

College of the Canyons
Award for Innovation in Higher Education Application

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List of Participants

- College of the Canyons, coordinating institution
- William S. Hart Union High School District

Application Abstract

College of the Canyons (COC) is very proud of our innovative, award-winning, state and nationally recognized programs that provide a pathway for high school and adult students to move quickly through college studies. From the Academy of the Canyons to the Dr. Dianne G. Van Hook University Center, COC hosts a complete pathway from high school diploma through bachelor's degree. Students can become transfer prepared, and then complete four-year and higher degrees at a singular location. These innovative programs help remove barriers and ease transfer through education segments, while increasing the numbers of students earning bachelor's degrees, and decreasing the time and cost.

In the past year, COC has instituted new programs and improved and changed previously instituted programs, all designed to increase access, remove barriers to completing degrees, and ensure that our students have a clear plan in place for moving through college, completing their degrees and entering careers. We have integrated the Completion By Design (CBD) principles into our strategic planning, including the following:

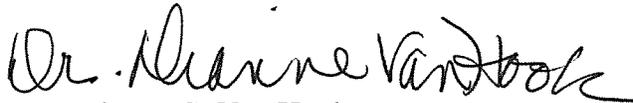
- Accelerate entry into coherent programs of study
- Ensure students know requirements to succeed
- Customize and contextualize instruction
- Integrate student supports with instruction
- Continually monitor student progress and proactively provide feedback
- Reward behaviors that contribute to completion

These CBD principles have guided our strategic actions in 2014 and will continue to provide the framework for 2015 and beyond, as we adopt and put into place practices and systems that assist, support and reward students for meeting their education goals.

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Assurance and Signature

I assure that I have read and support this application for an award. I understand that if this application is chosen for an award, my institution will be required to submit, for approval by the Committee on Awards for Innovation in Higher Education, a report indicating proposed uses of the award funds and, as the fiscal agent, will be responsible for distributing funds to any other participating entities. I also understand that if this application is selected for an award, my institution will be required to submit reports to the Director of Finance by January 1, 2018, and by January 1, 2020, evaluating the effectiveness of the changes described in this application.



Dr. Dianne G. Van Hook
Chancellor, College of the Canyons
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Context - Section 1: Goals

Yes, we can do it! That's the pervasive, positive attitude permeating College of the Canyons, where our strong, courageous and stable leadership has been driving innovation, resourcefulness, dynamic strategic planning, risk taking, trailblazing programs and collaborative partnerships for 26 of our 45 years. It has resulted in College of the Canyons (COC), a California community college in Santa Clarita, 33 miles north of downtown Los Angeles, being the fastest growing community college in the nation, as well as one of the most entrepreneurial. During the past 26 years, the college's enrollment grew from 4,823 to 19,356 unduplicated students and is projected by the Chancellor's Office to increase to 25,443 by 2023. Our percentage of Latino students has grown from 11% in 1990 to 43% and is the largest ethnicity of our students. Importantly, while only 14 to 15% of incoming students place into transferable-level English and math, our college has one of the highest completion rates in Los Angeles County and is one of the top five out of 112 community colleges in California for both prepared and unprepared students. And, the transfer rate is 5% higher for White students and 9 and 10 % higher for Latino and African American students compared to statewide transfer rates. How is it done? Dr. Dianne G. Van Hook, Chancellor, has led the charge, through five economic downturns with no layoffs or program eliminations, while maintaining fiscal stability, creating professional development programs that enhance the competencies and leadership capabilities of staff, and forming transformational teams to get results. Innovation and excellence are twin values that move us forward to create student success.

Our overarching goals have been increasing completion rates and decreasing the time it takes students to complete and transfer to bachelor's degree programs. Our goals align directly with the Awards for Innovation priorities: Our efficiency reduces the costs of completing lower division courses and increases the numbers of successful students. We've approached the overall goals by building highly innovative partnerships, bringing several universities onto our campus, installing a middle college high school, Academy of the Canyons (AOC), and encouraging high school concurrent enrollment. Within two years, 60% of local high school grads enroll at COC, and only 20% go to any other higher education institution. We are unique in having 40 bachelor's, credentials and advanced degree programs offered at our University Center, right on our campus where, since 2002, more than 2,139 students have earned bachelor's or higher degrees at zero cost to tax payers! And while other colleges have adopted parts of this model, we take it further, developing a wide array of support services, and improved policies and academic modes, such as new accelerated remedial math and English classes to get students up to college level quickly. We've systematically developed programs to promote completion, including those above and the First-Year Experience (FYE), Career Coaches at local high schools, extensive online course offerings, online counseling, basic skills initiative programs, extensive integrated planning with an online program review that drives all planning and budget development, extensive professional development with 10 FLEX days for all full-time faculty and an award-winning leadership development program.

Our specific goals are to 1) Increase completion rates by 10 percent; 2) Increase the number of transfers by 15 percent; 3) Decrease average completion time by 15 percent; and 4) Increase the number of baccalaureate degrees by 20 percent.

Context – Section 2: Student Profile

2013 Official Enrollment: 19,356 unduplicated students
Female 48% Male 52%

Ethnic Distribution of Santa Clarita Valley and College of the Canyons

	Santa Clarita Valley	College of the Canyons
African American	4.4%	4.8%
Asian/Asian-American	11.4%	8.5%
Latino/Hispanic	30.9%	43.4%
Native American	0.2%	0.2%
White	49.7%	38.2%
Other/Multi-Racial	3.3%	4.0%
Unknown/Decline to State	N/A	0.8%

Source: Claritas Inc., July 2013, UST referential file-F-12, and the 2013 North Los Angeles County Real Estate and Economic Outlook, Feb. 2013.

