The Dream Center at Skyline College was featured in The New York Times.
Battle Over Immigration Rattles Community Colleges

Pamela Ortiz Cerda vividly remembered the assignment six years ago from her Mexican-American history instructor at San Joaquin Delta College, a community college in Stockton, Calif. “He required voting for our class,” Ms. Ortiz Cerda said. Students were told to bring in voting ballot stubs as proof.

“I assumed it was a joke, but to the whole class he said, ‘And for you, all you illegals, I’m going to have immigration waiting outside the class for you if you don’t have the stubs,’” she said. “As a teenager, straight out of high school, that’s terrifying.”

Terrifying because Ms. Ortiz Cerda was undocumented herself, brought to the United States from Mexico when she was 9 by her parents, who sought a better life for the family.

In a statement, San Joaquin Delta College said that it would be “almost impossible” to know what happened in the history class so many years ago, but said that in recent years the school had taken steps to support undocumented students.

Ms. Ortiz Cerda, now 24, became an advocate for those like herself, and she is the program services coordinator at Skyline College’s Dream Center in San Bruno, Calif. It is one of about 40 such centers in California that assist students without legal status, navigating the complexities of admissions and classes, and connecting them with financial aid. “It’s really a focused effort in supporting undocumented students holistically through their higher ed journeys,” she said.

The centers are part of an endeavor in the nation’s higher education system to help undocumented students attend classes and attain degrees. And while many of these programs have existed for years, there are concerns about pushback as the Trump administration has shifted to a “zero tolerance” policy on illegal immigration.

This has led colleges to develop policies, with California in the forefront, that would thwart possible interference by the federal government.

The concerns are especially acute at community colleges, which have more open admissions policies than selective four-year institutions. According to a report from the California Community Colleges System, up to 70,000 undocumented students attend the state’s 114 community colleges, more than 3 percent of the 2.1 million students enrolled.

“We have, as our primary mission, the embracing of all students, and it is our desire to be there for the most vulnerable and the most marginalized populations,” said Judy C. Miner, chancellor of the Foothill-De Anza Community College District, which serves Silicon Valley.

The official policy of the Immigration and Customs Enforcement agency is to steer clear of college campuses, unless there is an extraordinary safety threat. “Enforcement actions are not to occur” at schools, according to the agency’s Sensitive Locations policy, “to ensure that people seeking to participate in activities or utilize services provided at any sensitive location are free...
to do so, without fear or hesitation.” The same policy applies to churches and hospitals.

But after Donald J. Trump was elected president, following a campaign filled with rhetoric against undocumented people, colleges became concerned about the future of the Sensitive Locations policy. The Department of Homeland Security issued a statement to colleges in November 2016 that said the policy would “remain in effect.”

However, in recent months, as scenes have unfolded of young immigrant children being separated from their parents and placed in detention centers, there are renewed doubts about how the current administration will treat undocumented college students.

“We don’t feel a level of confidence and security on behalf of our students,” said Dr. Miner, “given the fact that we hear so many stories that would indicate that our own laws are not being honored.”

In a statement last month, a spokeswoman for the Department of Homeland Security said, “Yes, the policy is still in place.”

But Dr. Miner, as past chairman of the American Council on Education, which represents about 1,800 higher education institutions in the United States, said she and her colleagues had taken precautions. At her colleges and others, for example, any warrant from immigration officials must go directly to the college president for review and could be subject to a legal fight.

All of this is a sea change from just a few years ago, when many undocumented students were given temporary immunity from deportation after the Obama administration’s creation of the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program, or DACA, in June 2012. An estimated 800,000 immigrants within a certain age range, who were brought to the United States as children, were allowed to remain as residents, attend school and obtain work permits.

The Trump administration effectively ended the program this year, and participants have been left in limbo as Congress considers an alternative, if any, and as challenges work their way through the courts.

Even before DACA, California had its own Dream Act (Development, Relief and Education for Alien Minors) in 2011, allowing those brought into the state without documentation as children to attend college and receive financial aid and in-state tuition benefits. At some community colleges, that means paying $46 per credit, instead of more than $200.

And now state lawmakers are considering a new bill, AB-2477, that could create even more support centers for undocumented college students.

