

STUDENT SERVICES PROGRAM REVIEW 2009-2010

DEPARTMENT OR PROGRAM: Puente Project

NAME AND TITLE OF PREPARER(S):

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In providing responses in the following areas, **please provide quantitative and qualitative data to support your responses.** For the purposes of the Program Review, both departments and programs will be referred to as “program.”

- I. **Description and mission of the program.** Provide a brief description of the program including any services provided and the program’s mission.

The Puente Project, a retention and transfer program sponsored by the University of California Office of the President and California Community College Chancellors Office serves all students interested in transferring to a 4-year university. The program provides the students three components consisting of: English and Human Development-Counseling courses, Counseling and Mentoring for their first year and Counselor follow-up until the student transfers. For over 25 years the Puente Project has successfully helped thousands of students to achieve the college success they deserve. De Anza College is completing its 8th year of the program and has resulted in many successes. The mission of the program is to increase the number of educationally disadvantaged students who enroll in four-year colleges and universities, earn college degrees and return to the community as mentors and leaders of future generations.

The De Anza program has served and continues to serve a large number of immigrant students, first generation college students, native English learners, and economically disadvantaged students, all enroll in the basic skills English course (EWRT 211/212) and when successful, proceed to the transfer level course, EWRT 1A, Composition and Reading. Later, they will enroll in a Critical Thinking course, and others as needed for transfer. Through program data, anecdotal data and observable student experiences, the two Puente Project Faculty Instructors have identified with its academic offerings, student support services and mentoring, *student success* is enhanced by the learning community that is created with the different student population mentioned above. However, data shows that students who *are not successful* in the basic skills English course, need enhanced basic skills support which *successful students* more readily obtain from their Puente peers in the learning community, not just the Puente Faculty and program support services.

The program began in the fall of 2001 and currently serves approximately 130 students. To fulfill the mission of the program, culturally and linguistically relevant services and instruction are integrated into all three components of the program. Each year we recruit approximately 30 students for the new fall cohort. In addition, 30 community mentors are recruited, trained, and matched with an incoming student. The following is a partial listing of the services provided throughout the year for students:

- Fall Quarter Linked Courses: English Writing 211/212 (Preparatory Reading and Writing Skills) and Human Development 20 (Life Skills for Higher Education) 4 unit, UC/CSU transferable course. This past quarter we added Read 211/212 as a result of student placement.
- Winter Quarter Linked Courses: EWRT 1A (Composition and Reading), 5 units and Counseling 80Y (Special Topics in Counseling), 2 units. Counseling course addresses topics such as scholarships, financial aid, cultural and familial strengths and obstacles, career exploration and mentoring.
- Spring Quarter Counseling Course: Counseling 80X, 1 unit.
- Professional Community Mentors: Students and mentors are required to complete 12-16 hours of mentoring and are met by attending 4 mentor/student activities throughout the year.
- Participation in the Annual UC Puente Regional Transfer Motivational Conference
- Academic planning involving transfer goals
- Career Planning and Counseling
- Personal counseling
- University Visits
- *Hermanos* and *Hermanas*– Peer mentoring
- Parent Informational Night
- Writing Tutor for Puente English courses
- Community Service opportunities, on campus and in community
- Workshops on Scholarship Research, Essay Writing, FAFSA, and Resume Writing
- Summer Internships and Programs
- Computer Lab (located in SSRS)
- Campus and Community Referrals (Math Performance & Success, CCIE, Diversity Leadership Training, ELLA Leadership Program)

II. Retention and growth.

- A. How has the program responded to the institutional goal of increased access, growth and retention?

The Puente Project is open to all interested students who plan to transfer to a 4-year university and eligible for EWRT 211/212 in the fall. This past year we worked collaboratively with the Outreach office and with several faculty on campus to promote the program on and off campus and had tremendous success. By end of spring, we received over 120 interest cards with over 80 students eligible for Puente. However, we could only accommodate 30 students and began a waiting list. In an effort to retain these students, they were referred to other support and retention programs within Student Success and Retention Services such as Summer Bridge, First Year Experience and Sankofa Scholars. This proved to be very successful in enrolling new students to the college. The excellent statewide reputation of the Puente Project and De Anza College make this program a highly sought out program for many students. Unfortunately, we are not able to accommodate all interested students without compromising the integrity and service level of its participants. It does speak to the great need to expand to another cohort and/or replicate similar best practices in other programs.

In the area of retention, Puente has averaged a 90% retention rate since its inception. For the academic years, 2007-2008 and 2008-2009, the program experienced staff changes which may contribute to some of the changes of data from previous years.

For Fall 2007 the Puente EWRT 100 cohort had an 87.5% success rate. For Winter 2008, the Puente EWRT 1A cohort experienced a 94.7% success rate. In comparison, the overall success rate for English/Writing Courses is 79%. Puente students succeed at a higher rate than the college average.

