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TheRPGroup

Vision-Aligned Reporting (VAR) Academy: Simplified Metrics for System Change 2025-27 Cohort

VAR Academy Application Worksheet

Application Instructions

This worksheet is provided to help you develop your college's VAR Academy application before submitting it. While the application can be completed over multiple sessions (your progress will be saved provided you use the same computer and browser to complete it), we encourage you to download the worksheet to assist you with the preparation of your team's application. Please contact the VAR Academy leads with any questions about the application or the VAR Academy: Laura Lara-Brady, Ph.D. (llarabr@wested.org) and Gio Sosa, Ph.D. (gsosa@craftonhills.edu).

The due date to submit your application is April 1, 2025.

Timeline of Activities

- **Applications Due:** April 1, 2025
- **Notification of Selected Colleges:** April 23, 2025
- **Colleges Confirm Participation:** May 2, 2025
- **In-Person VAR Academy Convening #1:** June 25-26, 2025, Irvine Hilton, Irvine, CA
- **In-Person VAR Academy Convening #2:** January 2026 (1 day, date & location TBD)
- **In-Person VAR Academy Convening #3:** June 2026 (2 days, dates & location TBD)
- **In-Person VAR Academy Convening #4:** January 2027 (1 day, date & location TBD)

Academy Costs

Thanks to generous support from the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office, the VAR Academy is free for college teams to attend. Colleges will be responsible for team travel costs to/from the in-person convenings.

Application Questions

1. College Information

College Name: [De Anza College](#)

District Name: [Foothill-De Anza Community College District](#)

District Type (select one):

- Single-College
- **Multi-College**

Annual College Size*:

- Small (fewer than 10,000 FTES)
- **Medium (10,000-20,000 FTES)**
- Large (more than 20,000 FTES)

Team Lead Name: [Mallory Newell](#)

Team Lead Contact Email: lnewellmallory@deanza.edu

**based upon 2023-2024 P2 (Spring 2024) 320 report or [CCCCO Data Mart](#)*

2. Please rank the following goals in order of most to least importance for your college's participation in the VAR Academy: (rank order selection in application)

- **Leveraging and Integrating Student Success Initiatives**
Focus on integrating and amplifying a wide range of student success initiatives (SEA, DSPS, etc.) currently underway through VAR efforts, ensuring these efforts are centered on the experiences of marginalized student groups in order to achieve measurable changes in student outcomes across the system. This includes leveraging existing college and systemwide systems, processes and resources to increase effectiveness, developing an action plan for institutionalizing student-centered work, and ensuring that initiatives are aligned with statewide goals.
 - Rank: **Second**
- **Increasing the Capacity of College Leaders**
Focus on enhancing the ability of college leaders to directly impact the closing of equity gaps by bridging inquiry and action through professional development. This will help build readiness among your college team to engage in data-informed, equity-centered work and ensure leaders are equipped to implement sustainable system changes.
 - Rank: **Third**

- **Promoting a Community of Practice and Data-Informed Change**

Focus on creating a community of practice of leaders across and within colleges to apply Academy learnings in their day-to-day work and promote a problem-solving approach. This includes exploring and analyzing current VAR implementation efforts, mapping out how VAR and publicly available data can be utilized to guide improvements, and identifying leading and lagging indicators that aim to improve student outcomes for marginalized populations.

- Rank: **First**

3. Based on your response to question 2, what led you to rank the goals in that order?

How do you see the goals impacting your institutional practices? *(limit response to 300 words or less)*

“Promoting a Community of Practice and Data-Informed Change” is our top priority as we do not have formal communities of practice (CoP) and see this as an opportunity to bring this evidence-based practice to our campus. This will be a powerful way to narrow equity gaps through the creation of formal communities of practice with regular meetings to examine data, set lagging and leading indicators (goals), and to monitor and update goals based on shared reflection and understanding of the data. We see CoP as an opportunity to bring people together at all levels to share their experience, review best practices, and develop shared activities to implement and monitor on a regular cycle. Challenges may include: finding funding to pay part-time faculty members for their participation; finding time to meet regularly; and recruiting participants outside those that tend to always volunteer for these opportunities.

“Leveraging and Integrating Student Success Initiatives” is our second focus. We are in the process of updating our college Educational Master Plan (EMP) and Strategic Plan and see this as an opportunity to leverage our existing systems, processes and resources by integrating them into our institutional planning and ensuring that all initiatives are aligned with statewide goals and Vision 2030. We also plan to develop action plans to ensure full implementation of each plan.

Lastly, “Increasing the Capacity of College Leaders” is our third choice, as we believe we have created a climate where data analysis and inquiry are part of our fabric. In collaboration with the Office of Research and Office of Professional Development, we are confident that our college leaders will have the ability to directly address the closing of equity gaps, fully implement communities of practice and integrate initiatives with the tools learned in the VAR Academy.

4. College Readiness & Self-Assessment *(limit response to 300 words or less)*

- How would you describe your college's level of readiness for VAR implementation?