But in the current political climate, undocumented students in other states have faced resistance. In April, the Arizona Supreme Court eliminated in-state tuition benefits for them, and similar programs face legal hurdles in several other states, according to a recent analysis.

“There’s so much enmity that it’s looking very hopeless, honestly,” said a mathematics student at Skyline College, who spoke on condition of anonymity to protect his identity. “People talk about the whitelash to Obama, to the first black president, and this was bound to happen.”

The student’s mother brought him to the United States from Mexico at age 13, when she was fleeing a violent husband. He worked at auto shops, warehouses and in manufacturing to support his mother and six siblings. Now, at 41, he has been able to get an associate degree and has ambitions for a bachelor’s.

He said he had often faced hostility as an undocumented person, but not at college. “I don’t feel fearful when I’m at school,” he said. “I don’t feel my studying is threatened, at least not yet.”

For Dr. Miner, the community college chancellor, the stakes are also personal. Her mother was undocumented,
brought to the United States from Mexico at age 3 or 4 — in another era, she also would have been a “Dreamer.” “Her own fear of discrimination led her to never speak Spanish to us, even though that was her first language, so we never grew up bilingual,” Dr. Miner said. “She was of that generation of immigrants who were so concerned about their children being real Americans.”


SKYLINE COLLEGE AWARDED MAJOR GRANT TO EXPAND PROMISE SCHOLARS PROGRAM TO FIVE CALIFORNIA COLLEGES

The San Mateo County Community College District (SMCCCD) has been awarded a $3,000,000 grant to support Skyline College’s Promise Scholars Program (PSP), and the implementation of the program at five colleges across the state, including the College of San Mateo and Cañada College. The grant was awarded by the California Community Colleges Board of Governors as part of $20 million distributed to 11 districts and colleges as part of the Chancellor’s Innovation Awards in Higher Education. SMCCCD was awarded the largest individual grant.

“The work the San Mateo County Community College District will be able to do as a result of this grant will be a game-changer for so many of our students,” said Ron Galatolo, SMCCCD Chancellor. “Creating clearly defined pathways from college entry to completion and providing comprehensive advising and wrap-around support services for students will allow them to be successful inside and outside the classroom.”

The Promise Scholars Program (PSP) at Skyline College is based on the City University of New York’s Accelerated Study in Associate Programs (CUNY ASAP) which has demonstrated the ability to dramatically increase completion and help eliminate equity gaps in student success based rigorous evaluation and experimental research. The grant funds will support the replication of that program to five colleges across California in order to increase graduation rates.

“This significant grant award validates and underscores the critical importance of the work Skyline College has done through its Promise Scholars Program,” said Regina Stanback Stroud, Ed.D, president of Skyline College. “We are now presented with an incredible opportunity to share this proven model with our sister colleges in the district and with other college’s throughout the state, ensuring that this comprehensive and conscientious work can transform lives and improve student success beyond the bounds of our campus.”

Skyline College is the only California community college that is recognized as a CUNY ASAP replication site, having received technical assistance from CUNY ASAP’s National Replication team since February 2017, as supported by the Laura and John Arnold Foundation. “We are proud to continue and build upon our partnership with Skyline College, supporting their vision to expand the Promise Scholars Program so that San Mateo County Community College District realizes the unprecedented completion impact that ASAP has had across CUNY,” remarks CUNY’s Associate Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs and ASAP Executive Director Donna Linderman.

Skyline College will serve as the lead for the scaling of the PSP, first within the district, and subsequently
throughout the state. A cohort of five colleges will receive structured technical assistance from CUNY ASAP and Skyline College for the implementation of the PSP model. Additional statewide workshops will be offered by the SMCCCD in partnership with the state Chancellor’s Office to disseminate the PSP model and its ability to achieve student success, equity, and completion outcomes.

