The Program for Academic and Career Excellence (PACE) is designed to increase engagement, retention, and graduation among Hispanic students at California State University, Stanislaus. The initiative, which is funded through a US Department of Education grant awarded in 2010, provides 600 traditionally underserved or Latino/a students with a variety of services including:

- PACE leverages students’ existing cultural capital by promoting peer group interaction among program participants. Parents and students are educated that the learning community is not limited to time spent inside the classroom.

- The year-long freshman learning community consists of two linked general education courses. A focus on composition and college success skills helps students develop connections that last beyond the freshman year.

- Intensive advising services form another layer of career mentorship. The advising relationship provides accountability to ensure student follow through occurs.

- Finally, all students can access a sense of familia at the PACE Center; an ideal space for group projects or study sessions, as well as socializing between appointments, while maintaining exposure to cross-campus resources.

Latino/a students composed more than 50% of the total population of California State University, Stanislaus for the first time in fall 2015. Four goals guide the Program for Academic and Career Excellence:

- Increase persistence and graduation rates of Hispanic and underserved students

- Encourage collaboration between faculty and staff to create student engagement

- Enable underserved students to earn college degrees and return to the community as mentors and leaders

- Embrace a variety of social and cultural learning styles to develop an environment that focuses on underserved student learning.

Our mission is to ensure that all students regardless of individual differences, acquire the self-knowledge, educational, occupational, and career development competencies needed to make self-directed, realistic, and responsible decisions. We are committed to individual uniqueness, an understanding of multicultural diversity, the development of human potential, and a passion for life-long learning.

In fall of 2014, CSU Stanislaus conducted a quantitative examination of PACE participation’s effect on persistence, units earned, and cumulative GPA among students from the institution’s 2011 freshman cohort. The results of the examination indicated that, 92% (81/88) of the Hispanic students in the PACE cohort persisted to the second year, compared to 78% (394/502) of the Hispanic students in the non-PACE cohort. With regard to persistence to the fourth year, 79% (96/122) of the students in the PACE cohort persisted to a fourth year compared to 61% (694/1129) of the students from the non-PACE cohort (in both instances, these differences were statistically significant at the .05 critical value).

Overall, the evaluation efforts to date suggest the program has been highly effective in improving outcomes for Hispanic students at the institution.