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The Student Voice in Student Success
by Ilse Maymes

There are many issues facing community college students and I only have enough words to address a few. Every step that a community college student takes to achieve their educational goal is critical; any misstep or ill-advisement could end the journey.

At a start, we need well-trained financial officers and better staffed financial aid offices. Many community college students require financial assistance, making it critical for them to have access to someone who can help them through the process.

Assessment tests that do not correctly capture student abilities make things difficult, whether it places them too low and adds to their course load, or too high in classes they can't pass.

Counselors also play a pivotal role in this journey and are critical to completion. It's not only that counselors need the time to actually talk to students, but they need continued training to provide students with correct and current information on what classes they need to finish, graduate, or transfer on time.

The next point of contact is classroom faculty. There must be a fundamental understanding that for students, there are answers that only their professors can provide. It creates a high-level of frustration when students cannot reach their professor, which unfortunately happens all too often. The current insufficiency of full-time faculty, and the lack of part-time faculty availability to students, undermines the very concept of student success.

As a Latina student, the improving but still low level of faculty diversity is, at times, disheartening. While there are measures in place to quantify required levels of staff diversity, there is still a lack of clarity on how districts can meet these goals (especially when the available labor pool still significantly lags behind the targeted levels).

At the end of the day, we need to refocus our attention on students. We each come with our own stories and dreams for the future. Whether we land at a four-year school or get a job at the end of our community college experience is not the only measure of success. Our education helps build our families, turn jobs into careers, and helps us to become a successful part of our community. That's why the support we need for student success, like financial aid, counselors, full-time

faculty, part-time faculty office hours, and a diverse workforce, is so critical. Our success is your success. Let's remember that as we move forward.

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