College of the Canyons (COC) serves the Santa Clarita Valley at two campuses, Valencia, which opened in 1970 and Canyon Country, which opened in 2007.ⁱ Enrollment has increased by 30% in the last 10 years with rising demand for affordable higher education. The college offers 154 degree/certificate programs, in which students can earn transfer units or take certificate programs to enter the workforce. The Santa Clarita Valley, formerly an agricultural area, contains housing tracts and a mix of commercial industries, including a thriving film industry, manufacturing, medical, retail and aerospace fields. In 2014, the community had 3,535 families below the poverty level and 2,900 were families with children. The valley’s demographics shifted in the last two decades, with an increase in the number of Latino families. The college’s outreach to this traditionally unrepresented group has been very effective, as the percentage of Latinos in the community is 30.9 and the percentage of Latino students enrolled at COC is 43.4. This shift is expected to continue; to a lesser extent, the percentage of African-American and Asian residents will also increase.ⁱⁱ Sixty-six percent of COC students are part-time, 34% full-time. The college is representative of a shift in America’s colleges—nontraditional students are the majority, with only 25% of students attending full-time without working.ⁱⁱⁱ

College of the Canyons is a substantially diverse college. A high percentage of COC students are minority (almost 61%), low-income (72.4%), or both. Disabled Students Services & Programs (DSPS) served 1,556 in 2013, and the COC Veterans Program served 1,014 student veterans. With drawdowns, we expect 10% growth in our student veteran population. We are even more diverse than it appears because foster youth, veterans, low income, homeless and disabled students self identify and many attend without notifying us of their status. This statistical profile even likely undercounts these populations, as much of the data only reflects self-identified students.

Seven years ago, the COC Institutional Research Office conducted a campus study to identify achievement gaps and/or inequities for various ethnic, gender, age and disability groups. The results indicated that, although higher than comparable statewide percentages, African-American, Hispanic students, low-income students had a somewhat lower completion rate than non-minority students, a trend that continues. Latino/Hispanic students' transfer rate after six years is only 38.9%, and in three years only 8.9%. Socioeconomically disadvantaged students transfer within six years at a rate of 36% to 40% even with financial aid. The table below compares COC's transfer rates over six years to the statewide rates.

Transfer over 6 years (2007/2008 cohort)

	COC	Statewide
Overall	46%	39%
African American	45%	35%
American Indian/Alaskan Native	40%	29%
Asian	56%	56%
Filipino	44%	36%
Hispanic	39%	30%
Pacific Islander	25%	36%
Unknown	51%	42%
White	47%	42%
CalWorks	11%	17%
DSPS	30%	28%
EOPS	32%	34%
Financial Aid Recipient	37%	35%

There are identifiable barriers to completion and graduation for these students that can be addressed. A higher percentage of ethnic minority and/or low-income students work while attending classes, impacting completion rates and time to completion. Many students also are underprepared for college-level English and math courses and are undecided about educational and career goals. These students, especially those who are first generation college students, need advisement and counseling, assistance with decision-making, two-year educational plans, assistance with financial aid applications, and programs to help them become prepared for college-level work and for success after transfer. While the college has been addressing these concerns, with more than \$20 million in federal and state financial aid, implantation of many online services and improved remedial and accelerated instructional programs (which have had a demonstrable positive impact on student success), the college continues to develop additional programs to further increase student success.

COC has proposed and begun implementing programs and services to address these barriers to completion. The next three sections describe innovations and expansions made before 2014, during 2014, and initiatives we plan for the 2015 year and beyond.

Innovations – Section 3: Policies and Practices Prior to 2014

We are very proud of our innovative, award-winning, state and nationally recognized programs that provide a pathway for high school and adult students to move quickly through college studies. From the Academy of the Canyons (a middle college high school) to the Dr. Dianne G. Van Hook University Center, College of the Canyons hosts a complete pathway from high school diploma through bachelor's and advanced degrees. Students can become transfer prepared, and then can complete four-year and higher degrees at a convenient singular location. These innovative programs help remove barriers and ease transfer through education segments, while increasing the numbers of students who earn bachelor's degrees, and decreasing the time and cost. COC forged the following critical partnerships to accomplish this innovation in student degree completion.

In 2000, the College founded the **Academy of the Canyons Middle College High School**, a public high school alternative in the William S. Hart Union High School District, located at COC's Valencia campus. AOC students earn college credits and associate degrees while completing high school, and our Board Policy waives their concurrent enrollment fees. By high school graduation, 90 percent of AOC students have completed one or more years of college. The school provides comprehensive support, including peer tutoring, college planning and flexible scheduling. The outcomes of the policy and program are dramatic. In Fall 2012, the success rate for AOC students in college classes was 14% higher than other concurrently enrolled students (non AOC) and 19% higher than other COC students in the same classes. Named one of the Best Schools in America by *US News and World Report*, recruitment to AOC focuses on high-need, talented students who are struggling, minority and low-income students. The lesson is that waiving concurrent enrollment fees can greatly smooth and speed-up high school students' college careers, especially if they can attend high school on college campuses. We've also learned that the cost of college textbooks is a barrier for low-income AOC students, so we are helping the Academy move toward Open Educations Resources (OER), and are providing textbooks to Academy students.

In 2002, COC launched the **Dr. Dianne G. Van Hook University Center**, a campus facility and partnership program that brought four-year degrees directly to Santa Clarita students. With our five partner universities, including CSU Bakersfield and Brandman University, the 110,000-square-foot Center now offers 40 bachelor's and advanced degree programs. The Center has served more than 5,000 students since opening, students who would have had to give up their dreams or leave the community to earn four-year degrees. In student surveys, 91 percent of UC students say the Center removes barriers to pursuing education, including location, childcare, and work schedules. This is a seamless pathway through which high school students and adult students can smoothly transition from COC's classes to the university center's programs.

The following are examples of instructional programs and support systems that help students complete transfer requirements and associate degrees, so they can move on to bachelor's degree programs. Alone these are important programs, but taken all together, the breadth of support is innovative and dramatically effective:

COC has developed **Personal Accelerated Learning (PAL)** math and English courses that *have directly increased completion rates*; students can take two 8-week classes in math and/or English, completing both in only one semester instead of two. Intermediate Algebra (Math 75)

was first piloted in spring 2012 with 11 sections; the course uses the curricular ideas proposed by the California Acceleration Project, including attention to affective domain, backward design of content, and just-in-time algebra concepts. PAL serves 1,200 students per year and has 35 waitlisted sections. Math 75 increases completion rates over eight semesters from 30% in a traditional Algebra path to 60%. When offered in PAL format, with the transfer level statistics course (Math 140), our success climbs to 80-85% completion rates in one semester. We currently offer eight sections per year of this format serving over 270 students. We've learned that this is very effective and we need to train more qualified teachers for these accelerated courses.

