

Cal-PASS

Transitions

Identifying and Removing Barriers to Student Success

From the Executive Director: Time to Reflect and Renew

As we wrap up the academic year, it is time to reflect on the work Cal-PASS has done and the plans for next year. Our membership has grown this year to more than 2,600 schools, colleges and universities. This is due in large part to the increase in state funding to serve all of California. Foundation funding has

Next year, the governor's budget includes a one-time increase of funds that we plan to use to create up to 30 new Professional Learning Councils...

blossomed as well, with a number of new funders supporting special projects and our infrastructure. Additionally, I want to acknowledge our three newest California State University members: San Jose, Cal Poly Pomona and Chico! I also want to acknowledge the letter of endorsement from the California State University Chancellor's Office. This letter is available for download at our Web site (www.calpass.org).

A number of new staff members came on board this year, including two new researchers, two new programmers, a new senior director of special projects, Jordan Horowitz, and a number of new regional coordinators. Their work has resulted in a number of additional services, including: *myCalpass*, an interactive site for member use and cross communication; the formation of new Professional

Learning Councils; the completion of more than 65 research studies requested by Cal-PASS members; funding of 18 mini-grants designed to break down the barriers to student transition and success; and the addition of a number of regional coordinators to improve intersegmental collaboration and communication. We have also

solidified our partnership with a number of like-minded organizations such as ARCHES who share our values: improving student transition and success.

Next year, the governor's budget includes a one-time increase of funds that we plan to use to create up to 30 new Professional Learning Councils, as well as increase our staffing and service in information technology and research. We believe that these councils are making a significant difference in local schools, colleges and universities. Through our evaluation partner we will be documenting these changes; specifically, how these changes are affecting student transition and success. Furthermore, next year we plan to work in many of the under-served rural regions of California to bring these schools, colleges and universities into the fold. Stay tuned for an exciting new year! As always, if you have any questions or comments, please do not hesitate to contact me at (619) 252-8503 or bphillips@calpass.org.

In This Issue...

From the Executive Director	1
Special Projects	1
PLC Growth & Development	2
Our Regional Coordinators	2
Student Success Conference	2
Spotlight on Data	3
IT Improvements	4
How to Reach Us	6

Reaching Out With Special Projects

This year saw impressive advances in Cal-PASS special projects, which are projects funded all or in part by sources other than the California budget. A number of organizations fund our efforts related to their missions that also support the Cal-PASS mission to ease student transitions across educational segments in California.

Hewlett Template Project

With funding from the Hewlett Foundation, we are developing Web-based, point-and-click templates to ease access to the Cal-PASS database. Over the next 3 years, the template project will engage stakeholder groups in developing, implementing and testing a set of templates to evaluate interventions. We convened the project advisory committee in late February and recently conducted group interviews with project directors and information technology leaders in

continued on page 3

Cal-PASS PLCs: Growth & Development

Cal-PASS staff and Professional Learning Council (PLC) faculty have been busy this year with new growth, professional development and the initiation of the Cal-PASS mini-grant process (see the spring 2007 edition of *Cal-PASS Transitions*).

Growth: Intersegmental (middle school, high school, community college and university) faculty serving on PLCs meet monthly to examine data and discuss student transition in English, math, EL, counseling and science in discipline-specific councils across the state. After holding PLC kick-offs in Merced and Riverside, we have grown to 25 active PLCs in Sacramento, San Bernardino (High Desert and East Valley), San Diego (north, east, south and central county), Riverside, Merced, Placer, and Nevada counties. We have plans to develop PLCs in the early fall in Sonoma, Contra Costa and San Mateo counties, East LA County, far north state, and West San Bernardino County, and are currently working on developing consortia and PLCs in San Joaquin County and in Los Angeles Unified School Districts, local districts two and seven (see Special Projects, beginning on page 1, for more information).

Additionally, we now have 13 regional coordinators across the state helping set up and maintain consortia and serving as Cal-PASS liaisons and advisors to PLCs (see sidebar).

Presentations: Cal-PASS staff, regional coordinators and PLC chairs and participants have been presenting at conferences and meetings throughout the year. Several PLC faculty presented at the October 2006 Strengthening Student Success conference in San Diego. Additional venues include the state CATESOL conference, both Northern California and Southern California CMC3 conferences, San Bernardino P-16 Superintendents' meeting, Math Diagnostic Testing Program, Placer Union High School District Staff Development Day, Placer-Nevada Math Articulation conference and West Hills District English Chairs' meeting.