Consider the following in your response (limit response to 300 words or less):

- How would you assess your college's technical (*data reporting, financial reporting, staffing, resources, etc.*) capacity to implement VAR, including student-level and financial reporting?
- What institutional structure (working group, staffing, resources, etc.) is in place to support the implementation of VAR?

The timing of the Academy aligns well with our institutional planning cycle, as we will be updating our Educational Master Plan over the next two years, overlapping with the Academy timeline. VAR implementation is led by our Office of Institutional Research, Planning and Accreditation. The

Academy team will include deans who oversee each of the areas currently reporting through VAR. The current VAR working group has been meeting regularly and includes program coordinators who regularly discuss data collection, data matching and interpretation of VAR outcomes. The working group is eager to begin entering data into the VAR platform. Our participation in the Academy will enable this group, as well as campuswide teams, to use the data to improve outcomes with the end goal of narrowing equity gaps, which is also aligned with the college's current master plan goals. The college president, vice president of instruction and vice president of student services are part of the working group and support full implementation of VAR and participation in the VAR Academy.

As De Anza is one college in a multi-college district, many student reporting and financial reporting elements are housed at the district level. Institutional research representatives from both campuses meet regularly with district information technology staff to ensure data is being reported by student service areas (from SARS and Clockwork) and carted over to the student information system (Banner) to be matched to student demographics. These conversations began in spring 2024 and continue to take place. We have been meeting regularly with district finance representatives to ensure each reporting area has access to their financial data in a way that aligns with VAR reporting categories.

5. Addressing Equity & Institutional Change *(limit response to 300 words or less)*

- How will your college use its participation in VAR as a strategy to facilitate or leverage our efforts to address equity gaps for our most minoritized/marginalized students?
Please consider the following in your response:
 - How does participation in the VAR Academy align with your college's existing equity efforts, such as the development of the 2025-2028 Student Equity and Achievement Plan?
 - What institutional processes are in place to ensure that marginalized student groups remain the focus of your equity efforts?
 - What are the key activities and steps your college will take to implement actions to reduce equity gaps identified through the VAR process?

We will use our participation to increase engagement with disaggregated data to inform change through the development of Communities of Practice (CoP). The CoP will explore disaggregated data, use program review to inform the development of strategic plan goals, and meet regularly to monitor progress. The college has engaged with faculty members and classified staff through data coaching cohorts, but is only able to engage with a fraction of employees through these initiatives. CoP will enable us to expand the reach of data coaching by taking the data to centralized groups with dedicated time to meet, review and reflect.

The college has set 10 institutional goals, mapped to Vision 2030 goals, including access to course success, transfer and workforce attainment. Each goal calls for narrowing equity gaps to no more than 5 percentage points for Black, Latinx, Filipinx, foster youth, LGBTQ+, Pacific Islander and Native American students, compared to all other students. The college will make these goals a focus of this work.

We will work to integrate improvements in data reporting while braiding the equity plan, program review, accreditation, strategic plan and Educational Master Plan. Steps to accomplish this include; working with our VAR coach to develop a 1.5 year plan; creating CoP across campus; training the CoP on evidence-based strategies; creating a template for goal setting; training CoP members on using the template and accessing data; using the templates to inform master plan goals; developing specific plans within each CoP area; integrating the plans into the Strategic Plan; and developing action plans. All of these will help us meet our EMP goals. This work will be led by the College Planning Committee, co-chaired by the director of Institutional Research, Planning and Accreditation and the college president, in collaboration with the VAR steering committee and Office of Professional Development.

6. Implementation & Support Needs *(limit response to 300 words or less)*

- What barriers could impact your college's ability to move beyond compliance-based efforts toward systemic change, and how do you plan to address the barriers?
- What additional resources or structures are needed?

Priority-setting: To move beyond compliance-based efforts toward systematic change, we need to prioritize initiatives. Rather than stretching resources across all possible initiatives, we need to focus on a few key objectives, which will help us prioritize both human resources and fiscal resources. Senior leaders will need to prioritize initiatives and lead the college in the allocation of resources toward these priorities. Through the prioritization of initiatives, we can focus on integrating and amplifying key initiatives that will lead to sustainable system change.

Size: Our institution employs over 1,000 individuals – full- and part-time faculty, classified professionals and administrators – on an annual basis across 89 programs that span instructional, student service and college operations. The ability to engage with all areas is challenging. The research and planning office is staffed by two individuals and is often tasked with carrying out planning initiatives including VAR, program review, state equity plan development and strategic planning. We will need to think creatively to leverage the already established Strategic Planning Action Plan teams and the Office of Professional Development to help lead this effort along with the VAR work group.

Time: With any new initiative, the responsibilities are above and beyond any individual's daily workload. We recognize that people have full schedules serving students and adding an initiative requires them to reprioritize their time. We hope through the development of the CoP we can dedicate time for the communities to meet with a set agenda to work through. With time set aside on a regular basis and scheduled in advance, we hope to overcome issues related to time constraints in order to dedicate ourselves to this work.

