Abstract

The principal goal of the Cultivamos Excelencia Project is to motivate and retain Latinx and other historically underserved students to complete a degree at a research university. By working together, San Jose City College and University of California at Santa Cruz will use a combination of tutoring, mentoring, research skills instruction, transfer advising and, perhaps most important, participation in undergraduate research experiences to encourage self-efficacy, skill development and motivation to complete their bachelor degrees on-time and with highly honed set of analytical and writing skills. By developing and delivering Research Methods courses for transfer credit, and summer undergraduate research experiences that will give students university credit for community college tuition. The project will give students, who might not think they can succeed at a research university, a head start at that university. The total amount awarded was $3.25 million over a five-year period.
**Increasing the SJCC to UCSC Transfer Enrollment Through Advising**

**Program Description**

Cultivamos Excelencia seeks to increase the transfer and retention rates of SJCC students through personalized academic counseling from SJCC and UCSC counselors. Students meet with professional counselors to discuss academic plans that will guide the student through the transfer pipeline.

Providing academic guidance regarding the transfer pipeline and navigating the UC curriculum have effectively increase the SJCC-UCSC transfer rates by 167% between Fall 15’ (9 transfers) and Fall 18’ (24 transfers).

**Family Engagement**

Through **Family Day** (FD), the Cultivamos Excelencia program promotes the incorporation of family in the student’s academic journey as a tool to preserve cultural values and include families in the transfer process. The goals of the program are:

- Increase transfer knowledge.
- Increase understanding of financial resources at the university.
- Meaningful engagement of bilingual, immigrant, first-generation and intergenerational family units through conversations in panels and advising sessions.

**Figure 1.** The SJCC-UCSC transfer rate progression and demographic shift since C.E. intervention in Fall 2015 compared to Fall 14’.

**Figure 2.** 2018 Family Day attendance breakdown in percentage: 48 Students, 46 family members, and 38 presenters/volunteers attended.

“This is beautiful. I wish we could’ve had that when I was younger. I mean I would not be doing what I am doing right now.”

- Family Day Student
Undergraduate Research Experience: Cultivamos Excelencia Scholars

Program Description

Through the year-long Cultivamos Excelencia Scholars Program, SJCC students enroll in English 1B in the Fall and English 1C in the Spring semester. The program culminates with a week-long summer residential Research Institute and Symposium at UCSC where students present their research projects.

As preparation for their research symposium, scholars interact with LALS UC instructor at SJCC, visit UCSC for a library exploration where they learn how to navigate research materials and archives, and collaborate directly with a UCSC PhD. student/mentor.

Figure 3. Attendance number for the Cultivamos Excelencia Program scholars (24) and PhD. Mentors (12). Out of the 24 scholars who participated in the program, 23 presented their research in the Research Institute at UC Santa Cruz.

Intersegmental Cross Enrollment

During Fall of 2018, Cultivamos Excelencia piloted the first UC cross enrollment course taught at SJCC. In partnership with the Latin American and Latino Studies (LALS) department and the Office of the Registrar, the Cultivamos scholars enrolled in LALS80F: Latinos in the US: A comparative Perspective. The cross enrollment course fostered SJCC students’ academic confidence and preparation with research.

“I thought only ‘smart’ people could put up with the intense UC courses. I came to realize that I could too, it just takes a lot of hard work and dedications”

- Cultivamos Excelencia Scholar