About the Chancellor’s Higher Education Innovation Awards
The 2017-18 Budget Act included $20 million for the Chancellor’s Higher Education Innovation Awards to be awarded by the board of governors. The awards recognize innovations that improve student success, and are sustainable and capable of being scaled across the state, with a particular focus on all of the following:

- Programs and frameworks that support students from groups that are underrepresented in higher education, such as low-income students, students from underrepresented schools and neighborhoods, first-generation students, students who are current or former foster youth, and students with disabilities.
- Targeted services and programs for students who are current or former members of the Armed Forces of the United States.
- Programs and frameworks that support adults who have been displaced from the workforce, and adults who are underemployed, so as to obtain the necessary training for gainful employment.
- Programs that support incarcerated adults in prisons and jails, including formerly incarcerated adults.
- Programs that incorporate technology to improve instruction and support services with a plan to ensure student success in these types of programs.
- A review committee, comprised of the chancellor’s executive staff and board members Connie Conway and Bill Rawlings, reviewed the readers’ findings and recommended the awardees and award amounts to the chancellor and board of governors. Those applicants receiving the highest scores are recommended for an Innovation Award.

- The committee selected the following award winners:
  - Shasta-Tehama-Trinity Joint Community College District (Shasta College) - $1,500,000
  - Foothill-De Anza Community College District (De Anza College) - $1,900,000
  - Laney College - $1,100,000
  - Glendale Community College - $1,900,000
  - San Mateo Community College District (Skyline College, Cañada College and College of San Mateo) - $3,000,000
  - Santa Rosa Junior College - $1,600,000
  - College of the Redwoods - $1,200,000
  - Imperial Valley College - $2,500,000
  - Chaffey Community College - $1,000,000
  - Kern Community College District (Bakersfield College) - $2,300,000
  - Irvine Valley College - $2,000,000

A list of all applications and more information can be found on the Chancellor’s Higher Education Innovation Awards website.

Article by Cherie Colin | Photo by Kevin Perez

2018 Promise Scholars Summer Institute

The Skyline College Promise Scholars Summer Institute (PSSI) successfully finished its inaugural year of the Promise Scholars Program’s preparatory summer program with 98 entering freshmen completing either a 3-week or a 6-week accelerated program. Both
modules were designed to accelerate student learning and placement into transfer level math and English as a central component of the Skyline College Promise for students to “Get In, Get Through and Graduate...On Time.”

The PSSI continued to recognize each student’s humanity and culture by developing relevant curriculum that would enable students to explore their own College Success Story. At the same time, the PSSI provided credit-bearing courses in math, English and Counseling to enable students to earn units, as well as prepare to move into transfer level courses. The 6-week program served 19 students who enrolled in an English workshop series, math workshop series or math 120 courses and Counseling 101 class. The 3-week program began midway through its counterpart and served 79 students who enrolled in either Math 110 or Math 120 and a Counseling 101 or Math 190 course. Students were immersed in classes from 9:00-5:00, Monday through Thursday, yet still found time to take part in social and community building events. To ease the academic immersion, PSSI sponsored a program bowling trip, as well as an evening at the San Francisco Giants where students could either apply their learned math or temporarily forget about it and have fun.

In addition to accelerating student placement and preparation into transfer level math and/or English, the 2018 PSSI enabled students to:

- Develop their critical consciousness and thinking skills
- Increase their comfort and confidence engaging the collegiate experience
- Increase their academic skills and efficacy

An examination of early PSSI outcomes proved very promising. In the math component, which all students participated in, PSSI used ALEKS as a pre-and-post assessment. In a review of the ALEKS outcomes, we found:

6 Week Module:
- Math 120 – 108% growth in math concepts learned
- Math 811 – 203% growth in math concepts learned

3 Week Module:
- Math 110 – 134% growth in math concepts learned
- Math 120 – 37% growth in math concepts learned
- Math 190 – 50% growth in math concepts learned

Additionally, the majority of participants passed their classes and moved into transfer level math and/or English.

The Program concluded on Thursday, August 2, 2018 with a PSSI Closing Ceremony with over 200 students, family members and guests celebrating the success of SSI students and launching them into the 2018-19 academic year.

Article by Michael Stokes

Opening Day 2018

Opening Day 2018 focused on progress. Progress made toward the college redesign, progress driving equity across campus and progress in ensuring that the college is student-ready.

President Regina Stanback Stroud took the opportunity in her opening day address to highlight the work accomplished over the past year.
“A few years ago, I stood on this stage and asked this college to confront the brutal facts of low success rates,” said Dr. Stanback Stroud. “I asked that you work with me toward achieving a student completion rate of at least 75%, and since then we’ve started clear, impactful work to move us closer to that goal.”

