

Section II, Narrative

Overview

City College of San Francisco (CCSF), provides a learning environment that supports the needs of all students, regardless of age, gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation or language ability. In particular, CCSF has developed a rich array of programs for over 30 years to serve San Francisco's immigrant community. Primarily nestled within the English as a Second Language (ESL) Department, these programs provide a broad continuum of learning opportunities for students. Through both noncredit and credit instruction, we provide access to the English-speaking world and to the diverse cultures of the United States. We enable students to gain language skills necessary to move into vocational- and academic-track coursework, transfer to four-year institutions, live and work in the United States, and succeed in English-speaking environments.

Throughout all of our ESL programs, we recognize the need to provide **access to classes and programs in innovative ways**, including: *flexible early morning, evening and weekend scheduling* to allow students to balance school with work and family obligations; *distance learning* that includes in-person meetings in the classroom and videos for home viewing paired with scheduled telephone contact; classes offered at a variety of *convenient community locations*, including nine CCSF neighborhood campuses and other venues. In addition, we provide noncredit ESL faculty with a *teacher's resource booklet* that provides an overview of other CCSF programs available to students, we created a *CD-ROM* that introduces students to noncredit programs at CCSF, we have formed a *cadre of faculty advisors* from whom students receive information about credit and noncredit ESL programs, and we have *increased collaboration between counselors and faculty* to improve ESL student orientations and services.

ESL faculty also **collaborate with a variety of other departments in a number of disciplines** to create hybrid programs for students. These include adult basic education, child development, biotechnology, automotive technology, labor studies, hospitality, health professions, and graphic communications. We have also partnered with a number of **community-based organizations and agencies** to deliver ESL courses in areas such as custodial studies, construction, welfare-to-work training, and transportation technology. Partners include, but are not limited to, the Asian Community Immigration Clinics, the Career Resources Development Center, Charity Cultural Services Center, Chinese for Affirmative Action, the Chinese Progressive Association, Department of Human Services, the San Francisco Beacon Initiative (funded by the San Francisco Foundation), the San Francisco Jail, the San Francisco Municipal Railway, San Francisco State University, San Francisco Unified School District, Self-Help for the Elderly, SFWorks (a program of the San Francisco Chamber of Commerce), and the State of California.

We also **promote student persistence and success** through support systems including *special orientation programs* for ESL students prior to class start-up and embedded within classes, innovative credit orientations to *academic planning*, *special transfer counseling* for noncredit ESL students transferring to credit programs, and *tutoring and workshops* for credit ESL students through the College's Learning Assistance Center.

Essentially, we support students who enter ESL programs to advance through the system by providing a **complete range of courses and opportunities**, from those at a very basic level to those in which we integrate ESL instruction within contextualized settings, thereby fostering successful futures for our immigrant students.

The design of courses, programs, and services for immigrants derives directly from student success data; feedback that students and the community have provided over time through surveys, focus groups, advisory committees, and public listening sessions; careful examination of environmental trends and the national research base; and faculty reflection. It is this **strategic framework** that supports our continuous efforts to meet the needs of students and modify our approach when necessary to reflect changes in those needs—in doing so, we also ensure that the reach of ESL programs encompasses the entire College and its surrounding communities.

Detailed Narrative

Background. CCSF, located in one of the nation’s most diverse cities, is among the oldest and largest community colleges, enrolling over 106,000 diverse full- and part-time students each year. Founded in 1935 to meet the need for the first two years of post-secondary education, CCSF began as a modest enterprise, enrolling only 1,074 students in a neighborhood high school, and grew rapidly, offering classes in 22 locations just four years later. Today CCSF delivers over 1,500 credit and noncredit courses per semester at the main campus, nine neighborhood campuses, and more than 150 other instructional sites citywide. The College’s programmatic breadth and variety, combined with its image and prominence in the city’s ethnic neighborhoods and the downtown business district, result in the highest market penetration of any community college in the country.

The mission of CCSF is to provide educational programs and services to meet the following needs of our diverse community:

- Preparation for transfer to baccalaureate institutions
- Achievement of Associate Degrees of Arts and Science
- Acquisition of career skills needed for success in the workplace
- Active engagement in the civic and social fabric of the community, citizenship preparation, and English as a Second Language
- Completion of requirements for the Adult High School Diploma and GED
- Promotion of economic development and job growth
- Lifelong learning, life skills, and cultural enrichment

To enhance student learning and maintain a commitment to excellence, the College provides an array of academic and student services that support the development of students’ intellectual, cultural, and civic achievements. CCSF belongs to the community and continually strives to reaffirm its commitment as a resource for the community.

