



October 26, 2018

Dear Chancellor Van Hook,

I am writing on behalf of American River College, one of four colleges within the Los Rios Community College District. During 2016-17, our district experienced the benefits of working with a Partnership Resource Team (PRT) and significantly advanced our local efforts as a result of the seed grant funds. American River College is currently in the midst of a college-wide redesign aligned with guided pathways. Our hope is that we can once again tap into IEPI expertise and funding to accelerate our endeavors towards innovation.

1. Description of Areas in Which American River College is Doing Well.

American River College has made substantial improvements to the new student experience over the last few years. A call center was created that is staffed by student workers who reach out to new applicants as well as handling a variety of inbound calls. Call center support is provided in five languages to serve the needs of a diverse student population. Our college is also in the process of consolidating multiple services into a centralized one-stop center to create a welcoming and convenient location for incoming students to connect with in-person support. Another step forward is the recently implemented Achieve@ARC program which was intentionally designed to incentivize full-time enrollment and promote the success of recent high school graduates. It provides a suite of activities, guidance, and benefits to ensure a smooth transition to college. In addition, we are fully engaged in the California Guided Pathways Demonstration Project. Areas of interest have already been adopted and faculty are immersed in design of program maps.

2. Description of your institution's area of focus for the PRT or Mini-PRT, assistance that will help advance your institutional effectiveness even more.

One overarching challenge of American River College's redesign effort is the multitude of disparate systems and communications that new students experience prior to registering for classes. In order to simplify the front door, our college seeks PRT assistance to cohesively address two closely related areas of focus.

- Front door technology assessment:
 - Holistically assess the technology used from point of first contact to registration in order to surface opportunities for better integration
 - Consider how various systems such as CCCApply, CCCMyPath, and Lacai intersect with existing operations (e.g., call center), communication methods, website presence, and a soon-to-be adopted educational planning tool, the implementation of which the Los Rios District is coordinating.
 - Make recommended changes to create a smooth, well integrated student experience

- Front door technology gaps:
 - Select and implement an interactive tool for exploring program maps that integrates with existing systems
 - Select and implement a communication tool (e.g., CRM) to enable cohesive communication with prospective and/or new students
 - Identify and address other gaps which may surface in technology assessment

Both of these areas of focus must be addressed within the next six to nine months in order to effectively launch a fully redesigned student experience for the incoming class of Fall 2019.

3. Description of the rationale for these areas of focus.

Like many other institutions, American River College continues to struggle with the long-standing obstacle of integrating a collection of front-door technologies that have been added over the years. We fundamentally recognize that there must be a clear, unified way for prospective and new students to move from exploration of program pathways through the onboarding steps to registration. However, there currently is no pathway exploration tool available and the remainder of the process is a patchwork quilt of disjointed systems. Employees diligently attempt to coach students through the gaps in these systems, but do not have modern tools to manage or coordinate communications across services and programs. Although the call center is highly effective, it operates in isolation from other student communications and maintains separate call logs on spreadsheets. The combination of disconnected systems and siloed communications results in an inconsistent and often frustrating experience for students. Our intent is to tackle both the technology and communication limitations as a single project in order to create a seamless and supportive front-door experience.

Our college is pursuing IEPI assistance in these areas of focus to stimulate our efforts and enable us to quickly glean insights based on the experience of PRT colleagues. This expertise would be particularly valuable in discerning possible options and approaches to this work as well as lessons learned from previous use of similar technologies. The seed grant funds would help us secure technology solutions as well as acquiring vendor or consultant resources to expedite some of the work involved in assessment, technology implementation, and integration.

4. *Description of how these areas of focus relate to the Core Commitments in the **Vision for Success**.*

IEPI assistance will enable American River College to further extend its work to achieve the aspirational goals described in the Chancellor's Vision for Success. With an emphasis on the front door, the true aim of these efforts is to enable students to start right as the foundation for achieving their end goals. Our approach will align with the core commitment to "design and decide with the student in mind." Further, the assessment aspect will foster increased use of data to inform our decision-making related to front door technologies. As a result of IEPI assistance, students will benefit from improved infrastructure and clear communication that highlights the path to completion.

I would be happy to discuss the areas of focus or provide any additional information that might be needed. If selected, American River College is prepared to engage in this endeavor quickly and would ideally schedule the PRT visits in early 2019. Thanks in advance for your consideration of this letter of interest and for your ongoing efforts to lead the IEPI process.

Appreciatively,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'T. Greene', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Thomas Greene
President, American River College