(Source: DAC Puente Project Data Report to Puente Statewide Office, February 2008 and DAC Program Review English/Writing Data for AY 2007)

For Fall 2008 the Puente EWRT 211 cohort had a 100% success rate and currently for winter 2009 there are 31 students enrolled in the Puente EWRT 1A anticipating a high success rate.

(Source: DAC Puente Project Data report to Puente Statewide Office, February 2009)

- B. How has the program responded to the institutional goal of increased access, growth and retention specifically for the identified targeted populations of African Ancestry, Latino/a, and Filipino/a students?

In an effort to increase access, growth and retention for the aforementioned target groups, Puente has actively participated in various community and campus events. Students are the best recruiters and retention specialists because they can speak to the realities of students and are a living testament of being successful in college. Last year Puente students participated in several high school presentations addressing ethnically diverse audiences in East San Jose, Santa Clara and in Sunnyvale. On campus, students participated in the African Ancestry Student Conference, Latino Youth Conference and Voices United Conference highlighting and recruiting for the program. In addition, many assisted with the New Student/Parent Nights in the spring and were called upon to address parents who were monolingual. The participation in these events helped to increase the interest of the program and enrollment to other retention programs as indicated in the previous section of this review.

III. **Student equity.** In what ways has the program worked towards decreasing the student equity gap? Has the program made progress towards or achieved these equity goals? What challenges exist in the program in reaching such goals?

The Puente model creates an environment in which students are encouraged to value academic achievement and support for each other's academic goals. We facilitate parent involvement; providing cultural and linguistic relevant information necessary to support their children in their goals for higher education. Some of the key components of the model include instilling a commitment to understand and respect student's cultural differences and adopting a process-driven, portfolio-based approach to writing instruction. The model includes collaboration between instructors, counselors, mentors, families and communities. Puente also has a commitment to staff development and offers instructor and counselor trainings twice a year. These trainings are fully funded by the Puente State Office.

Since its inception over 25 years ago it, the Puente Project has served as a model for other state-wide programs such as Umoja (Sankofa Scholars @ De Anza) providing culturally relevant

services on the African Ancestry experience. Providing cultural relevant services, access and parent involvement are just three ways that our model addresses the equity plans goals.

The statewide Puente model strongly emphasizes the use of best practices and is incorporated into the three components of the program. The services and instruction provided have consistently yield an average of 10% higher success rate than non-Puente English students.

In addition, Puente's success is not limited to the student's first year as it greatly impacts the continuous enrollment of its participants. From Fall 2007 to Fall 2008 the persistence rate for the Puente Fall 2007 cohort is 83.3%. in comparison to other Latino students persistence rate of 73% and 82% for others.

(Source: DA Institutional Research)

While Puente is open to everyone, the content of the curriculum focuses on Latino culture and issues pertinent to the Latino community. As a result, the culturally relevant content attracts an overwhelming number of Latino/as students to the program. As the campus expands curriculum to include other models of culturally relevant content, this will help to increase the number of our targeted populations access, growth and retention (i.e. Sankofa Scholars, First Year Experience, and the new AAPI program).

IV. Strategic Planning initiatives (Community Collaborations, Cultural Competency, Outreach, and Individualized Attention for Retention). Other than what was mentioned in III and IV above, what other Strategic Planning Initiatives has the program addressed and in what ways?

An integral part of the Puente Project model involves community service that is consistently programmed and implemented into its courses and services. This is one of the best practices that distinguish the program from other retention programs in the state. For the past two years, the Puente students have partnered with Mid-Peninsula Housing After-School Program in East Palo Alto and organized a Christmas Toy Drive for 30 families. The targeted families are participants of the after school program located in the residential low income housing. The event gave students hands on experience working with the community and valuable insight to the real issues facing our communities as presented in class. In addition, the Puente students interactions with the after school program participants provided them an opportunity to serve as role models promoting higher education.

Puente was fortunate to receive a Retention Innovation Grant last year for its *Voces del Valle* Project. In collaboration with the California History Center, students learned to collect oral histories, conduct interviews and research and write oral histories of untold stories of Latino/as who have contributed to the economic, social, and cultural life of Silicon Valley. This collection of oral histories was edited and designed by the students. The project helped students understand the importance of their own unique history, gave them a sense of pride in their community, and enabled them to place themselves in the life of Silicon Valley and the De Anza community.

In an effort to share best practices and the importance of cultural competency both Puente instructors presented a workshop on "Creating Familias in the Classroom" for interested faculty at De Anza's Academic Senate Conference in January 2008. The workshop involved

experiential exercises that facilitated increasing the knowledge base of its participants and culturally relevant techniques to replicate in the classroom for instructors. The evaluations received were overwhelming positive and we received several follow-up calls from colleagues for consultation. In addition, both Puente instructors participated in a panel presentation for the 2007 District Opening Day on the Puente model and its culturally relevant framework and success.