Mini-grants: We funded our first set of mini-grants to PLCs this spring. The resulting innovations are well underway and focused on better student outcomes using innovative methods to support student learning. The new mini-grant projects include innovations in English, EL, science, counseling and math. A complete list of Cal-PASS mini-grants is available on the Cal-PASS Web site (www.calpass.org).



Connie Fish (left), regional coordinator for San Bernardino-West and East LA County, and Virginia Horowitz (right), regional coordinator for Placer-Nevada, at the May 3, 2007, semiannual regional coordinators' meeting, where coordinators network, learn what's new and strategize.

Regional Coordinators

Judy Chavez—Bay Area

Connie Fish—San Bernardino-West End and East LA County

Lynn Fowler—Sacramento

Virginia Horowitz—Placer-Nevada

Katheryn Horton—Sonoma

Lucia Lachmayr—San Mateo

Kate Mahar—far north state

Daniel Martinez—Riverside

Virginia Moran—San Bernardino-High Desert

Linda Murray—Santa Clara

Alana Nicastro—San Diego

Robert Wendel—Merced

Ron Williams—San Bernardino-East Valley

Student Success Conference Takes Shape

“Strengthening Student Success: Making a Difference” will include more than 80 concurrent sessions in 10 strands during the 3-day conference, set for Oct. 3–5, 2007, in San Jose, CA. The Cal-PASS strand includes sessions on: deconstructed standards for Beginning and Intermediate Algebra and Geometry; assessment items aligned with these standards; inter-segmental teaching units for English, including critical thinking across the segments; and strategies for effective use of research in classroom work.

Conference keynote speakers are Lee Shulman, president of The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching; Vince Tinto, distinguished professor of Education at Syracuse University; and Elizabeth Barkley, music professor from Foothill College.

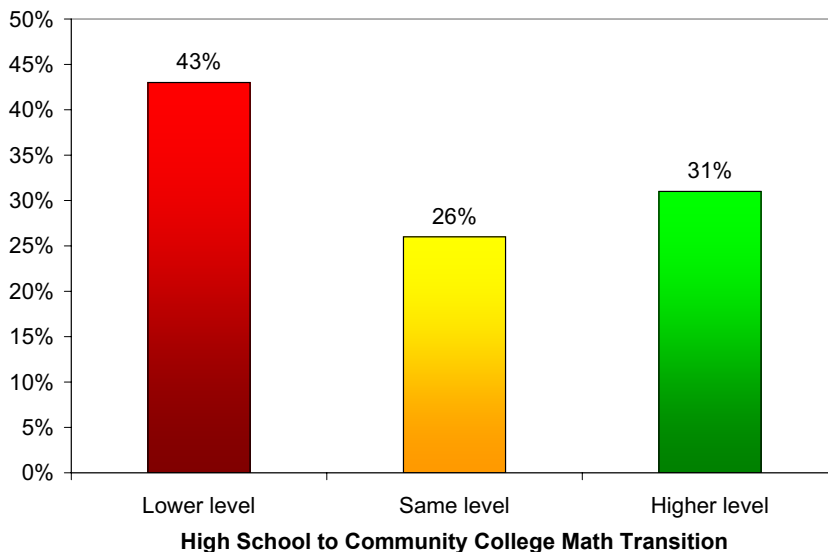
To register, go to www.calpass.org and follow the link to the conference registration site. Early-bird registration closes July 3.

Spotlight on Data:

Research Key to Improving Student Success

This year, the research department saw the addition of two research analysts as well as several contract analysts. As a result, the department completed more than 65 research reports for Professional Learning Councils (PLCs) and other stakeholders, providing them with the knowledge necessary to identify trouble areas and design innovative interventions. Some of the reports were:

- **Science Pathways:** This took an initial look at biology and chemistry students' transition from middle school to high school and then to college. We found a correlation between California Standards Test (CST) scores and success in science courses. There was also a correlation between GPA and success in science courses, not only at the high school level but starting as early as middle school. Additionally, success in math and English courses are correlated with success in science. One science PLC is utilizing this information to create a science course placement guide for high school counselors.
- **Math Transition:** Building on previous work, and with more focus on middle to high school transitions, we incorporated several improvements in the analyses, including completion of UC and CSU requirements. Generally, the outcomes for these reports have stayed constant over the years: math level and outcome in 8th grade are often good indicators of the highest math level attained in high school. Also, more than half of students transitioning to community college repeat the same or lower course as their first college math (see chart). Finally, many students switch between science and general education math (in either direction) when they transfer from a community college to a university.



Overall, more than half of students transitioning to community college repeat the same or lower course as their first college math (N=46,847).

continued on page 5

Special Projects cont.