Student Demographics. CCSF serves students throughout San Francisco and the surrounding Bay Area from a variety of backgrounds. Our students represent a broad spectrum of ages, socioeconomic status, sexual orientation, and physical ability—and they speak a multitude of languages. Over one third of CCSF students hail from underrepresented minority populations, including African American, Filipino, and Latino/Hispanic. A significant percentage of these students are English learners.

In San Francisco, nearly 10 percent of the 18–64 population speaks English “not well” or “not at all,” according to 2000 U.S. Census Bureau statistics. Of these limited English speakers, 62 percent are native speakers of Asian and Pacific Island languages, 30 percent are native speakers of Spanish, 7 percent are native speakers of Indo-European languages, and 1 percent speak “other” languages. Language limitations often restrict non-native speakers of English to interacting only within their own, often isolated, ethnic communities.

With respect to income level, more than 96,000 persons in San Francisco live below the poverty line, representing 10 percent of San Francisco families. Average income for a family of four is \$12,880. Many of our adult ESL students represent this low-income population. They hold menial jobs, primarily in hospitality, garment manufacturing, and custodial service industries. Their upward mobility is restricted by their lack of English proficiency and lack of familiarity with the American workplace and customs, according to the norms of today’s teamwork and interpersonal interactions.

As our mission illustrates, CCSF is committed to serving these students, thereby helping them move beyond the circumstances that foster poverty to self-sufficiency.

Meeting Immigrant Student Needs. To serve these students, CCSF has offered a rich array of programs for over 30 years. Primarily nestled within the English as a Second Language (ESL) Department, these programs provide a broad continuum of learning opportunities for students. On one end of the continuum, we offer ESL opportunities that support students who are not literate in their primary language, let alone in English. On the other end of the continuum, we provide programs that provide foreign-trained health professionals with the necessary English language skills to thrive in the U.S. healthcare industry.

ESL is the largest department at CCSF with over 130 course offerings (with multiple sections) and more than 360 faculty members. Because San Francisco is a highly desirable place to work, we have been able to hire a diverse group of instructors for our ESL faculty. Many are bilingual. Not only do CCSF's rigorous hiring standards ensure that all instructors have the necessary expertise to serve the immigrant student population (all instructors must, at a minimum, possess Masters degrees in ESL-related areas), but CCSF also has a rich tradition of providing opportunities for professional development to instructors, counselors and administrators. To support professional development within ESL, the College obtained a grant to support a staff development facilitator (.2 FTE) who develops and offers workshops. In addition, faculty meet at least once all together each semester, and continue to meet throughout the academic year in smaller groups to focus on pertinent issues resulting from the review of data.

The department includes both credit and noncredit programs. The Credit ESL program requires a fee and is designed for students with academic goals who wish to complete a two-year degree or vocational certificate at CCSF or to transfer to a four-year college or university. The Noncredit ESL program is free of charge and is designed to help immigrant students develop their general ability to listen, speak, read and write English. Separate from the ESL Department is the Institute for International Students (IIS). The IIS requires tuition and offers an intensive academic English program for international students in the United States on an F-1 student visa who want to prepare for college or university classes.

Through both noncredit and credit instruction, we provide access to the English-speaking world and to the diverse cultures of the United States. We enable students to gain language skills necessary to move into vocational- and academic-track coursework, transfer to four-year institutions, live and work in the United States and succeed in English-speaking environments. Through our programs, we:

- Provide instruction that emphasizes development of basic language skills, literacy, and cultural knowledge
- Provide instruction in both credit and noncredit courses to support students enrolled or planning to enroll in other credit and noncredit educational programs offered in the College
- Provide instruction in a variety of delivery modes and at multiple levels to many areas of the city at convenient times
- Facilitate transfer of ESL students from noncredit to credit programs
- Provide instruction that prepares students for further academic study and for transfer to baccalaureate institutions
- Provide Vocational English as a Second Language (VESL) instruction to support students enrolled or planning to enroll in occupational programs offered in the College to help them succeed in the workplace
- Provide computer-assisted instruction to enhance language and skill development and promote technological literacy of students
- Provide specialized programs for individuals who are already employed in a variety of fields to gain the language skills necessary for success and advancement in their careers
- Integrate information on American culture, history, and government into all levels of study to help students understand the rights and responsibilities of citizenship
- Provide instruction that prepares students to become U.S. citizens