President Stanback Stroud underscored the importance of redesigning the entire mindset of the campus community around strengths-based thinking as opposed to deficit thinking. Concentrating on what students can do and bring to bare on their journey as opposed to what they can't do, or don't have or weren't raised with.

“We must believe in the idea that there is always an institutional, structural way to improve student success.” Dr. Stanback Stroud then described a few of the major projects and milestones coming up in the 2018-19 academic year:

• The Equity Institute: Featuring equity academies, the cabinet roundtable, publications and professional development. It will administer institutional assessments, publish research and provide professional development for organizations across the state and nation.
• Accreditation: The college has been preparing for the upcoming site visit. The campus engaged in a strategic planning process to identify our strategic goals and initiatives that align with the district strategic plan. The plan has gone through the governance process and will go to the board for final approval this fall.
• Branding Research Study: The college will be conducting a full scale research study (using quantitative and qualitative methods) of our brand to evaluate and evolve our brand look, define our unique positioning in the higher education landscape, develop audience personas to hone in on messaging, update our assumptions on target markets and test a new/evolved brand direction.
• Great Colleges to Work For: We did not place in the competition across the nation. Instead we learned some things that we will certainly work on so it can and you can get the recognition you deserve.

After recognizing award winners, newly tenured faculty and new employees, the program was rounded out with a presentation by members of the Design Team who gave a presentation on the comprehensive college redesign. Of particular note in the presentation was the thorough mapping of what a student’s journey through their college experience might look like, with specific resources and milestones that they could expect along the way.

The presentation highlighted the incredible amount of work that’s gone into the college redesign thus far, and also provided a clear outlook for the future.

Article by Connor Fitzpatrick | Photos by Mia Coo & Zaw Min Khant

SKYLINE COLLEGE CONTINUES TO HONOR OUTSTANDING MEMBERS & GROUPS

This year marked the 13th year of Skyline College’s Skyline Shines Award, presented annually to one College employee or group and one community individual or group who help Skyline College to shine in terms of its quality of programs and services and its reputation for quality.
College Winner: Pamela Ortiz Cerda, Program Services Coordinator, Dream Center

As a part-time staff member for most of her time at Skyline College’s new Dream Center, Ms. Ortiz Cerda has worked quickly and efficiently to invent and establish the Center as a space accessible and open to all. Unfazed that there was no structure in place or precedent for doing so, she hit the ground running, using her networking skills, excellent judgement and professional skills to make it happen, and on a part-time basis. As DACA has been rescinded and reopened, Ms. Ortiz-Cerda has stayed up to date on the constantly changing legal landscape, able to answer questions from confused peers with confidence, clarity and accuracy.

Pamela demonstrates the values of Skyline College through her earnestness and approachability, as well as her courage to speak the truth. Though young, she runs monthly Dream Center Task Force meetings consisting almost exclusively of staff and faculty older than herself, she is easily able to motivate her team to come together and work on common concerns amicably. Additionally and importantly, Pamela has been able to welcome undocumented Skyline students to the Task Force as equals and to create an environment that has encouraged them to return monthly. She also speaks to classes regularly and has led faculty and staff flex workshops.

Her job aside, Pamela embodies social justice work in all aspects of her life. While balancing work and pursuing a graduate degree, she and her family have helped hundreds of community members apply for DACA on their own time without pay. Like many social justice advocates, she works tirelessly to help her community both at work and when she leaves campus.

Establishing and running Skyline College’s Dream Center was no easy feat in such a turbulent political climate. Pamela has met and exceeded that challenge to the benefit of the students we all serve. Congratulations Pamela!

Community Winner: Strategic Energy Innovations

For those of you who may not be familiar, Strategic Energy Innovations (SEI) is a nonprofit organization dedicated to building sustainable communities through programs focused on four key areas: education, workforce, housing, and government. SEI works with communities across California on identifying opportunities to provide their residents with socioeconomic support while reducing use of natural resources and generating savings. Five years ago, SEI initiated a partnership with Skyline College to work on programs for its students directed at sustainability education and green workforce development. Today, those programs are known as the Energize Colleges student internship program and the Climate Corps fellowship program.