V. **Budget limitations.** (Please be specific in your responses.)

- A. Identify any limitations placed on the program based on limited funding. What increases in resources are critical to the program and what are the consequences if the program does not receive these resources?

Since the inception of the Puente Project at De Anza College, its operating budget has remained relatively small. While program demands and student needs have increased proportionately, the budget has not. The program relies on the B budget for its primary funding source. While it is small, the funding is expected to yield large results. The B budget is used to coordinate activities such as workshops, university and industry tours, participation in the Puente Annual Motivational Conference, family informational sessions, mentor recruitment, training, and communication, peer assistance and tutoring, and office supplies for daily operations. The limited funding has resulted in the program not being able to provide as many university/industry tours as we would like to or more parent/family and mentoring events. To bring in additional funds to meet increasing student needs, Puente has applied for additional funding to DASB and has been fortunate to receive some funding for the past three years. However, this upcoming academic year 2009-2010, DASB has notified Puente that it will decrease by 50% thus forcing Puente to eliminate some of the peer assistance and tutoring for the program participants.

- B. Describe the consequence to students and the college in general if the program were eliminated. Please be specific.

Beginning last year, society at large has seen gas prices and cost of living rise in this valley and the economically disadvantaged students have been severely impacted. With the economic downturn, the financial and psychological stressors on students have risen and the need for support to continue their education becomes imperative. Programs such as Puente, Student Success and Retentions Services, Sankofa and First Year Experience become havens for many of our students as they manage to cope and stay in school. A reduction in the Puente budget would have a detrimental effect on service, retention of students and would impact the equity goals the college has worked so diligently to achieve. It becomes extremely difficult to provide the full range of services when we do not have the funding to continue to utilize best practices, which have made this program so successful.

- VI. **Assessment of program.** What evaluation and/or assessment practices are in place to support the program's accomplishments and findings? (provide quantitative and/or qualitative data).

As a program we collect data for various reports to the Statewide Puente Office. Annually, we report data on the new cohort and their progress in the Puente English and Counseling courses (see data results in Retention and Growth section of this report). In addition,

transferring Puente students submit a form to the Statewide Puente office reporting enrollment at their transfer institution and in return receive a small stipend as an incentive. In a recent statewide study, the Puente Office reported from the academic years 2001-2006 transfer rates to 4-year colleges and universities among Puente participants at 52.7% compared to 30.6% for educationally disadvantaged students and 40.7% among all California Community Colleges students. Transfer rate data will be available by colleges, unfortunately the data was not available in time for this report but once the data is received it will be shared with the college.

As a campus, data is compiled on Puente students through the SIS system and SSRS data bases to monitor their success and persistence rates (see data results in Student Equity section of this report). Lastly, as program co-coordinators, data is collected on participants receiving Associate of Arts degree and transferring institutions. This past academic year (2007-2008) 18 students received degrees and transferred to a 4 year institution such as San Jose State University, San Francisco State, San Diego State, UCLA, College of the Arts, and Santa Clara University.

Another measure of the success of the program is its sense of community. Puente students are involved with various facets of the De Anza College life thus facilitating their continue enrollment at the college. The Student Success and Retention Services area is a place where students come to feel more at home. They form study groups, dialogue about issues discussed in their classes and assist each other with assignments. The SSRS computer lab is a central service to our students. If students are experiencing difficulty in a writing assignment they seek assistance from the Puente writing tutor who meets students at the lab. The lab is ideally situated in front of the counselor's office so if students have concerns they usually drop in to see her. The limited physical space in the SSRS and Transfer Center also serves as a "safe place" for students to confide to each other personal issues they may be experiencing and to seek help from counselors. We have been fortunate to have peer assistants working closely with SSRS counselors and serve as referral agents to the counselors. Lastly, Puente students are eager to share their experiences with others and to help others connect with resources on campus. This past year, we implemented a peer mentoring component called *Hermanas* and *Hermanos*. We recruited 12 veteran Puente students who volunteered to assist with the new Puente cohort. They were assigned a "familia" consisting of 6 new students and served as a big brother or sister to them. The *Hermanas* and *Hermanos* participated in the new student orientation, parent informational session and the Counseling orientation in the summer. In the fall and winter, they organized workshops and activities around time management and priority setting, scholarship tips, and a community event in March to *Teatro Vision*. In the spring, they plan on hosting a transfer student panel and survival techniques for classes outside of Puente. This added support offered to the 2008 cohort, we believe helped to achieve the 100% retention this past fall in the English course.

- VII. **Additional comments.** What additional information is important to consider when reviewing the budget of your program for possible reductions? You may include any or all of the following, or other information.