Annual student enrollment in noncredit ESL and ESL Citizenship courses exceeds 22,000 with more than 3,500 students in credit ESL classes. All students take locally developed, end-of-semester tests to determine whether they are prepared to advance to the next level. Nearly 90 percent of ESL Citizenship students pass the INS naturalization exam with 80 percent passing on their first attempt. Over 40 percent of noncredit ESL students show a learning gain of 3 or 5 points on the Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System (CASAS)-scaled scores in a comparison of pre- and post-test results at the end of a year—a gain which the state recognizes as significant.

Strategic Framework. Underlying and framing our approach to immigrant education is a strong commitment to continuous improvement based on feedback loops through examinations of student enrollment and success statistics (including exit exams), direct student feedback through surveys and focus groups, community input regarding needs, careful examination of environmental trends internal and external to the College and of the national research base, and faculty reflection on what does and does not work in the classroom.

The methods used to gather information from students have been innovative in and of themselves. For example, at CCSF's Chinatown/North Beach Campus, students participate in focus groups as part of their classroom instruction. This provides a forum in which they practice their English speaking and comprehension skills. Instructors gather and pool the information that students provide in these sessions about their needs and determine what changes they need to make to instructional offerings. In addition, from these classroom focus groups, faculty select students to participate in campus-wide focus groups comprising representatives from all classes. Not only does this provide students with even broader public speaking experiences, but it also promotes leadership and civic engagement among students. Again, the findings of these collective sessions are fed back into program design and offerings.

This data-driven, grounded strategy, coupled with strong, consistent support from the College administration, results in faculty members taking leadership in developing innovative, effective approaches and programs to meet the needs of immigrant students.

We describe these approaches and a selection of these programs in the following two sections. We believe that it is the strategic framework that makes these approaches and programs possible, and that other institutions would similarly benefit from such a strategy that utilizes data-driven decision-making at its core.

Cross-Cutting Approaches. On the whole, the College addresses immigrant education by utilizing a number of cross-cutting approaches to promote student success. These include (1) approaches that increase access, (2) collaboration across departments and with external partners, and (3) student support systems.

Access. Throughout all of our ESL programs, we recognize the need to provide access to classes and programs in innovative ways, including:

- *flexible early morning, evening and weekend scheduling* to allow students to balance school with work and family obligations;
- *distance learning* through hybrid courses that include in-person meetings in the classroom and videos for home viewing paired with scheduled telephone contact;
- classes offered at a variety of *convenient community locations*, including CCSF's nine neighborhood campuses and other local schools, community centers, and similar venues.

We developed these approaches based on actual student and community needs, gleaned from surveys, focus groups, community listening sessions, scans of community demographics, and student performance data. For example, we instituted flexible scheduling in response to student requests voiced in focus groups. Distance learning emerged through our recognition that we were not reaching all non-native English speakers in San Francisco. That is, in comparing the total number of non-native English speakers

in San Francisco to our total number of non-native English-speaking students, we realized that the difference was significant, suggesting that a large number of San Franciscans were not being served by our regular classes; thus, we turned to distance learning as a way to reach more people. The provision of classes within communities throughout San Francisco has evolved in response to community demand for specific courses.

In addition, we provide a number of resources to help students connect to other available programs. For example, all noncredit ESL faculty receive a *teacher's resource booklet* that provides an overview of other CCSF programs available to students and lesson plans for communicating that information to students. We also created a *CD-ROM* that introduces students to all noncredit programs at CCSF. Moreover, we have formed a *cadre of faculty advisors* from whom students receive information about credit and noncredit ESL programs, and we have *increased collaboration between counselors and faculty* to improve ESL student orientations and services.