Tutoring Learning Computer Center (TLC) at COC provided more than 123,000 hours of student support and tutoring to 9,000 students last year in math, English and other core subjects, an increase of 116 percent over five years. These are free services for enrolled COC students. The Center also provides **Supplemental Learning** (self-paced tutorials), **Guided Learning** (computer tutorials), and group “practice jams” with tutor advisors to help students master basic skills and improve learning.

COC has launched a **First-Year Experience (FYE)** program, modeled after other college programs nationwide. These have been highly successful at improving student retention and persistence, particularly for at-risk, first-time college students.^{iv} Students receive orientation, meet with counselors to develop education plan, and have a faculty mentor.

Prior to 2014, COC also began adding online counseling and tutoring which helps move students through the system faster. One of our future goals is to expand this service with additional staff. On the Instructional side, we vastly increased our Distance Learning program, with online classes and training for online faculty.

COC has been a leader in the use of **Open Educational Resources (OER)**, teaching, learning, and research resources that reside in the public domain or have been released under an intellectual property license, permitting their free use. COC faculty have authored and adopted dozens of open textbooks, resulting in significant savings for students and increased access to education. The estimated total student savings due to OER during just 2013-14 was \$750,000.

Upward Bound Program: College of the Canyons entered into a partnership with the William S. Hart Union High School District to launch an “Upward Bound” program at the Golden Valley High School (GVHS) campus, designed to increase the number of GVHS students who earn a diploma and move on to pursue higher education at a college or university.

Innovations – Section 4: Policies and Practices in 2014

In the past year, College of the Canyons has instituted new programs and has improved and changed previously instituted programs, all designed to increase access to classes, remove barriers to completing degrees, and ensure that our students have a clear plan in place for moving through college, completing their degrees and entering careers. College of the Canyons has integrated the Completion By Design (CBD) principles into our strategic planning, including the following:

- Accelerate entry into coherent programs of study
- Minimize time required to get college-ready
- Ensure students know requirements to succeed
- Customize and contextualize instruction
- Integrate student supports with instruction
- Continue to monitor student progress and proactively provide feedback
- Reward behaviors that contribute to completion^v

These CBD principles have guided our strategic actions in 2014 and will continue to provide the framework for 2015 and beyond, as we adopt and put into place practices and systems that assist, support and reward students for meeting their education goals. CBD is an initiative currently implemented in four states outside of California. It “seeks to raise community college completion rates for large numbers of students while containing college costs, maintaining open access, and ensuring the quality of college programs and credentials.”

Accelerated Weekend College

- Launched in fall 2014, the new **Weekend College** program, piloted at the Canyon Country Campus, targets working adults seeking a degree, as well as new college students seeking a clear course pathway. In this program, *students can complete all general education requirements for the associate degree in one year*. Although the impacts of Weekend College have yet to be quantified, with a clear course for students to complete their associate degree in one year *with UC transfer requirements met*, we expect the accelerated, highly efficient Weekend College program to have positive completion and transfer rates compared to part-time, extended college attendance, particularly for working and nontraditional student populations.

Student Success & Support Program (3SP)

- At College of the Canyons, the Student Success and Support Program (3SP) is both a program and a process designed to support and encourage student success. The mission of 3SP includes ensuring fair and equal access to campus resources, accurate and unbiased assessment and placement, and the provision of quality guidance and support for students to reach their educational goals.

As of 2014, newly implemented 3SP requirements call for each student to have in place a two-year, comprehensive plan to guide them to a degree in his or her chosen program of study. After 15 college units are completed, all students must declare a specific program of study. In addition, COC has instituted mandatory assessment and orientation for all

newly matriculated students. Our orientation workshop has now moved online to ensure facilitated access to the program for all students, including those with busy work schedules and nontraditional class hours.

These three core services: 1) mandatory assessment, 2) orientation, and 3) an educational plan have been shown to make a significant difference in moving students towards completion. Studies have strongly indicated that, particularly for part-time, non-traditional students with limited time and financial resources, providing several years to explore various courses and study options can negatively impact whether that student eventually graduates.^{vi} Through the Office of Enrollment Services, College of the Canyons has hired three new counselors to assist with this new program.

Tutoring Learning Center (TLC) and Distance Learning

- The Distance Learning program expanded in 2014, with plans in place to move additional orientation and courses online through multiple delivery formats. The orientation for freshman students and all Personal Accelerated Learning (PAL) courses shifted to online, enabling more students to learn about and register for accelerated math and English classes. COC's online general education classes, known as GO, offered a five-week alternative to traditional semester classes. In a fall 2014 student survey conducted at the University Center, work schedule was the most important barrier (72 percent indicated 'agree' or 'strongly agree') impacting students' ability to attend class. Distance Learning allows students to create their own schedule. Currently, 15 percent of College of the Canyons students are taking their courses exclusively online or through hybrid courses (online mixed with traditional one-on-one faculty meetings or classroom session). We anticipate that number will continue to rise, and College of the Canyons has committed to allocating additional resources to grow the Distance Learning program in the next decade.^{vii}
- TLC also launched the **Student Athlete Academic Mentor Program (SAAM)** to help student-athletes manage time, reduce stress, ensure they have an educational plan, and better use resources. The goal is to increase athletes' course completion rates, and increase the number of athletes who transfer to four-year universities. Data shows a dramatic increase in student athletes attending classes since the program began—an increase of 187% in total classroom hours attended. We've learned that to meet demand, we need to increase Supplemental Guided Learning activities; services for Distance Learning students, including video tutorials; and training for online faculty to promote best practices in online courses.

FYE Expansion

- COC expanded the First Year Experience program, in 2014, launching "learning communities" that will allow FYE participants to take their core freshman classes with other FYE students, providing critical peer support and encouragement during the student transition to college.

Career Coach Program

- Through a grant from the SB70 Career Technical Education Community Collaborative program, College of the Canyons established the **Career Coach program** in 2014. This grant is intended to improve education pathways and career technical awareness for students enrolled in secondary school and the community college systems. The community college system is assisting K-12 in building and aligning coordinated CTE pathways that lead to postsecondary programs of study that prepare students for high-skill jobs with high wages. *Approximately 84% of COC's CTE programs transfer to universities, making this a direct method of supporting transfer and completion of bachelor's degrees.*

Career Coaches are College of the Canyons' trained paraprofessionals based at local high schools to serve students who often graduate from high school without a definitive plan or resources for postsecondary education. The Career Coach program has targeted 11th and 12th grade high school students with a GPA ranging between 2.0 to 3.0.