Sacramento. More interviews with stakeholders in other geographic areas are being planned. We will begin developing the templates and will launch pilot testing in spring 2008.

Walter S. Johnson Foundation in California's Central Valley

The Walter S. Johnson Foundation is funding the development of consortia and Professional Learning Councils (PLCs) in the Central Valley.

The program in Merced began with a kickoff event in February (see the spring 2007 edition of *Cal-PASS Transitions*), and there are three PLCs in Merced meeting monthly: math, English and English learners. There is representation from each of the high schools and Merced College on these PLCs. UC Merced is also a partner in this effort. A well-attended technical assistance workshop gave K-12 district staff the ability to ask questions and receive custom technical assistance from our IT director, which resulted in more Merced County districts uploading data.

In San Joaquin County, we are working with Delta College and K-12 district superintendents and their information systems staff to jumpstart Cal-PASS in the county. Our goal is to have the largest districts in the county sign memoranda of understanding (MOU) and upload their data by the end of the calendar year.

The Rosalinde and Arthur Gilbert Foundation in LA

The Gilbert Foundation is funding efforts to develop consortia and PLCs in the Los Angeles area, specifically tied to their Access to College initiative. We are working with the Foundation to obtain MOU and data-sharing agreements with key universities in the region including University

continued on page 4



"...this communication renews our request to encourage [CSU] campuses either to renew expired or execute first-time MOUs with Cal-PASS. CSU participation in Cal-PASS will help us to analyze student academic preparation and transition...in a way that was not possible before.

excerpt of a memorandum to CSU Provosts from Gary Reichard, Executive Vice Chancellor & Chief Academic Officer, The California State University Office of the Chancellor

Process Improvements in IT

As we wrap up each academic year at Cal-PASS, we naturally look for words or phrases to define the time. This year, for the IT department, those words are *process improvement*. Cal-PASS has grown considerably over the years, and consequently we discovered that the processes and systems that worked well for the small number of K–12 districts and colleges we started with in 2003 didn't work well with 200 members and their associated data submissions, on-line queries, custom reports and Professional Learning Council (PLC) activities and communication needs.

To support and maintain collaboration—the first of the Cal-PASS core values—and with the widespread geographic locations of Cal-PASS participants and staff, it became clear that we would have to excel in electronic communication and connectivity in order to keep up with the business needs of the organization. To that end we have begun to reengineer our database model; looked at ways to improve our reports, both customized and the point-and-click on-line queries; created password protected portal Web sites for Cal-PASS staff and regional coordinators; deployed a beta version of *myCal-PASS*; and improved our public Web site naviga-

tion, all while continuing to process and load several years of data from our many partner districts and institutions. Below are the details:

New Reports: When new institutions/districts join Cal-PASS, there is lag time between the MOU being signed and the first submission of data. Consequently, many of the administrators who were initially interested in the information that Cal-PASS provides didn't know when data were available to them. In response to this, we have created new reports specifically designed to give basic transition information to the district/institution administrators at two times during the year. The first is an annual hardcopy mailing that contains standard reports which show the district's own data along with samples of the customized reports that are available through the Cal-PASS research department. The second distribution of reports will begin next academic year and will be via an email with navigation links to the reports on-line through the Web portal, *myCal-PASS*. This email will be sent when new data are uploaded or there have been changes in the availability of data for the region.

Connectivity: There are 13 Cal-
continued on page 5

Special Projects cont.

of California Los Angeles (UCLA) and the California State Universities at Northridge (CSUN) and Dominguez Hills (CSUDH), as well as University of Southern California (USC). We are working to establish consortia in LAUSD local districts two and seven, initially.

We also are working with the Gilbert Foundation to explore ways that Cal-PASS data can be used to evaluate the work of their Access to College grantees. It is anticipated that grantees will participate in the PLCs and will use optional data fields in the Cal-PASS database to track the effects of their programs at the group and cohort levels.

The Irvine Foundation and Student Success Conference

The Irvine Foundation is supporting two efforts that address their organization's mission. First, they are subcontracting to Cal-PASS through MDRC (a nonprofit, nonpartisan social policy research organization) to include the nine California community colleges involved in their Student Support Partnership Integrating Resources and Education (SSPIRE) initiative in the work we are doing with the template project (above).

The Irvine Foundation also has committed funds to support Cal-PASS involvement in the annual Strengthening Student Success Conference.

The coming year promises to keep us busier than ever, as we develop new partnerships and continue to build relationships with our current partners. We cannot fulfill the Cal-PASS promise of student success across all segments without our partners and the special projects they support. Keep an eye open for updates in future editions of *Transitions*.



