**Warriors on the Way – A New Design Phase**

**Transfer Students in Feeder Institutions Belonging to a Single Stan State Ecosystem**

CSU Stanislaus is committed to exploring options in raising 4-year degree attainment rates in its service area. The University has always been focused on raising educational outcomes in California’s Central Valley. One initiative in the past has included establishing some transfer outreach components of the Warriors on the Way (WOW) program with its three key community college feeders - San Joaquin Delta College (SJDC), Modesto Junior College (MJC), and Merced College. While this program allowed the University to send recruiters and evaluators to the community colleges on a bi-weekly or monthly schedule, the University lacked resources for the needed curricular and co-curricular programming to make the program reach its full potential. Missing were the joint mentoring and outreach components that blur the divisions between the community colleges and Stan State allowing both institutions to merge their resources. If this were to happen, all students who see themselves as future Warriors could be inspired and energized to meet transfer requirements, stay the course and successfully transfer.

In recent years the University has secured grant funding through Title III grants for Hispanic serving institutions, National Institute for Health (NIH), and the McNair Post-Baccalaureate Achievement Program to support STEM students in science, technology engineering, math and computer science. Successfully implementing these programs has allowed the University to develop distinctive pedagogies both in and outside the classroom to enhance transfer rates. At Stan State these experiences have highlighted the value of channeling and merging the University and community college’s energy into a single flow of services. Future Warriors should not experience discrete boundaries between institutions but be part of an ecosystem in which their educational career is meaningfully tied to a 4-year degree, that is around the corner and realistically within their reach. It is for this reason that the campus is ready and committed to expanding the WOW program beyond a small selection of students in STEM fields to all transfer students and is interested in applying for a College Futures planning grant.

Stan State wants to jointly reimagines its standalone WOW program with its feeder colleges because relationships matter and our interdependencies matter. Our people, programs, deadlines, policies, and curriculum all touch each other. We know we touch each other’s processes and interact with each other’s infrastructure. These interdependencies shape an invisible ecosystem that students navigate to cross campus boundaries. Stan State proposes to assemble the campus leadership from MJC, SJDC, and Merced College to approach transfer programming with a new perspective in which we overcome our identities as large monolithic entities and go on to build a new WOW program that involves staffing, curricular and co-curricular changes on each campus. This will allow more future Warriors qualifying as ADT transfers to enroll in 4-year degree.

Each participating institution is likely to bring unique student and institutional needs to the table that will need to be incorporated in the new WOW program. However, there are certain common components along which early planning can be organized. These are identified below:

1. An analysis of transfer trends at Stan State shows that nearly three quarters of students transferring to campus from MJC, SJDC, and Merced College do so in these majors: Business, Psychology, and Liberal Studies. A student centric approach to facilitating transfer might involve creating a special focus on academic and student services in these three disciplinary areas first.
2. Early identification of MJC, SJDC, and Merced College students indicating interest in a 4-year degree at Stan State by signing an Intent to Enroll and a FERPA release form allowing the University and the community college to share academic progress and tracking information.
3. Permanent and designated space on each community college housing Stan State staff. These staff members will hold regularly scheduled office hours during accommodating peak student traffic to build strong relationships with the community college students, faculty and staff.
4. Jointly sponsored programs for declared WOW students in these areas:
   1. Advising and mentoring by staff of both institutions.
   2. Co-curricular activities, participation in orientation programs at Stan State, tours and other sessions that familiarize future Warriors with Stan State programs and resources.
   3. Financial aid counseling.
   4. Regularly scheduled joint faculty development opportunities for Stan State and the three community college partners in curricular alignment in the three most sought after degree programs by transfer students - Business, Psychology, and Liberal Studies.
   5. Sponsoring campus programs and public events, speakers, symposia, etc. for WOW students on each campus. This would be done in a manner that mimics dual admissions and allows students to participate in the wealth of intellectually and socially stimulating programs of each institution.
   6. Developing co-sponsored banners, flyers, signage, brochures, press releases and communication plans that highlight partnerships and the blurring of boundaries. The goal would be to facilitate the development of WOW student identity as one that reflects the experiences and traditions of both the community college and Stan State.
   7. Exploring partnerships to assist in the successful transfer of students who have been formerly incarcerated (i.e., Project Rebound)

This work would allow Stan State and its three main feeder community colleges to set aside time for sessions in which their leadership rebuilds an integrated approach to facilitating transfer. Each participating campus will have a unique and complex role to play.

Components of a design phase will include the following:

* Convening the leadership of Stan State and its feeder institutions over a 3 to 6 month period.
* Developing a common understanding of student needs and the needs of each institution.
* Revising or aligning policies, processes and programs.
* Involving key faculty, staff and student stakeholders in the design of a new WOW program.
* Sponsoring pilot testing days on each campus to obtain early feedback on efficiency and effectiveness of proposed changes.
* Incorporating the feedback from pilot testing in the final design.
* Having the design phase conclude with an action oriented implementation and assessment plan.

This work will allow Stan State to push new boundaries in increasing the rate of ADT transfer students receiving 4-year degrees. It will also show deep consideration for the University’s desire to build a vibrant ecosystem that has the bandwidth and capacity for all its partners to integrate their efforts in pursuing common goals.