Anticipated outcomes include an increased number of students who are "college ready" when they enter college; increased number of students who enroll in CTE transfer programs upon entering COC; stronger parental awareness of the need for students to connect education and college degrees to career; and increased interaction and partnerships with business and industry and high schools.

Career Coaches served 1,330 students within the William S. Hart Union High School District in 2014; 1,028 career plans were developed. The one-time funding concludes at the end of 2014; however, gap funding has been secured to continue the program short-term and the college will seek ongoing funding.

Student Equity

- Based on the College of the Canyons Student Equity Plan, the college has accomplished numerous steps in 2014 to assist underrepresented groups on campus. Some of the steps include:
 - We researched adoption of the **ePortfolio** system and began faculty training on the system. This is a web-based portfolio that allows students to archive and display work using various types of media, including text, MS Word, or PDF files, PowerPoint, web links, audio, video, graphics and other multimedia. The web portfolio serves as a tool for applying to bachelor's degree programs and for career readiness, planning and eventually searching and applying for jobs.
 - To support student success in math, COC piloted curriculum improvements; implemented attention to affective domain; piloted academic counselors visiting the classroom to assist students; and expanded PAL courses.

- To support student course completion, we researched purchase of the **MyBeacon** content management system.
- To support students with disabilities, a pilot **Smart Lab** was created and a small-scale trial group was used to pilot the effectiveness of online tutoring for DSPTS students.
- To increase student equity awareness: COC developed a curriculum for two-hour awareness workshops for all FTE employees to attend; these workshops will begin in spring 2015.
- Data Analysis: COC allocated \$60,000 to study each of the five student success indicators (access, course completion, degree/certification completion, basic skills/ESL, and transfer rates) to provide a base of data to pursue further action on student equity issues and grant funding. COC also allocated funds to study the access of students to the Student Health Center and barriers to accessing services for minority, at-risk and low-income groups.
- Foster youth: COC hired an adjunct counselor specifically to provide registration and academic advice and support to foster youth. The counselor is also responsible for increasing outreach to identified foster youth within the local William B. Hart Union High School District.
- ESL: COC has begun development of a Learning Resource Center for ESL students to increase access for non-English proficient speakers to college classes. We have also begun work on developing online tutor training for providing this online resource to non-English speaking students.

Economic Development Division (EDD)

- One of the vital roles of community colleges is to meet the needs of communities by training skilled workers. We open the doors, enhance access and increase the numbers of students coming to colleges and moving on to universities, through extensive work, programming, and partnerships with business and industry; While the data is incomplete on whether these articulated pathways increase degree completion, they are a clear path for nontraditional college students to enter a promising career and provide direction, motivation and worksite opportunities.^{viii}

Professional Development

- We developed a resource library and training program for faculty in effective uses of High Impact Practices (learning communities, writing intensive classes, supplemental instruction, service and community based learning, etc.)

Innovations – Section 5: Policies and Practices in 2015 and Beyond

While the data presented on completion at College of the Canyons is positive, and we are very proud of the innovative initiatives we have instituted, we believe that we can do even better. Through our strategic planning process, we have identified key strategies and policies, to be implemented in the coming year, intended to further increase the success of students in achieving their educational goals. These strategies and policies include:

Student Equity

- Purchasing the ePortfolio system and implementing its use, including a three-year plan, setting evaluation measures and outcomes (August 2015).
- Providing additional professional development for ESL faculty, particularly in collaborative strategies (August 2015).
- Supporting student success in mathematics by creating a system of mapping high school courses to college courses. This will allow use of high school grades as a heavily weighted part of assessing initial placement of students into college level mathematics courses (February 2015). Once the pilot is complete, we will be installing an academic counselor in 12 sections of developmental math classes so they are easily accessible to students in need (June 2015).
- Finalizing the online orientation for accelerated PAL classes and marketing those classes effectively to new students (June 2015).
- Supporting DSPTS – making the completed smart lab accessible to students, and launching online tutoring, by the end of the school year (June 2015).
- Providing Equity Awareness Workshops so that all full-time employees will have completed an awareness workshop (June 2015).
- Increasing services for foster youth students.
- Hiring a graduation technician to work with departments and student information system data to increase degree/certificate awards for eligible students.
- Expanding services for veterans as part of the VA principles of excellence.
- Establishing research and inquiry groups to examine institutional data for key student success indicators (access, course completion, degree/certification completion, basic skills/ESL, and transfer), in order to increase college awareness of student equity and student success challenges while contributing to ongoing college solutions.

Tutoring Learning Computer (TLC) Center

- Redesigning the **First-Year Experience (FYE)** program to include learning communities based on a pathways model, offering students peer support during their critical first year (March 2015).
- Expanding Student Athlete Academic Mentors program (date to be determined with securing of grant funding)
- **Expanding** Supplemental Learning and Guided Learning Activities (date to be determined with securing of grant funding).

Distance Learning

- Supporting student access to learning materials by expanding the use of Open Educational Resources (June 2015).
- Increasing the engagement of students in online classes by creating a video series about succeeding in online classes; the videos will feature current students and faculty sharing proven strategies for succeeding in online classes (June 2015).
- Increasing student retention and success in online classes by promoting consistent design of online classes. Provide faculty workshops on best practices in online classes. (Date to be determined with securing of grant funding).
- *Library*: Expanding workshops on information literacy instruction by librarians. A comprehensive offering would consist of, at a minimum, eight distinct topics per semester, offered at least once at each campus in addition to online, for a total of 24 workshops (June 2015).
- Offering additional sections of accelerated curriculum in English and math (Spring 2015).

Student Success & Support Program (3SP)

- Developing two-year course offering plans for programs and revisiting enrollment management strategies to ensure student progress.
- Creating and customizing an online student advising system that teaches students how to create a one-semester education plan.
- Providing Career Coaches at the local high schools to help students identify career pathways available through community college programs, identify CTE transfer to bachelor's degree programs and to help students see the connection between education and a career.