Inter-Departmental and Inter-Agency Collaboration. ESL faculty also collaborate with a variety of other departments in a number of disciplines to create hybrid programs for students. These include, for example, adult basic education, child development, biotechnology, automotive technology, labor studies, hospitality, health professions, and graphic communications. As with all of our approaches, our collaborations have developed in response to requests from these other departments, all of which generated their interest in collaboration based on student and community needs.

We have also partnered with a number of community-based organizations and agencies to deliver ESL courses in areas such as custodial studies, construction, welfare-to-work training, and transportation technology. Partners include, but are not limited to, the Asian Community Immigration Clinics, the Career Resources Development Center, Charity Cultural Services Center, Chinese for Affirmative Action, the Chinese Progressive Association, Department of Human Services, the San Francisco Beacon Initiative (funded by the San Francisco Foundation), the San Francisco Jail, the San Francisco Municipal Railway, San Francisco State University, San Francisco Unified School District, Self-Help for the Elderly, SFWorks (a program of the San Francisco Chamber of Commerce), and the State of California.

Student Support Systems. We also promote student persistence and success through support systems including *special orientation programs* for ESL students prior to class start-up and embedded within classes, innovative credit orientations to *academic planning*, special *transfer counseling* for noncredit ESL students transferring to credit programs, and *tutoring and workshops* for credit ESL students through the College's Learning Assistance Center. Again, these systems evolved through continuous examination of student needs.

Selected Innovative Programs. In addition to providing traditional ESL courses that move students from basic English acquisition through more sophisticated language development, we provide a number of innovative educational programs, often in partnership with other organizations and agencies as noted above. We highlight here a number of current programs that address the needs of our immigrant student population in a variety of ways and demonstrate the breadth of our approach to immigrant education.

This list of programs is by no means exhaustive. These descriptions simply provide insight into the depth and breadth of the programs we offer—and provide evidence of how we utilize feedback in the form of both qualitative and quantitative data to develop meaningful, outcomes-oriented experiences for students.

Vocational ESL Immersion Program (VIP). VIP is a joint program of CCSF and the San Francisco Department of Human Services (DHS) that began in 2000 (see also letter of support). CCSF and DHS collaborated to design and implement VIP to meet the needs of limited English proficient CalWORKs participants to acquire vocational English and workplace culture skills quickly in order to obtain and advance in employment.

VIP resulted from DHS-facilitated focus groups that had revealed that CalWORKs participants found traditional ESL classes too large and lacking in opportunities to practice. Participants had also found the content irrelevant to work, and the classes did not allow participants to move along quickly enough. Based on this feedback, DHS researched best practices for language acquisition and literacy for adults and solicited CCSF's involvement to form VIP. Immersion programs had already been part of CCSF's menu of offerings, generated by our own findings through a 20-hour ESL workshop that indicated to us that intensive immersion programs were of greatest benefit to English learners seeking to enter the workforce as quickly as possible.

VIP is a highly innovative, task-based, student-centered VESL learning model that allows limited English proficient adults to acquire vocational English and workplace culture skills within a short time. VIP incorporates cutting edge, project-based and computer-assisted language learning (CALL), job readiness competencies—such as teamwork, following directions, asking for clarification, and problem solving—short- and long-term projects, and work-site visits chosen by the students.

VIP mirrors the workplace environment so students acquire multiple skills simultaneously. Students are assigned to teams with weekly duties, such as: recording and faxing daily attendance, photocopying, answering the classroom telephone and taking messages, conducting surveys and charting results. Students practice speaking and listening while learning to use the computer or operate office equipment.

DHS provides intensive case management services while CCSF provides training, VIP carefully monitors student progress, punctuality and attendance. Incentives encourage individual and team progress to promote desired workplace behavior and self-confidence.

To date, VIP has served approximately 600 students and has been highly successful:

- 93 percent of VIP enrollees completed their 18-week session.
- 78 percent of full-time session participants have advanced one or more ESL levels within 18 weeks; of those nearly 40 percent advanced two or more ESL levels.
- 60–70 percent of VIP participants opt to continue VIP for a second 18-week session, and, consequently, progress from low beginner level English (ESL level 1) to intermediate levels (ESL levels 5-7+) during their VIP training.
- VIP graduates qualify for “mainstream” vocational training, a wider range of occupations, and higher entry wages (ranging from California minimum wage to \$16.00/hour).
- The higher the ESL level at VIP completion, the higher the average entry-level wage. The average entry wage for VIP level 1 graduates was \$7.31/hour; for VIP level 2 graduates \$9.17/hour; and for level 3-4 graduates \$10.34/hour.