Puente is an invaluable retention and transfer program and has served as a catalyst to attract more students to the campus, especially Latino/as. De Anza College serves approximately 13% Latino/a students. The program has gained a reputation at De Anza attracting more students every year. While this year we were not able to accommodate all interested and eligible students, we redirected several students to other services on campus such as the Student Success

and Retention Services, First Year Experience, Sankofa Scholars, EOP&S, and MPS. If the demand for services continues there will be a greater need for the aforementioned programs to accommodate student needs.

- **Relationships with other programs.** Describe any partnerships or collaborations that the program is actively engaged in, which reduce costs and/or improve service delivery.

As a program we have a strong working relationship with several programs on campus including the Transfer Center, Writing and Reading Center, Math Performance for Success (MPS), EOP&S, EDC, Financial Aid, California History Center, Outreach and the Institute for Community and Civic Engagement). Puente students and instructors continue to support several campus activities on campus such as Latino/a Heritage events, ADELA Scholarship Luncheon, Women History's Month, Dia de los Muertos Activities, APASA Annual Luncheon and African Ancestry events. Our program has been fortunate to develop working relationships with community groups such as Silicon Valley Hispanic Foundation, Google Hispanic Network, Society of Professional Engineers, and Teatro Vision in the Mexican Heritage Plaza. As a result of the working relationships, several scholarship opportunities and internship have become available for the students. Several professionals from these respective organizations have been impressed with our results and have volunteered to serve as mentors for the program. These relationships off and on campus help to retain students and provide necessary services otherwise would not be available because of our limited staffing and budget.

- **State and Federal mandates.** What State or Federal mandates impact the work you do?

Currently, there are no Federal mandates that impact the program. As an institution with a Puente Project we are required to adhere to the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) guidelines requiring physical space, funding, staffing and institutional support. The UC Puente Statewide Office is funded through the state and with the situation of the state budget could potentially impact mentoring support and Puente staff training.

- **Trends.** Describe any positive and/or negative trends in the program.

Some of the challenges facing students are book costs, transportation; immigration concerns especially the AB 540 students. While AB 540 students may struggle to pay and enroll in classes, they often experience hardship with the escalating costs of textbooks and commuting to the campus. They are not eligible for federal and state aid because of their immigration status and need to rely on family. While there are some private scholarships available, students have to wait at least a year before they can apply because many of the requirements request a college GPA and completed college courses. As retention studies have indicated, the first year is critical to their success and persistence and without economic support it becomes difficult for them to continue their studies.

- **Comparable programs at other institutions.** Provide any information that you have that would allow for a comparison of the program to similar programs at other institutions in the State.

As stated earlier, the Puente Project has been in existence for over 25 years and has become a model for several retention programs in the state and nationwide. Currently, there are over 50 community colleges in the state with Puente Projects and a few campuses with two programs (Santa Rosa, Chabot College, and College of the Sequoias). The program has won several awards for its success in providing innovative counseling and teaching methodologies for educationally disadvantaged students and integrating local communities into an academic program. Within the Puente community in the state, De Anza College has gained a reputation for strong institutional support from its administrators and is held in high regard.

VIII. **Program strengths/areas for improvement.**

- A. Provide a summary of the program's main strengths.

As stated in other areas of the report, the success of the program are many. Briefly, the success of the program lies in the rigorous two-course English class sequence from a Puente-trained instructor; working closely with a Puente-trained counselor to prepare an academic plan and staying focused on their goals; and meeting regularly with a Puente-trained mentor from the professional community all provide a foundation for the retention and transfer success. In addition, the leadership and vibrant community environment created and sustained by the Puente veterans adds to the retention of their peers. The community setting and familial relationships help to facilitate the success of students and often attracts other students to the program across campus.

- B. Provide a summary of the program's main areas for improvement.

Areas of improvement include continuing to develop the professional mentoring component and to foster relationships among companies who maybe in a position to provide support for the program participants especially during these difficult economic times. While the program provides intensive instruction and counseling services the first year in college, the second and third year student needs could be addressed with more collaboration among other services and programs such as the MPS, Cooperative Education, Tutorial Services, Transfer Center and SSRS.

IX. **Suggestions for campus-wide change.**

- A. What organizational change would you recommend to increase program effectiveness, include consolidations, collaborations, or mergers that you think the college should investigate?

None. At this time, the program has been able to operate a very effective program on a small B Budget due to collaboration with other programs, and the volunteerism of the Puente students. Already, the primary recruitment efforts are coordinated with the Outreach office. To maximize resources, we will continue to collaborate with the Transfer Center and SSRS for university tours, college representative visitations, peer assistance, and workshops.

B. Are there cost savings or recommended reductions to any areas of the college that you think should be investigated?

None.