Title V Grant programs

- Developing and implement a comprehensive Online Student Educational Plan, fully integrated with the college's MIS (management information system).
- Expanding online tutoring
- Expanding online counseling

Innovations – Section 6: Impacting Average Cost of Degrees

Students often cite the cost of college as the main barrier to completing their degrees.^{ix} Colleges, universities, the federal and state governments, must all play roles in finding ways to cut costs, streamline the financial aid process, and provide additional scholarships and financial vehicles. With innovative instructional and student services programs, operational efficiency, and stable fiscal management on the district and college level, colleges can have a major impact on cost for the state, the institution and students. Dr. Dianne G. Van Hook, CEO of College of the Canyons since 1988, has led an ongoing effort to increase access, by expanding course offerings, providing alternative delivery modes, and decreasing the time students take to complete their programs and transfer, all while keeping operational costs low, astutely managing the budget, and assisting students with innovative approaches to textbook cost control. State expenses for the college's recent construction programs have been enhanced through two successful local general obligation bond elections, and the college's audit reports have been excellent. Additionally, scholarships at the college set a new record in 2013-14, with 241 students receiving more than \$175,000 in awards. In short, COC employs consistent strategies to save money for students and taxpayers through efficient and effective use of college funds.

The college's overarching goals are to increase the number of students who complete lower division work, and to decrease the time and cost for prepared students to transfer into bachelor's degree programs. Our innovations significantly reduce costs to the state, the universities, our college, and students. Moving students faster through the system is one of the most efficient ways to reduce average costs. With new 3SP requirements, students will have a clear education plan, reducing the time spent in courses not needed for their educational objectives. Accelerated courses in math and English, online counseling and classes, weekend college and our other new initiatives are also aimed at reducing time to completion. In addition, COC has served as a leader in Open Educational Resources (OER), an important trend that saved our students \$750,000 last year alone. This initiative puts us in the vanguard of lowering textbook costs for students as colleges incorporate additional digital and online education delivery modes.

The Dr. Dianne G. Van Hook University Center also offers students a smooth pathway to bachelor's degree programs, while saving the high cost of college visits, applications, transportation and housing. The Center, with 40 programs, has served more than 5,000 students through five partner universities. Most of the programs are run through private and CSU Extended Universities, which operate without state support, while offering the same degree programs as those available at the universities' main campuses. Students take lower division classes at College of the Canyons and can transfer seamlessly into upper division classes offered by partner universities. Many COC students concurrently enroll in upper division classes at the University Center while still doing COC coursework, if they have met lower division prerequisites, allowing many to graduate with a bachelor's degree in three years. It is a unique opportunity to obtain a four-year degree at a fraction of the cost.

The middle college high school program (Academy of the Canyons) and concurrent enrollment fee-waiver policy for high school students provide huge opportunities to save on college. Concurrent enrollment allows high school students to take college courses without paying enrollment fees. Ninety percent of students complete one year of college before they leave the K-12 system and some are awarded associate degrees and H.S. diplomas in the same week.

Innovations – Section 7: Assessing Risks and Tradeoffs

Becoming a highly innovative college has required College of the Canyons to take risks and to continuously evaluate the cost and benefit of every new initiative, carefully considering consequences and tradeoffs. Dr. Dianne G. Van Hook, the CEO for 26 years, encourages employees at every level of the college to take risks, share their ideas, dream dreams, and take the chances required to turn dreams into reality. The culture of innovation she's created by promoting this philosophy has allowed the college to move forward and thrive even during very difficult economic times. It has made the college a recognized leader in innovation. There are tradeoffs and risks in the innovative programs the college has been implementing to improve completion and transfer rates for students.

Embarking on a huge capital campaign to raise funds for construction of an 110,000-square-foot Center, and seeking partnerships with universities was a huge risk. What if no universities wanted to join the consortium? What if no students wanted to attend university classes on a community college campus? What if we couldn't raise enough funds? The college minimized the risk by conducting a feasibility study that concluded the community liked the concept, donors would support it, and a temporary University Center was set up in a portable building to test partnership and student interest. The risk was worth testing, and now thousands of students have received four-year and advanced degrees from the five partners and 40 programs at the Dr. Dianne G. Van Hook University Center.

Seeking grant monies to start a middle college high school on the College of the Canyons campus was a risk, and the college had to consider the tradeoff of using land for other college purposes. But the benefits to the students outweighed the tradeoffs, and allowed the college to create a school now rated as one of the best in the nation. It has become a model for other colleges and high school districts to consider.

There are serious tradeoffs to consider when developing programs that benefit one group of students over another, because the college must consider whether some groups may be neglected. For example, if the college creates a special program to assist student athletes, will it unfairly affect students who are not athletes, such as students in arts, science or other groups? The college considers this and is careful to consider the needs of all groups of students, particularly to be sure that services for underrepresented students are funded and supported by trained staffed. MESA is a good example of a well-established program to support underrepresented students in Math, Engineering and Science. The college's detailed student equity plan, guided and funded by the statewide priority to promote successful outcomes for underrepresented and disproportionately impacted students, is another example of thoughtful strategies to minimize risks and tradeoffs for students.

Other tradeoffs for our innovative projects are financial, for example, some of the resources allocated to counseling, student health services, and other student support services might be allocated to additional professional development, classroom technology or other priorities. However, completion and transfer are overarching goals for the college, so funding programs that most directly advance these goals is an overarching priority.

Many of our goals for the coming year, detailed in the previous sections, are summarized below:

- Reducing costs to students by placing an increasing number of textbooks and other classroom resources into the public domain
- Training additional instructors to teach accelerated Math courses
- Expanding the Student-Athlete Academic Mentoring program
- Expanding workshops on information literacy instruction by librarians to help students use their academic resources effectively
- Completing the development of two-year pathways
- Redesigning the FYE and develop a freshman seminar in learning communities to provide strong peer support for first-year students
- Providing ongoing incentives for professional development to enhance teaching and learning and encourage infusion of high impact practices
- Providing additional counseling faculty to help more students
- Increasing services online to assist students to complete their educational goals
- Increasing transcript evaluation, degree and graduation completion/outreach services to help students obtain a promising start and support them on their journey to completion.