7. Data Utilization & Success Metrics *(limit response to 300 words or less)*

- How will your college integrate VAR data and insights with other institutional planning activities such as program review, strategic planning, student equity plans, service area outcomes, professional development, etc.?

The college plans to use the VAR Academy as an opportunity to improve integration of institutional planning, which currently takes place in silos, into the updated Educational Master Plan and Strategic Plan. The college has a well-established program review process, in which 89 areas across the campus review disaggregated data, set goals and annually report updates on their goals. The college's Resource Allocation and Program Planning committee provides feedback annually on each area's comprehensive program review and annual program review updates. While this process is cyclical, it is siloed in that the program reviews are not used for strategic planning. The new college president has plans to leverage program reviews to inform the Educational and Facilities Master Plans, and we see the Academy as an opportunity to provide guidance on this effort.

Further, the college recognizes that it does not have a process to review new programs or

discontinue those that may be under-resourced, outdated or no longer necessary due to the changing student population. We hope that the insights gathered from the VAR academy will enable us to establish a committee that can help integrate institutional planning including program review, equity plans, accreditation, learning outcomes, workforce demand and strategic plans to regularly evaluate institutional effectiveness and best allocate and distribute limited resources and amplify key initiatives. By focusing on creating a Community of Practice of leaders across the college, we hope that we can better integrate VAR data and insights across all institutional planning activities. We see the work of the Communities of Practice that result from our participation in the Academy to be a way in which the college can advance this work from within each college area, as part of a bottom-up strategy to gain buy-in and broaden participation in these efforts, leading to lasting and sustainable system change.

8. Make Your Case *(limit response to 300 words or less)*

- What makes your college a strong candidate for this Academy?

De Anza College is a strong candidate for the Academy for multiple reasons. First, the college has a long-standing commitment to disaggregating data and using it to narrow equity gaps. The college's recent ACCJC reaffirmation of accreditation resulted in a commendation for the college's commitment to this use of disaggregated data. The college's Educational Master Plan includes goals to narrow equity gaps to no more than 5 percentage points between disproportionately impacted student population groups and all other students. Faculty members are acquainted with seeing and being asked to report on disaggregated data. For example, every faculty member receives a quarterly success rate report for each section taught, with results disaggregated by 18 categories. Disaggregated data is also integrated into the program review and resource allocation process. Faculty and staff members in each area are familiar with reviewing, reporting and discussing disaggregated data. However, even with a commitment to narrowing equity gaps and ease of access to disaggregated data, the college is not progressing in narrowing equity gaps at the rate desired.

The college views the Academy as an opportunity to receive one-on-one training on evidence-based practices to integrate plans and use data to inform change. We believe the Academy will provide an invaluable opportunity for all areas of the campus to engage with data, set goals and monitor improvements. The college now has a new president who is eager to adopt an integrated planning process with the review and update of the Educational Master Plan and Strategic Plans, using data to improve outcomes in every area across campus. We view the Academy as an important tool to guide us through this work.

9. College Team Composition & Leadership

Each college must have a diverse team of five to six individuals, which must include the VAR Lead and a data/research representative. If your VAR Lead is a researcher, that one person can fulfill this requirement. The remaining team members can include an executive administrator, faculty members, and classified professionals and/or managers representing student services and academic programs.

Please provide contact information for the team lead below and all additional team members. We recognize that team members may change between now and the first convening; nevertheless, please tentatively identify the team members.

Constituent group types: Faculty, Classified Professional, Administrator

Lead Information: Mallory Newell, Director of Institutional Research, Planning and

Accreditation, Classified Professional

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Team Member Information

	Name	Title	Constituent Group	Email Address
Team Member 1	Laureen Balducci	Dean, Counseling and Disability Support Programs and Services – includes Transfer Center	Administrator	
Team Member 2	Michele LeBleu-Burns	Dean, Student Development and EOPS – includes College Life, Guardian Scholars, Health Services, Judicial Affairs, OTI	Administrator	
Team Member 3	Nazy Galoyan	Dean, Enrollment Services – includes Admissions, Assessment, Cashier, De Anza College Promise, International Student Programs, Outreach Office, Resource Hub (Basic Needs), Veterans Resource Center	Administrator	
Team Member 4	Randy Bryant	Dean, Career Technical Education and Workforce Development	Administrator	
Team Member 5 (Optional)	Omar Torres	President	Administrator	

Please share how this team was selected. *(limit responses to 100 words or less)*

The team was selected to ensure all programs reporting in VAR are represented. Each of the team members oversee multiple VAR areas. The VAR working group includes program coordinators (classified professionals) and faculty as well as the area dean. The Academy team will work closely with program coordinators to integrate lessons learned from the Academy into their everyday operations. Team members were invited to participate and accepted the invitation. The team lead is the director of Institutional Research, Planning and Accreditation, and will serve as the VAR implementation lead and lead the college in the Educational Master Plan and Strategic Plan process.