In 2002, VIP was named a semi-finalist in the prestigious Innovation in U.S. Government Award competition sponsored by Harvard University and the Ford Foundation. In addition, VIP was one of eight Student Success Award recipients honored by the Board of Governors and Chancellor's Office of California Community Colleges in 2002 for innovation, student outcomes and replicability.

The effective, innovative model has been featured at statewide welfare-to-work, community college, and immigrant advocacy forums. To date, five California counties and two out-of state agencies have visited VIP to consider program replication in their welfare-to-work efforts.

Project SHINE. For the past six years, CCSF has worked with San Francisco State University (SFSU; see also letter of support) toward addressing our local demand for increased and enhanced immigrant language and civic education through Project SHINE (Students Helping in the Naturalization of Elders). Project SHINE is a national initiative based at Temple University's Center for Intergenerational Learning in Philadelphia. As one of the original SHINE programs incepted in 1997, San Francisco serves as a model for eight other sites throughout the country. Prior to participating in SHINE, CCSF faculty and administrators had come to understand, through reviews of the national research base, that service

learning is a powerful vehicle for engaging students in contextualized, applied learning experiences. Thus, at the time that Project SHINE emerged as an opportunity for CCSF to engage its students in service learning, faculty and administrators had already begun moving in this direction and were thus receptive to participating in SHINE, which not only provided a forum for service learning, but also addressed an expressed need from the community for support to immigrants pursuing naturalization.

Through the project, CCSF students (coaches) tutor older immigrants (learners) studying for the INS naturalization exam in CCSF's noncredit, community-based citizenship and ESL classes throughout San Francisco. Coaches work with learners individually or in small groups who are in need of extra support to pass their citizenship exam. Students receive credit for their service and completion of related curricular activities through their enrollment in a CCSF introductory course in subjects such as political science, sociology or teacher prep. CCSF's Office of Mentoring and Service-Learning (OMSL) organizes, facilitates, and supports all project participants.

Each semester, nearly 100 student-coaches and 10 service-learning faculty participate in the SHINE program. On average, over 75 percent of coaches are bilingual, bringing an added resource to the ESL instructors and learners with which they work. Combined, these coaches provide more than 4,000 hours of service to the elder immigrant community each school year. As such, this project produces benefits for all who get involved. Participants respond enthusiastically to this program, as the following quotations suggest:

“Yesterday I had the honor and joy of taking and passing my citizenship exam. My coach encouraged me a lot. I'm happy because I am now yet one more citizen of the United States.” (ESL Learner)

“I hope to make a great difference in people's lives. I hope to show them that society can be a good place and not depressing. People can make beautiful things out of their lives after they learn a few fundamental things to get along in America.” (SHINE Coach)

“The students who chose to participate in SHINE were not the strongest students in the beginning of the semester. But their papers and presentations were among the best in the class. I attribute this to the direct experience in the community which brought their academic reading and learning to life.” (Service-learning Faculty Member)

Bridge to Biotech. *Bridge to Biotech*, created in 2002, is a program that provides the necessary background for underserved students to enter into CCSF's biotechnology certificate program, and, in some cases, directly into entry-level jobs and/or internships. CCSF developed and implemented *Bridge to Biotech* in response to community demand from two economically disadvantaged areas of San Francisco: Bayview Hunters Point (a predominantly African American and Asian immigrant neighborhood) and the Mission (a predominantly Latino neighborhood). The Southeast sector of San Francisco is undergoing a radical face lift as the University of California, San Francisco (UCSF) has begun developing a 43-acre tract of land that will support a life sciences campus for teaching, research and health. UCSF Mission Bay is part of a larger Mission Bay effort to stimulate economic development within the Southeast sector of San Francisco, currently plagued by high crime, high poverty, a neglected environment, and poor health conditions.

With this economic development comes the promise of increased employment opportunities. In particular, the development of Mission Bay is attracting new biotechnology companies into the immediate vicinity. It is this trend that catalyzed the surrounding communities to voice their need for training so that they can participate in this economic revitalization. CCSF listened and responded by developing *Bridge to Biotech*.