We believe that these activities will not have any adverse effect on our underrepresented student populations; in fact, we believe the opposite is true — that these innovations will result in extremely positive outcomes for our nontraditional, low-income, and disadvantaged students.

Sustainability - Section 8: Key Strengths and Assets for Sustainability

The guiding principal behind my 26 years of leadership as the CEO of College of the Canyons can be summed up in the phrase, "If you can dream it, you can do it."

*- Dr. Dianne G. Van Hook, Chancellor
College of the Canyons*

At College of the Canyons, institutional leadership is a critical strength that allows the college to excel. Dr. Dianne G. Van Hook provides that leadership along with support from a stable, forward-thinking Board of Trustees. She has served as chancellor since 1988, the longest tenure for a community college chancellor in the country, and infused and empowered the college with her vision and philosophy of innovation.

She has overseen the tremendous growth of the college from 5,000 students and an \$8 million budget in 1988 to more than 19,000 students and a \$200 million budget today; from one small campus to two modern campuses, doubling the size of the college and its facilities with the opening of a state-of-the-art Canyon Country Campus. She has led the college through the opening of its University Center, now partnered with five universities to provide four-year and advanced degrees to Santa Clarita students. She has led successful efforts to pass two bond measures that have funded these far-reaching projects, and managed the college's finances so skillfully that auditors consistently praise the college for its strong fiscal management.

She has received numerous state awards for her service, and presided over each of the community college organizations in the state of California. She is nationally recognized for her innovative leadership in economic development and has overseen the creation of the college's Economic Development Division, which serves more than 500 employers annually and provides employee training, support for small businesses, and accelerated career track courses for students. The award-winning Professional Development Program she spearheaded at the college is seen as one of the leading professional development programs in the State.

Along with Dr. Van Hook's vision and drive, College of the Canyons has been propelled forward by the combination of the community's growth and an unwavering vision of the Board of Trustees and the campus community to become the best community college possible. The Board has been very stable over the years with little turn over, and one of the current trustees was on the original Board when the District was formed in 1968. In Dr. Van Hook's words:

College of the Canyons is a student-centered institution focused on meeting the needs of the community. Because of our commitment to innovation, planning, and partnerships, we have established a 45-year history of helping our students fulfill their goals. Their success speaks to our success, and we are proud of what we have accomplished on their behalf.

COC participates in several innovative partnerships that have redefined the traditional role of community colleges. It has partnerships with nearly every social service agency in the

community, with the school districts, with the City, the Chamber of Commerce and with a majority of the local businesses.

One of the many ways that the Chancellor has provided vision and leadership is in raising external funds to support innovative programs and services. To augment available resources, the College actively pursues grant revenue from the state, federal government, and private foundations. Leveraging outside funds provides sustainability for our innovative programs. Over the past 14 years, the College has brought in more than \$64 million dollars in grant revenue. Funded grants for 2014-15 total more than \$8 million. We are extremely confident—based on past successes over more than two decades—that we will secure grant funding for the innovations, improved programs and services, and additional staffing we have outlined in this application.

Another important source of sustainability for the college is the COC Foundation. During the last decade, the Foundation has raised approximately \$14 million in corporate and community donations. Donors support the college because they see that it is well run, efficient, and effective and that taxpayer income as well as donations are managed with great care. Continued support by our loyal donors enables the college to increase its support for students, fund campus innovation, and move forward with new initiatives. We will continue to improve and innovate and seek partners to help us achieve our vision.

Our institutional leadership, partnerships, and strong fundraising programs are key strengths that we will leverage to ensure we sustain our innovations for the future.

Sustainability - Section 9: Strategies for Engaging Stakeholders

College of the Canyons has a history of forging strong partnerships to ensure the success of our programs. Our efforts to improve completion rates will be the same. Across the college and community, faculty, counselors, staff, administrators, Trustees, donors, partners, business people, and community members have taken ownership of the college with great pride and are dedicated to maintaining its innovative goals and sustaining its future. Some of our established partners include our University Center partners; the local William S. Hart Union High School District; local business leaders (with 852 local businesses served annually by our Economic Development Division alone); CTE Advisory Committees with 501 representatives, the COC Foundation Board with 37 local community leaders; the City of Santa Clarita; the Santa Clarita Valley and Simi Valley Chambers of Commerce; partners in the Center for International Trade Development; California Institute of the Arts; and, of course, the Santa Clarita community at large. The college has an impeccable reputation in the community, with more than 95% of respondents from a broad community survey agreeing that the College is doing an “excellent” or “very good” job.^x College of the Canyons has earned this support through years of hard work and trustworthy relationships, and it will maintain this broad engagement of key stakeholders with institutional efforts such as student completion.

However, to improve completion rates, the most important partners of all are our students. We need them to invest themselves in their own success and to believe in themselves. In order to help students succeed, we must understand what they are going through as they make the transition to college life. A majority of students are working while they attend school; many of them have children and family obligations. They are anxious, stressed, and often overwhelmed. As a recent *New York Times* article addressed, “if you want to help low-income students succeed, it is not enough to deal with their academic and financial obstacles. You also need to address their doubts and misconceptions and fears.”^{xi}

As outlined in our proposal, we have begun a critical campaign to reach out to students, both individually and as groups, to provide the support they need to persist, particularly through the difficult first-year transition. Our Career Coach program currently reaches out to students before they even enter our campus, targeting vulnerable 11th and 12th grade students at the W.S. Hart Union High School District. We have re-worked the highly effective First-Year Experience (FYE) to include peer communities for additional support for freshmen students. The programs described in this application are all targeted to assist our students in overcoming the many challenges and barriers to their success.

Additionally, we have proposed a Student Health Center expansion that would extend more mental health and outreach services and would provide additional outreach to targeted groups, including minority, low-income, foster youth and other underrepresented populations. The plan includes meeting with diverse campus groups and clubs to distribute information on ways the college can help them meet the challenges of persisting in their dreams and completing their college degrees.