Process Improvements cont.

PASS regional coordinators who facilitate the creation of new Cal-PASS consortia and assist with the development of the PLCs in the area. In order for them to share information about their methods and experiences, we set up an Intranet site just for their use. Coordinators are able to chat with each other through forums, post documents that can be maintained in a shared location, and have access to calendars of events that affect them all. The coordinators can keep in touch and have all the resources they need to get new regions up and running with just a few clicks of the mouse.

myCal-PASS is a portal Web site to help users stay connected. In this beta release, staff and faculty from districts/institutions that have signed a Cal-PASS MOU can log onto this Web site and can view and comment on posted documents, view various calendars by category (such as all PLC meetings for a specific discipline in a region), join in a discussion with other Cal-PASS members through a forums page, and access the Cal-PASS on-line queries. In keeping with the Cal-PASS Guiding Principles for Data, access to the queries on the site is governed by the MOU and only open to the sharing partners that have been identified in it. Also subject to the sharing partner designations are the shared documents where the owner of a document may request that it be posted as either public or private. This allows document sharing and interaction either within or across regional consortia. Currently posted documents include the Algebra I and Algebra II Deconstruction Standards. Forums are the “Cal-PASS chat rooms.” The forums are organized by category, to which you may subscribe so you never miss a post.

The current forum categories are General, Professional Learning Councils, Information Technology and Research. In the beta release, we are asking users to provide feedback as to the functionality, look and feel, and general usability of the site. We anticipate the data submission and download functions to be incorporated into *myCal-PASS* this summer giving access to all aspects of Cal-PASS data with a single login and password.

Cal-PASS Information Technology and Research Advisory Committee (ITRAC): The purpose of ITRAC is to get input and advice on possible modifications in order to improve the Cal-PASS data model, data collection and research functions. Committee members come from all segments (K–12, community college, university) as well as other statewide partners such as California School Information Services (CSIS) and the California Department of Education (CDE). Items covered at the first meeting (held in April) were Cal-PASS and CDE data coding issues; the relationship between the Cal-PASS data dictionary and the CSIS data dictionary, including the capture of multiple ethnicities; the commonalities of all California student data systems in the use of the statewide student identifier (SSID); possible improvements to the Cal-PASS data validation program and upload process, including ways to simplify the instructions and provide more detail in the documentation. Members also discussed the methodology for math transition and English transition standard reports, including how to deal with caveats to the data for certain districts/institutions. The next meeting will be in the fall.

Spotlight cont.

- English Transition: As with math, about half of students repeat the same or lower English course as their first English course in community college.

- A–G Completion: One report looked at high school students’ completion of the UC/CSU admission requirements. At this district, students were most likely to meet the “A” requirement (history and social science) and least likely to meet the “D” requirement (laboratory science). In this group, about 27 percent of students met all requirements for admission to UC/CSU.

- EL Student Transition to Community College: Most high school EL students do not enroll in EL courses in community college but instead enroll in Basic Skills English for their first English course, with a small percentage enrolling in English courses that are transferable to a 4-year college.

- Effect of Time Delay on Success in Community College Math: The analysis found a small but statistically significant relationship between a student’s delay in taking their first community college math course and success in that course.

- Effects of 4X4 Scheduling in High School on Community College English and Math Success: We found no significant difference in community college course-taking behavior in English based on the semester in which the last high school English course was taken. Students in the most advanced levels of math were more likely to progress upwards in math at college if their last high school math course was taken in the spring rather than in the fall.

These reports and others have helped the PLCs improve student achievement at the primary, secondary and post-secondary levels. We look forward to another year of productive collaboration with our partners!



How to Reach Us:

2236 Encinitas Blvd., Ste. H
Encinitas, CA 92024
(619) 933-7489
www.calpass.org

Brad Phillips, Executive Director
bphillips@calpass.org

Michelle Kalina, Senior Director, Operations
mkalina@calpass.org

Jordan Horowitz, Senior Director, Special Projects
jhorowitz@calpass.org

Terrence Willett, Director of Research
twillett@calpass.org

Shelly Valdez, Director of Regional Intersegmental Collaboration
svaldez@calpass.org

Mary Kay Patton, Director of Information Technology
mkpatton@calpass.org

Judy Alexander, Special Assistant to the Director
judy.alexander@gcccd.edu

Cal-PASS Principles

*C*ollaboration

*D*iscovery

*C*ontinuity and
Alignment

*I*nnovation

*E*valuation

*E*xpansion



2236 Encinitas Blvd., Suite H
Encinitas, CA 92024