The Energize Colleges program (designed by SEI) offers Skyline College students internship opportunities through which they develop skills that give them an edge when applying to transfer or looking for a job. Internships pay $13.50/hour, are mostly on campus or with nearby organizations, and have flexible schedules. This affords all students the opportunity to participate with respect to their social, financial, academic, and other constraints. In addition, fellows in SEI’s Climate Corps fellowship program enroll at Skyline College and earn the Climate Protection Professional Certificate while they work at local government agencies, nonprofits, schools and businesses on sustainability projects. Because they are Skyline College students, fellows qualify for student loan deferment. This removes a significant financial barrier that could otherwise deter someone from applying for the fellowship and gaining the valuable hands-on experience needed to advance within the green workforce.

Through the Climate Corps fellowship program, SEI supports Skyline College with its curriculum development program, the Sustainability Blitz. Climate Corps fellows work alongside Skyline College faculty to develop lessons relating sustainability to a variety of different academic disciplines, resulting in a well-
rounded education that prepares students to maneuver challenges of the future. SEI staff also collaborates with Skyline College faculty on an energy series module, which provides students with an introduction to concepts of energy and sustainability as well as a space to explore the field’s career opportunities.

Finally, all of the programs implemented with SEI have allowed Skyline College to truly implement its sustainability vision, ensuring our campus is moving into the future in an environmentally responsible way. Congratulations!

Article by Connor Fitzpatrick | Photos by Zaw Min Khant

**SparkPoint at Skyline College Honors of 2018 & The Third Annual SparkPoint Client Celebration**

Zero Textbook Cost (ZTC) and Open Educational SparkPoint at Skyline College has emphasized its financial capability and support services as a strategy for community colleges to address the food and housing insecurity of their students. SparkPoint continues to provide tours and site visits, but its impact has grown to become recognized as a national model in addressing these financial barriers. The California Community Colleges Chancellor’s Office’s selected SparkPoint at Skyline College to join the Basic Needs Workgroup and to speak at the culminating Basic Needs Summit, which enabled the SparkPoint model to be shared with every other community college in the state. The Government Accountability Office (GAO) was tasked with researching student food insecurity and SparkPoint at Skyline College was identified as one of the most promising programs currently being offered to address this issue at the college level. Two Senior Economists were assigned to interview Skyline College students, faculty, staff and administrators and to conduct a site visit. Their findings will compiled as part of a research document that will inform congressional policy.

On July 12, 2018, the Third Annual SparkPoint Client Celebration commemorated the financial, educational and career achievements of SparkPoint clients, and invited others to take advantage of SparkPoint. Held on a summer evening for the convenience of students and community members, the celebration included dinner, music, fun games, arts & crafts, prizes and more – imparting a warm, family atmosphere. SparkPoint participants brought their friends and entire families to share their stories with faculty, staff, administrators, funders and each other. Crucial off-campus program partners such as United Way Bay Area, SF-Marin Food Bank, San Mateo Credit Union and Second Harvest Food Bank supported the event by donating backpacks, flash drives and gift cards. As has become the tradition, Almerita Rout, a community member, also donated over 100 handmade cloth grocery bags for door prizes in honor of SparkPoint’s food pantry.

The Client Celebration invited four clients with a range of perspectives to provide testimonials about their experiences at SparkPoint. Skyline College alumnus Alex Kennedy, spoke about the impact that SparkPoint had on her academic and financial life. She has since transferred to USF and cites SparkPoint as a major influence on her current volunteer activities with the women’s jail, her employment with Second Harvest Food Bank and her academic goal to earn a Masters of Public Administration. Our final client testimonial and winner of the SparkPoint Spotlight Award was Pearl Ibeanusi, a passionate student leader with a commitment to women
empowerment and self-development. Pearl identified the Grove Scholarship and financial coaching services as key factors in her academic success, as well as a source of stability for her children.

Article by Chad Thompson

Meta Major Preview Day Welcomes New Students to Skyline College

On August 11, 2018, Skyline College hosted the first Meta Majors Preview Day for new students where they learned about the Meta Majors, engage with instructional faculty, meet counselors within their success teams and complete the steps to enrollment. Students were also able to connect with campus resources and services, receive assistance with financial aid applications and support with course registration.