Sustainability - Section 10: Sustaining Innovations with Existing Resources

The services described in this proposal—including increased counseling services, equipment, outreach, curricula improvements and training—will be maintained through a variety of funding sources. College of the Canyons has a history of realizing strong growth funding, with a 157 percent funded growth rate since 1995-96 that has provided the fiscal flexibility to institutionalize efforts that are not available to most colleges. In addition, categorical funding has increased: Governor Brown’s 2014-15 budget allocated an additional \$170 million to support student success services and an additional \$30 million to support DSPS for California Community Colleges. The Governor’s 2015-16 budget proposal further provides additional \$690 million in funding for California Community Colleges and \$500 million in Adult Education Block Grants, which will provide College of the Canyons with additional flexibility to sustain efforts.

The College supplements these resources with more than \$8 million in annual grant revenue and \$1 million in revenue through the COC Foundation to further provide fiscal support and flexibility. For example, the Foundation is currently launching an effort to fund expansion of the services provided by the Tutoring Learning Computer (TLC) Center, and expansion of Supplemental Learning and Guided Learning will be included in that effort when the funds are available. Grant revenue provides support for many programs, especially those focused on increasing success of students traditionally underserved, such as our Hispanic Serving Institution Title V grant and grants focused on advancing institutional effectiveness, such as the college’s \$12.5 million statewide Institutional Effectiveness and Technical Assistance grant.

The college’s strong partnerships will also be leveraged to help defray some of the costs of these programs. We will approach our University Center partners, as well as our business and industry partners, to help support student success services, the new DSPS smart lab, the Freshman Year Experience (FYE) outreach, and other proposed services. For example, the William S. Hart Union High School District has always been a strong collaborative partner that provides support and staff for programmatic changes; the high school district will be a key partner moving to online textbook resources in the public domain for Academy of the Canyons students.

Evaluation - Section 11: Quantitative and Qualitative Evaluation

College of the Canyons has developed its evaluation plan to ensure that it employs a systemic approach in evaluating progress toward achieving identified goals and providing information that informs ongoing programmatic improvement.

Formative evaluation activities will be ongoing and will enable the timely adjustment of strategies and schedules, the reallocation of resources, and revised managerial decisions, if needed to improve the activity. Methods will include annual surveys of students, faculty and staff, which the College currently conducts to assess satisfaction with services, strengths of efforts, barriers, and suggestions for improvement. The surveys will be augmented by focus groups as well as individual interviews to provide more in-depth, rich information.. The RP Group Principles of Redesign and Student Success Redefined will help guide the inquiry. These principles include: Accelerate entry into coherent programs of study; Minimize time required to get college-ready; Ensure students know the requirements to succeed; Customize and contextualize instruction; Integrate student support with instruction; Continually monitor student progress and proactively provide feedback; Reward behaviors that contribute to completion; Leverage technology to improve learning and program delivery; and Promote six success factors, which include Directed, Focused, Nurtured, Engaged, Connected, and Valued. Information from the formative evaluation will be integrated into the College's planning process as groups, including the College Planning Team and Performance Indicators Committee, reflect on formative evaluation information to identify additional strategies or modifications to existing efforts.

Summative evaluation activities will be conducted to determine the degree to which the objectives have been achieved. These indicators will include:

1. Increase student completion by 10 percent
2. Increase in the number of students who transfer by 15 percent
3. Increase in students who have two-year student education plans to 75 percent
4. Increase in students who have declared educational goals to 75 percent
5. Decrease average completion time by 15 percent
6. Increase number of baccalaureate degrees completed in the University Center by 20 percent
7. Decrease the state's cost per completion by 20 percent
8. Decrease student's cost to completion by 10 percent.

Indicators 1 through 4 and Indicator 8 will be disaggregated by ethnicity, income, first-generation college, and disabilities. Progress on all of the indicators towards the goals and the disaggregations will be assessed annually. The summative data, as with the formative information will be used by the College Planning Team and Performance Indicators Committee to monitor progress and consider programmatic changes to further enhance student success. Evaluation information will also be disseminated to the College community and stakeholders through annual evaluation briefs.

Evaluation - Section 12: Target Outcomes Through 2018/2019

We will use eight indicators as measures of our success. Indicators one through four and indicator eight will be disaggregated by ethnicity, income, first-generation college, and disabilities. For indicators one and two, we have included disaggregated ethnicity tables with baseline data for College of the Canyons and statewide, as well as what we will achieve each year through 2018/2019. This process will be used for each indicator, and will include all sub-categories listed above.

Indicator 1: Increase student completion by 10 percent

	COC Baseline	Statewide Baseline	2015/ 2016	2016/ 2017	2017/ 2018	2018/ 2019
Increase student completion by 10%	58.6%	48.1%	60.0%	61.0%	62.5%	64.5%
African American	47.3%	37.5%	48.5%	50.0%	51.0%	52.0%
American Indian/Alaskan Native	27.3%	37.6%	28.0%	28.5%	29.0%	30.0%
Asian	69.0%	65.7%	70.5%	72.0%	74.0%	76.0%
Filipino	60.0%	51.1%	61.5%	63.0%	65.0%	66.0%
Hispanic	48.3%	39.1%	49.5%	51.0%	52.0%	53.1%
Pacific Islander	60.0%	42.7%	61.5%	63.0%	65.0%	66.0%
White	62.1%	52.5%	63.6%	65.0%	66.5%	68.0%

For student completion, we are starting with a baseline of 58.6% and will increase that by 10% in 2018/2019 to a total of 64.5%. Annual numbers are listed in each column, and this data will be disaggregated for all sub-categories.

Indicator 2: Increase the number of students who transfer by 15 percent

	COC Baseline	Statewide Baseline	2015/ 2016	2016/ 2017	2017/ 2018	2018/ 2019
Increase student transfer by 15%	46%	39%	47%	49%	51%	53%
African American	45.0%	35.4%	46.0%	47.0%	48.0%	49.5%
American Indian/Alaskan Native	N/A	29.3%	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Asian	56.0%	55.6%	57.0%	58.5%	60.0%	61.6%
Filipino	44.0%	36.1%	45.0%	46.0%	47.0%	48.4%
Hispanic	39.0%	30.1%	40.0%	41.0%	42.0%	42.9%
Pacific Islander	25.0%	36.0%	25.5%	26.0%	27.0%	27.5%
Unknown	51.0%	42.2%	52.0%	53.0%	55.0%	56.1%
White	47.0%	42.2%	48.0%	49.0%	50.0%	51.7%

*N/A – Sample size is too small to report

For student transfer, we are starting with a baseline of 46% and will increase that by 15% in 2018/2019 to a total of 53%. Annual numbers are listed in each column, and this data will be disaggregated for all sub-categories.

