

Caring Campus: What We Are Learning

The Institute for Evidence-Based Change (IEBC) has learned a number of important lessons about successful implementation as we implement *Caring Campus for Staff and Faculty* at 60 institutions, including 40 in California.

IEBC works with community colleges to implement *Caring Campus* facilitating the work of staff and faculty to implement intentional specific behavioral commitments that are proving to help a student feel welcome and connected to the college.

We would like to share these lessons, which have broad impact and implications for funders and those implementing student success initiatives in America's colleges.

First, for both staff and faculty *Caring Campus* is fulfilling an acknowledged need at America's colleges; it is not a solution in search of a problem. Staff and faculty who engage in *Caring Campus* have a deep sense of the benefits of connecting with students. Yet they struggle with doing this effectively and simply. *Caring Campus* provides a method for both staff and faculty to engage with students in face to face and virtual environments. For staff, that first connection they have with a student is crucial for how that student feels about college, and their college. If that first interaction is warm and caring, it encourages students to feel confident and supported. For faculty in face to face and virtual classroom environments, they commit to easily implemented behaviors that foster student connectedness and lead to increased course success and, ultimately, completion.

Second, staff, faculty and leadership greatly appreciate that *Caring Campus* is grounded in research and that other colleges are demonstrating positive impact. The publication of *Research Rich Education* (Felten & Lambert, 2020) is only the most recent confirmation of our approach. Feedback from staff and faculty at *Caring Campus* colleges also confirms our belief that they trust their colleagues and peers to inform their practice. They are more likely to implement strategies their peers have already found to be successful. And pointing to positive results from other colleges supports implementation.

Third, *Caring Campus* is supportive of other student success efforts and not ancillary to them. These include Guided Pathways, College Promise, accelerated basic skills, and new student success funding formulas, among others. Colleges are finding ways to integrate the human connectedness aspects of *Caring Campus* into these efforts.

Finally, we are learning that campus culture can change and that behaviors lead the way. We are hearing from colleges about the ways *Caring Campus* is influencing culture change such as improved communications within and across departments. And colleges are finding exciting ways to expand their culture of caring within and beyond their campus borders (e.g., Maysville Community and Technical College's Maysville Cares community initiative). We anticipate the research project by the Community College Research Center, Teachers College, Columbia University that is using *Caring Campus* as a case study to understand how college culture changes will expand upon and confirm this lesson in college culture and help understand how and why it occurs.

THE INSTITUTE FOR EVIDENCE-BASED CHANGE (IEBC)

The Institute for Evidence-Based Change (IEBC) is a nonprofit organization dedicated to helping education stakeholders — community colleges, universities, K-12 school systems, employers and others — use coaching, collaboration and data to make informed decisions and craft solutions that improve practice and dramatically increase student success. We partner with our clients to successfully implement customized evidence-based solutions to today's most pressing issues.

Institute for Evidence-Based Change

3711 Long Beach Blvd #5033, Long Beach, CA 90807 • 619-933-7489 • info@iebcnow.org • www.iebcnow.org