The program consists of three integrated courses in which students enroll during one semester: biotechnology, language, and mathematics. Students take all three classes at the same time and form a “learning community” to support each other through the program. The curriculum in all three classes is integrated such that each class reinforces what is learned in the other two. Specifically, the biotechnology course (a credit course) is a hands-on, laboratory-based class that introduces students to the basic biology

and chemistry concepts and laboratory techniques underlying biotechnology. In language, students learn the necessary terminology to facilitate their understanding of the concepts covered in the biotechnology curriculum. In the mathematics course, students learn basic math concepts applied to real-life laboratory-based problems. To ensure that the materials and assignments of each class align with and augment each other, the instructors of each class meet weekly.

Students also visit local biotechnology companies to gain a better sense of the industry and receive additional wrap-around services related to job success, including resume preparation, interviewing support, and other job-related skills.

Once students have completed the *Bridge to Biotech* program, they may either elect to enroll in CCSF's standard biotechnology certificate programs or enter college credit science courses that are transferable to four-year institutions.

Recruitment is a significant feature of *Bridge to Biotech*, and we actively promoted the program to all eligible ESL students with positive results: more than half of the students (57 percent) who enrolled in *Bridge to Biotech* this past year are non-native English speakers.

Welcome Back. With a grant from the California Endowment received in 2001, CCSF, in partnership with SFSU, established *Welcome Back*, a program that provides training and career counseling to foreign-trained health professionals in the Northern and Interior San Francisco Bay Area. *Welcome Back* is a project of Community Health Works of San Francisco (CHW) and its subsidiary, the San Francisco Bay Area Regional Health Occupations Resource Center (RHORC), both of which are co-sponsored by CCSF and SFSU. It resulted from the astute identification of two concurrent, synergistic environmental trends: (1) the emergence of a highly literate immigrant population that possessed high-level health care training but who had limited English skills and (2) the urgent need for healthcare professionals.

Welcome Back supports internationally trained immigrants typically blocked from professional health care service in medically underserved areas of high diversity that desperately need their skills, as well as their linguistic and cultural competence. The program offers counseling and educational services to assist these workers in obtaining the appropriate licenses, credentials, and English language skills to work in the U.S. health care system. Additionally, *Welcome Back* develops U.S.-specific leadership, management and advocacy skills among these immigrant health professionals.

Hotel Labor/Management Training Programs. In 1994, 11 hotels, including Crowne Plaza (see letter of support), joined together with the union representing their employees to form a labor-management partnership in an effort to reduce tensions between labor and management. This partnership yielded a “living contract” that promoted the formation of study teams to examine needed changes in the work setting. One outcome of these examinations was the recognition that there was a serious training deficit at all levels in the hotel industry and that more training was critical to improving worker-management relationships, quality and efficiency. Thus, the partnership turned to CCSF to develop and deliver joint training programs to improve workers' skill levels and to train entry-level workers—a large number of whom are immigrants—and line managers to communicate better.

To date, the Hotel Labor/Management Training Program has trained over 1,600 multiemployer-group hotel employees. The training curriculum includes communication, critical thinking, team building, interest-based problem solving, English-language skills, and craft-specific technical skills. Training sessions have been simultaneously translated into Spanish and Chinese to allow maximum employee participation.

Post-training surveys have indicated that the training has been successful. The hotels report increased customer satisfaction, communication and teamwork. The workers have been exposed to other job opportunities within the industry and have improved their communication, relationship skills, and morale.

Recently, CCSF has begun tackling another challenge facing the industry. Specifically, together with the partnership, CCSF has developed career ladders and training opportunities for hotel workers, allowing them to advance, thereby providing access to better salaries and recognition. Traditionally, hotel workers were hired into one position within a hotel and rarely, if ever, advanced beyond that position. This new program has begun to dramatically alter the way in which hotels view their employees, and employees no longer resolve themselves to staying in dead-end, entry-level positions.

EL Civics. Through an *EL Civics* grant issued by the California Department of Education for the past three years, CCSF has developed a three-pronged program that currently comprises the following: a community resource guide, civic engagement activities outside of the classroom, and classroom-based educational modules. These components collectively prepare students to become active participants in their communities. The community resource guide, “Access to Justice and Communities,” provides information on community resources specific to the needs of ESL, non-native speaking, immigrant communities in San Francisco and aligns with National Institute for Literacy’s content standards *Equipped for the Future*. Instructional objectives include developing students’ confidence and sense of security, and connecting students with resources available in their communities.

