches to course content and format. Rather than a remedial focus looking backward, redesigned courses directly connect to college-level content. Many colleges have replaced long math and English course sequences with alternative accelerated or co-requisite models. Practitioners are also broadening the definition of college readiness beyond content knowledge to include critical thinking skills necessary for college-level academic work. Moreover, the process of student assessment and placement is changing, moving away from reliance on a single standardized test towards multiple measures that include high school transcripts for recent graduates. The recent Community College Basic Skills and Student Outcome Transformation Fund gives colleges the opportunity to reconsider what preparation is required, how to assess students’ current knowledge and readiness, and how to effectively move students to college-level academics.

We are seeking presentations that highlight effective approaches to transforming the way students begin their educational experiences including the placement process and design of course sequences that include curricular content material that has been designated as basic skills. This includes students’ experience in basic skills courses and in college-level courses that include or are supplemented with basic skills material and academic support.

Examples include:

- Redesigned basic skills sequences with acceleration or co-requisite courses
- Integrated instructional approaches that advance students’ acquisition of basic skills and preparation for college-level coursework, such as first year experience programs
- Placement processes that incorporate multiple measures and the resulted changes in basic skills placement
- Exploration of the equity implications of basic skills redesigns

(3) Learning in the Classroom and Beyond

Educators in instruction and student services constantly innovate and try new techniques to improve student engagement, learning, and success. However, educators rarely have the opportunity to see their colleagues teach or to experience the classroom as students do. This strand is designed to help participants take different perspectives, try on new strategies, and learn from their peers. We aim for this strand to showcase specific instructional strategies, with particular attention to active learning, not only in the classroom, but also in academic support settings across the college, such as the library and tutoring centers; this may also include examples of student support and advising integrated into instruction.

We are seeking presentations that share hands-on pedagogical approaches, including (1) instructional practices that address the affective domain, and (2) approaches that incorporate
technology—in the classroom and other settings across the college (e.g., academic support and counseling).

Examples include:

- Classroom instruction that translates content into active and/or contextualized learning
- Academic support including preparation, training, implementation, and delivery of tutoring in the learning center or library or tutoring connected to specific courses
- Approaches that focus on development of the affective domain, including strategies designed to help students advance metacognitive skills, feel at “home” in the academic environment, or develop habits of mind and intellectual dispositions
- Use of technology to serve more students, extend the teaching repertoire in the classroom, and/or extend the classroom with online learning; includes identifying the benefits of technology to advance equitable student success
- Programs that work with instructors sharing common instruction or jointly constructing curriculum and pedagogy, including collaborations that span English as a Second Language and Career Technical Education courses

(4) Leadership and Transforming the Institution

Creating educational environments that effectively serve students often means reshaping our colleges in both small and large ways. Some colleges are critically examining their structures to see how responsive they are to students, and as a result, they are taking strides to transform their institutions. Some institutions are now attempting to understand how to engage a broad range of practitioners and partners in conducting a holistic assessment of the college, and how to pursue structural and cultural changes that are mutually supportive.

Transformational change requires leadership at all levels of the college, not only from executive leaders, but also from practitioner leaders across the college. Presidents and vice presidents provide the vision and direction for the college; faculty, administrators, staff, counselors, researchers and others across the college can also take on the responsibilities as practitioner leaders to translate the vision into action. Many colleges are investing in leadership development either by creating campus programs or supporting practitioners to attend statewide and regional leadership programs such as Basic Skills Initiative Leadership Institute (BSILI) or Leading from the Middle (LFM), among others.

We are seeking presentations that address how colleges build capacity for educational transformation and what they learn in the process of transformation. We also seek presentations that describe how executive and practitioner leadership plays a central role in this transformation. Presentations can describe how colleges are reconstructing their practices, program structures, and infrastructure as a whole institution, as well as the process of fostering and developing
leadership across the institution.

Examples include:

- Institutional effectiveness initiatives
- Initiatives designed to promote cultural change across the whole campus
- Redesign of course sequence structure and meta-majors as part of a college transformation effort
- Efforts to prepare the college for accreditation
- Cases of effective leadership at all levels of the college
- Efforts to identify and develop critical leadership skills, including collaboration and communication
- Professional learning experiences designed to foster and advance the work of leadership, including middle and faculty leadership

(5) Professional Learning—Building a Culture of Improvement

California Community Colleges are increasingly seeing themselves as learning institutions and are investing in a culture of improvement through professional learning. Quality education for students requires that educators across the college not only be skilled and certified, but that they also continue to learn and grow professionally. Research confirms that professional learning is more effective when it is ongoing, directly related to practice, and undertaken collaboratively with colleagues.