Indicator 3: Increase in students who have two-year education plans to 75 percent

For student education plans, we are starting with a baseline of 5% and will increase that to 75% in 2018/2019. With the Student Success Task Force recommendations, students are required to have a one-year education plan. We will give students a two-year plan, and 60% of the students will have an education plan in 2015/2016. That will increase by 5% each year with 75% being achieved in 2018/2019. This data will be disaggregated for all sub-categories.

Indicator 4: Increase in students who have declared educational goals to 75 percent

Similar to student education plans, we are starting with a baseline of 5% and will increase that to 75% in 2018/2019. Tied to the Student Success Task Force recommendations, students will select an educational goal. 60% of the students will have an education plan in 2015/2016. That will increase by 5% each year with 75% being achieved in 2018/2019. This data will be disaggregated for all sub-categories.

Indicator 5: Decrease average completion time by 15 percent

Baseline data for student completion will be collected and disaggregated into the above sub-categories. Average completion time will be decreased by 15%. For example, if the average completion time is 4 years, we will decrease the time to completion by one semester. Final data will be disaggregated for all sub-categories.

Indicator 6: Increase number of baccalaureate degrees completed in the University Center by 20 percent

For the number of baccalaureate degrees completed in the University Center at College of the Canyons, we are starting with a baseline of 2,100 degrees earned over 11 years, or an average of 190 degrees per year, and will increase that by 20% in 2018/2019 to a total of 228 degrees per year.

Indicator 7: Decrease the state's cost per completion by 20 percent

Baseline data for state's cost per completion will be collected and disaggregated into the above sub-categories. The state's cost per completion will be decreased by 20% due to students finishing faster and COC not needing to offer additional courses. Final data will be disaggregated for all sub-categories.

Indicator 8: Decrease student's cost to completion by 10 percent

Baseline data for student's cost per completion will be collected and disaggregated into the above sub-categories. The state's cost per completion will be decreased by 10% due to students finishing faster and not needing as many courses. Final data will be disaggregated for all sub-categories.

ⁱ The population of Santa Clarita Valley is projected to increase by 8% by 2020, to a total of 345,275. Source: SCAG and 2014 Santa Clarita Valley Economic Development

Corporation & College of the Canyons Economic & Real Estate Outlook, March 2014.

ⁱⁱ SCAG Outlook, 2014.

ⁱⁱⁱ *Time is the Enemy: Barriers to College Completion* (2011). Washington, DC: National Governors Association Complete College America. p. 6.

^{iv} Over five years more than 500 students have participated in FYE and demonstrated on average a 15% point higher Fall-to-Fall persistence rate than non-FYE first time, full time freshmen. Source: College of the Canyons Office of Academic Affairs survey, 2013.

^v Nodine, T., Venezia, A., and Bracco, K. (2011). *Changing course: A guide to increasing student completion in community colleges*. San Francisco, CA: WestEd.

^{vi} *Time is the Enemy*, National Governors Association Complete College America, September 2011. Only 7.8 percent of part-time college students graduate with a two-year associate's degree within 200 percent of standard time, i.e., four years.

^{vii} *Learning at a Distance: Undergraduate Enrollment in Distance Education Courses and Degree Programs*. (2011). Washington DC: U.S. Department of Education. According to survey of college administrators, 50 percent of all college students are expected to be enrolled in online courses by the year 2020.

^{viii} *Pathways to Success: Integrating Learning with Life and Work to Increase National College Completion*. (2012). Washington DC: Advisory Committee on Student Financial Assistance. The committee identified two main policy changes that would assist nontraditional students — creating clear career pathways and streamlining financial aid — as vital steps to removing barriers to success.

^{ix} *Pathways to Success*, p. 4. Financial barriers to higher education are a primary cause of part-time and delayed enrollment; Cost and lack of time are the two main barriers cited by students.

^x Community survey

([http://www.canyons.edu/Offices/PIO/Accreditation/EvidencebyNumber/209%20Community%20Survey%20Fall%202013%20Rpt%20285%20\(E.209\).pdf](http://www.canyons.edu/Offices/PIO/Accreditation/EvidencebyNumber/209%20Community%20Survey%20Fall%202013%20Rpt%20285%20(E.209).pdf))

^{xi} Paul Tough, "Who Gets to Graduate?" *New York Times*, May 15 2014, Part 1.



William S. Hart Union High School District

January 9, 2015

Committee on Awards for Innovation in Higher Education
California Department of Finance
Education Systems Unit – innovation Awards
915 L Street, 7th Floor
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Committee Members,

On behalf of the William S. Hart Union High School District, I am writing to support College of the Canyons' application for an Innovation Award from the California Department of Finance. Our partnership with College of the Canyons (COC) allows our high school students to complete college courses, thus shortening their time to a baccalaureate degree. This is particularly true for our students attending Academy of the Canyons, our middle college high school located on the college campus.

The William S. Hart Union High School District is located in the City of Santa Clarita and serves grades 7 through 12 with an annual budget of nearly \$180 million. Nearly 23,000 students are enrolled in the district's six comprehensive high schools, a continuation school, middle college high school, independent study school, a home school support program, six junior high schools, an adult school and a Regional Occupational Program.

Academy of the Canyons (AOC) opened its doors in August 2000. AOC is open to high school students in grades 9-12 who are looking for a unique high school experience that affords them the opportunity to complete high school requirements as well as take college courses at COC. According to a recent AOC evaluation, success and retention rates for our students are historically higher than all other COC students. In addition, 90 percent of our graduates complete one year or more of college by the time they graduate high school, reducing the cost and time to achieve a bachelor's degree.

An Innovation Award will allow our partnership to help students succeed in their academic career. More importantly, it will help our low-income, first-generation students eliminate barriers to their success. While tuition is waived for our students, books and fees are not. These can be a huge barrier to success and completion. Textbook awards will greatly benefit our students. I am excited about this potential.

Thank you for your consideration of this proposal. I hope you are able to recognize the impact and benefits it has for our students.

Sincerely,

Vicki Engbrecht
Superintendent