Dr. Angélica Garcia welcomed the students to campus and provided words of encouragement for the start of a new semester. Jessica Hurless kicked off the event with a fun balloon activity that emphasized the way in which the faculty, staff, and administration are available to help students throughout their time at Skyline College. Instructional faculty were present to lead engaging workshops to connect students to their Meta Majors. During the workshops, faculty also highlighted the common themes within each Meta Major, provided recommendations for student support services and shared their own personal college stories.

Arts, Languages & Communication
The Arts, Languages & Communication Meta Major workshop was facilitated by Jessica Hurless, Jude Navari and Luciana Castro. The faculty identified expression as the common theme that ran throughout all of the programs under the ALC MM. To truly connect the students to the “Expression” theme, the faculty challenged the students to a Project Runway-like fashion competition in which they had to use mixed materials to design and create a garment, incorporate both sound and movement and display words from different languages to describe their garment.

Business, Entrepreneurship & Management
Soledad McCarthy, Marv Steinberg and Angelica Gorostiza facilitated the Business, Entrepreneurship & Management Meta Major workshop, which introduced students to business foundations and ideas. Using only random items provided in a box students teamed together to create a new idea or product to “pitch” to investors (aka faculty).

Science, Technology & Health
Students in the Science, Technology & Health Meta Majors were led by Safiyyah Forbes, Carla Grandy, Nick Kapp and Gretchen Keys through a variety of experiments. Gretchen walked the students through the various STH programs, recommended supports and introduced the faculty, providing students with what to expect during the semester.

Society & Education
Kristina Brower, Kate Browne, Nicole Porter, Danni Redding Lapuz and Anthony Swanson led students through an Escape Room exercise to identify their meta major theme: Human Connection and its impact on education, law, history and social sciences. The discussion also uncovered students’ own concerns and fears about entering college and the positive impact of engaging with faculty members before the start of school to quell those fears and create a space of comfort and belonging.
Thanks to the planning committee and all involved in execution of Meta Major Preview Day. In addition to those listed above: Luis Escobar, Will Minnich, Delisle Warden, Grace Beltran, Jeremy Evangelista, Patty Mendoza, Connor Fitzpatrick, Nadia Tariq, Ana Gutierrez-Gamez, Suzanne Poma, Michelle Chee, Carlos Colombetti, Cliff Moss, Angelica Alvarez, Yatin Kumar, Athena Mendoza, Mary Caldeo, Sha’Rhonda Johnson and Lauren Ford who all contributed to the success of the event. In addition, thank you to Dr. Jennifer Taylor Mendoza and Christine Roumbanis for stopping by to show their support, and Kevin Chak for donating prizes. Finally, thank you to Roger Marcelo, Bryant Evans and Vinny Samujh for the media and logistical support needed to make this event a success!

Additionally, we’re welcoming about 500 new Promise Scholars to campus this semester, all of whom will benefit from the nearly $300,000 dispensed as part of the President’s Innovation Fund to launch new faculty and staff-led initiatives.

A new counseling structure will see Student Success Teams provide multifaceted support to students including student ambassadors, counselors, and career counselors. Initial counseling appointments with students will now be 45 minutes to an hour, as opposed to a half hour, to allow a deeper dive with students.

Article by Connor Fitzpatrick

Meta Majors & Guided Pathways Update

Communications continue to roll out regarding elements of the comprehensive college redesign. This academic year we are fully launching Meta Majors and Guided Pathways at Skyline College, creating clear pathways for students to be able to get in, get through and graduate on time. This accomplishment is the culmination of years of committed work by the faculty, staff and administration.

Meta Majors Preview Day successfully launched on August 11, 2018, introducing over 100 new students to Meta Majors and engaging them in interest-specific activities to help them decide which Meta Major was right for them.

Upcoming Events

ASSC Annual Pancake Breakfast
August 23, 2018
7:00 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.
Quad

Puente Noche de Familia
August 29, 2018
2:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.
Building 6, Rooms 6-202, 6-204, 6-206

International Student Program Mixer
August 31, 2018
1:00 p.m. - 5:30 p.m.
Building 4, Room 4-240

Success Summit
September 28, 2018
8:00 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.
Skyline College Student and Community Center
Building 6, 2nd Floor