We are seeking presentations that highlight the ways institutions are supporting professional learning, with an emphasis on efforts that encourage collegial learning across traditional silos. Descriptions may include not only the structures, but also the process and outcomes of professional learning, and reflections on the experience.

Examples include:

- College structures for professional development, such as centers, academies, and programs
- Formats for ongoing collaborative professional learning, such as inquiry groups and teaching circles
- Experiences and outcomes of institutional, regional, or topical focused communities of practice
(6) Integrating Plans and Initiatives into the Campus Fabric

Over the last several years, colleges have experienced an increasing number of categorical initiatives. Each of the varied initiatives represents an attempt to address one or more critical barriers that stand in the way of students achieving their goals. However, many colleges have come to recognize that tackling barriers one at a time does not add up to a comprehensive or coherent solution. So many of the problems our colleges—and our students—face are interrelated. The California Community Colleges Chancellor’s Office has recognized the inherent interconnection of efforts to support student success and has called for the integration of institutional plans for the Basic Skills Initiative, the Student Success and Support Program, and Equity Plans. This presents colleges with the opportunity to pursue integrated planning that shows that when they are merged, these formerly separate efforts can amplify each other. As different plans are integrated into the overall campus fabric and planning process, the important connection between academic and student support becomes clearer.

We are seeking presentations that highlight how to break the silos and build linkages among programs that started as single initiatives. We are particularly interested in presentations that highlight how integrated planning can lead to integrated action.

Examples include:

- Integrated planning efforts that connect initiative plans and goals with the campus master planning process
- Campus-wide activities that break down silos and encourage active collaboration between curricular and non-curricular activities
- Strategies for getting students started at the college, including outreach, enrollment, orientation, initial education planning, and student support classes
- Ongoing support and wrap-around services that promote progress and completion, particularly for student populations that have been identified in equity analyses of disproportionate impact

(7) Beyond Campus Boundaries: Engaging Your Community and the World

Many forces surround, support, and affect our colleges. How does your college engage with the local community and the broader social and political environment? Course content or community activities can become more relevant to students’ lives by addressing the social justice issues that affect them, their families and friends, and their community. Colleges can provide formal and informal academic approaches to understand and address issues such as inequity, race, poverty, and other forces that impact students’ lives and the lives of individuals in their communities. In this time of changing economic realities, colleges can also work to address basic needs as they...
are recognized, such as creating food banks for students. And the college may offer a space for students to respond to political issues.

We are seeking sessions that address the mutual benefits that students and colleges gain when they go beyond classroom boundaries.

Examples include:

- Courses and extra-curricular activities that address social justice
- Service learning, social activism, volunteerism, action research, and community involvement
- Models for bringing community to the campus and the campus to the community. Campus and student responses to the changing political times
- Political and non-political processes for expressing strongly held principles and commitments to social justice

(8) Open Formats

Sometimes in the process of developing a program or preparing to teach a class, or in the midst of a professional learning experience, you find you have questions that you would like to hear colleagues’ perspectives on. These are topics that lend themselves to an open conversation, rather than a formal presentation. This will be a space for topical conversations, film presentations, or book discussions. The room hosting these presentations will hold 35-40 people. Sessions can be organized as one large group conversation, or several small groups discussions and activities.

We are seeking sessions that are open to alternate formats and conversations around compelling ideas and questions.

Formats might include:

- Round table conversations
- Films and discussions, particularly movies produced by students
- Assessment discussions around examples of student work
- Book discussions
- Brain storming sessions on questions of practice of instruction or assessment
Examples include:

- What do we mean when we talk about leadership? When practitioners move into leadership responsibilities, what challenges do we face? How do others address them?

- How do we share data? How do we walk findings around campus? How do we start conversations about the interpretation of local data, especially when it may seem personal and sensitive to colleagues?

- How do we begin hard conversations about equity and what it means in personal terms to us as educators and to our students?

- What have colleges found that works—and didn’t work—in developing non-credit programs?

- How do we engage students in more aspects of the entire life of the college?