Civic engagement activities outside of the classroom focus on adult immigrants who lack sufficient English and cultural information to enable full participation in their communities. Through these activities, students overcome language and cultural barriers; interact in communities beyond their own; expand their worldview; and receive exposure to the diversity of U.S. culture. Through this component, we have enhanced the ESL program’s classes with task- and project-based lessons including interactive speakers, field trips and community service and distance learning assignments. Experiential learning has included using public transportation, accessing and contributing to community service and environmental protection projects, gathering information from public institutions such as libraries, museums and government buildings, and making use of recreational facilities, such as zoos and national or regional parks.

Classroom-based modules focus on (1) preparation for the naturalization interview; (2) rights and responsibilities of citizens; and (3) U.S. history and government. The purpose of these modules is to help students become self-sufficient, independent, and proactive with respect to becoming citizens and understanding the rights and responsibilities that come with citizenship. Several elements broaden the scope of activities and experiences students participate in over traditional civics courses, leading to more grounded knowledge of civic life and how to engage in it. These elements include: guest lectures, visits from community groups and agencies, and guided visits to community sites related to civic activities and engagement.

Impact on Students. The impact that our approaches, programs, and general instruction have had on students is significant. Using the ESL student population as a proxy for immigrant status, student achievement data indicate that immigrant students are achieving significant levels of success. Their success—and the success of the programs and opportunities we provide—is evident in the proportion of credit ESL students who began in noncredit programs, their achievement of Associates degrees, their level of transfer preparedness and readiness, and the proportion of ESL students who transfer to four-year institutions. We present these data below.

- We have created expanded pathways for immigrant students from noncredit, introductory programs into post-secondary academic and vocational programs. Since 1991, roughly 90 percent of first-time credit ESL students on average began coursework at CCSF in noncredit programs (this figure represents a range in the number of students from approximately 700 to 1,000). This coincides with the merging of noncredit and credit ESL programs into one department at that same time, suggesting that the new, integrated ESL Department served as a solid bridge for students from noncredit to credit courses and programs. From 1991 forward,

students have been better able to navigate the system and make use of available resources to make the noncredit to credit transition.

- We have assisted an ever larger proportion of immigrant students in obtaining Associates degrees. Over time, the percentage of ESL students within the entire population of students who achieve Associates degrees (A.A. and A.S. combined) annually has steadily increased, from 40 percent in 1993 to 49 percent in 2001.
- We have supported an increasing proportion of immigrant students to become transfer prepared and transfer ready.¹ In 1994, 30 percent of transfer-prepared students were immigrants, whereas in 2001, 44 percent of transfer-prepared students were immigrants. Similarly, in 1994, 25 percent of transfer-ready students were immigrants compared to 43 percent in 2001.
- We have provided greater numbers of immigrant students with the opportunity to pursue four-year degrees. That is, the number of ESL students who actually transfer to four-year institutions has increased by 63 percent, from 413 students in 1997 to 674 students in 2001.

The gains in student outcomes noted above reflect our continuous improvement strategy. That is, over time, we regularly assess the quality of the courses, programs, and services we provide, and we use the information we gain from that assessment process to inform the ways in which we need to change our approach.

Conclusion. Essentially, CCSF supports immigrant students who enter ESL programs to advance through the system by continually assessing the quality of existing programs and the need for new programs. By analyzing student success data and feedback that students and the community have provided over time (through surveys, focus groups, advisory committees, and public listening sessions), carefully examining environmental trends and the national research base, and promoting faculty reflection, we are able to provide a complete range of courses and opportunities. These range from those at a very basic level to those in which we integrate ESL instruction within contextualized settings. In this way, we provide immigrant students with opportunities to pursue education and training in vocational and academic fields—and to realize other life goals such as that of becoming a naturalized citizen.

We continually strive to meet the needs of students and modify our approach when necessary to reflect changing student needs—and we work to ensure that the reach of ESL programs encompasses the entire College and its surrounding communities.

¹ Transfer-prepared students are those students who have completed 56 or more transfer units. Transfer-ready students are those who are transfer-prepared and have successfully completed transfer math and English.