

Big Gains for the Northern California Region

The CVC Improving Online CTE Pathways Grant Delivers Shining Results

The California Community Colleges have long provided millions of Californians a pathway to better pay and more opportunities, and now the *Improving Online Career Technical Education (CTE) Pathways* grant has done even more for the college system and for students. Over the past 18 months, the grant has enabled 70 colleges across the state to further improve online education, reach more students, change the way community college online programs are developed, and grow career-technical pathways, all of which serve to drive the California economy forward and improve job prospects for students.

“The *Improving Online CTE Pathways* grant demonstrated the ability of the California Community Colleges to generate real results in a short time,” said Justin Schultz, Director of Planning and Grants Administration for the California Virtual Campus. “The pathways created and/or quality-improved by the grant program better position our colleges to meet the needs of students and employers throughout the state.”

The work done as part of the *Improving Online CTE Pathways* grant was the collaborative focus of faculty and staff at community colleges across the state, whose commitment and focus to this project was incredible. Statewide, the grant has resulted in more than 792 new online courses, 216 new online programs/pathways and 191 improved online programs and pathways.

“The grant rallied faculty behind a system-wide cause and showcased how dedicated and interested faculty could be incredibly innovative in a small amount of time,” said Donna Miranda, Senior Program Coordinator for the CVC. “Even small institutions were able to achieve substantial gains through the grant, and a foundation for future collaboration, growth and student support has been established through this powerful project.”

In the Northern California region, College of the Siskiyous, Lake Tahoe Community College, Lassen College, Los Rios Community College District, Shasta College, Woodland Community College and Yuba College were awarded grant funds to

address barriers to education by creating online student services tools and support services to develop programs in which students can thrive online. Colleges also focused on faculty training and specialized projects around conversion and equity assessment, all of which are aimed at generating improvements in online student persistence and completion.

The grant led to significant increases in the availability and offerings of online program options, which have given students more options for career development, leading to greater employability. For the region, more than 60 programs were enhanced online or completely converted to online programs, significantly increasing opportunities for residents. Programs advanced by the grant include agriculture and natural resources; health science and medical technology; and information and communications technology, to name a few. Careers in these industries are changing and growing, and jobs with upward mobility are available.

These community college programs are designed to be completed quickly, and convenience is key; online programs enable students to access their courses from virtually anywhere, allowing them to maintain commitments to work and family. Furthermore, colleges have created the online student experience to feel like an on-campus experience, and resources such as tutoring, counseling and advising are available online to make students feel supported in their online academic journey.

Andrea Hanstein, Director of Communications and Strategic Partnerships for the CVC said, “We know that students have circumstances that challenge their academic progress - transportation issues, childcare issues, work responsibilities. By opening up access to online courses and services statewide, we’re able to be exactly what our students need, right where they need us...and that’s online, right at their fingertips.”

Background on the CVC *Improving Online CTE Pathways* Grant

The California legislature and governor provided funding to support existing California Community Colleges in accelerating innovative online learning opportunities leading to increased employability and upward mobility for working Californians.

The Budget Act of 2018 (SB840) and trailer bill (SB843) appropriated one-time funds of \$35 million to the CVC to develop online programs and courses that accomplished the following:

- Lead to short-term, industry-valued certificates or credentials, or programs.
- Enable a student in a pathway developed by the California Online Community College to continue his or her education in a career pathway offered by an existing community college.

The CVC *Improving Online CTE Pathways* grants were sub-awarded to community colleges and ranged in size from \$100,000 to \$500,000. Projects were on a rapid timeline, with implementation expected within an 18-month funding timeframe. To learn about the *Improving Online CTE Pathways* grant and all programs advanced by the grant, visit www.cvc.edu.