ABSTRACT

California State University, Dominguez Hills (CSUDH) in Dominguez Hills, CA, is a public university granting bachelor’s and master’s degrees. West Los Angeles College (West), located in nearby Culver City, CA, is a public comprehensive community college. Both are accredited by the Western Association of Colleges and Schools. While CSUDH enrolls students from across the whole state and beyond, its primary catchment area overlaps substantially with West’s and comprises a densely populated area in southern and western Los Angeles County, characterized by a highly diverse population, low educational attainment, and poverty. Despite the presence of well-educated faculty members and administrators, the two counties where each institution is located still have lower percentages than the state and nation of adults who hold bachelor’s degrees. Poverty rates exceed those of New Mexico, one of the poorest states in the nation. CSUDH’s Fall 2009 undergraduate enrollment of 10,247 was 40.3% Hispanic, and 28% of West’s 10,932 students were Hispanic, qualifying both as Hispanic-Serving Institutions.

While they offer different levels of education, CSUDH and West share a focus on meeting the educational needs of their students, the region, and the state. They also share similar challenges: low retention to degree completion, outdated instructional practices, and inadequate funds for faculty development. Both have been heavily impacted by California’s economic crisis and do not have funds to develop new instructional practices that could increase student success, retention, transfer (from West to a senior institution), and graduation. Our Title V Cooperative Project, Building a High-Impact Transfer Academy, will create the CSUDH Transfer Academy at West, a two-year transfer program with tracks for students planning to major in Business Administration (60 students per cohort), Criminal Justice (60), Digital Media Arts (60), or a technical Associate of Science program (40). Tracks will focus on requirements for each major, along with required general education courses. Students in each track will be organized as Learning Communities, taking at least 3 courses a semester together. By meeting together, studying together in small groups, attending special events on the CSUDH campus, and participating in group tutoring as needed, they will build personal linkages and campus engagement. Faculty will work together to align curricula and to infuse high-impact practices and use of technology into instruction. Transfer Bridge activities, an upgraded Transfer Center at CSUDH, and an Online Transfer Center developed by West will address current barriers to transfer and provide seamless transfer opportunities. CSUDH and West will also collaborate on extensive outreach to area high schools, developing materials to inform prospective students, parents, and high school counselors. The partners will jointly review and accept students for admission into the program.

Five-year outcomes will include at least 70 faculty members trained in and using high-impact practices and/or instructional technology (including online instruction); 60 students each entering the Business, Criminal Justice, and Digital Media Transfer Academies and 40 entering the Applied Studies Academy annually; at least 75% retained into the sophomore year; at least 63% of each cohort completing an associate degree and transferring to CSUDH; and at least 75% of those transferring completing a bachelor’s degree after 2 years at CSUDH.

The total 5-year request is $3,875,000, with CSUDH receiving $2,243,500 and West receiving $1,631,500.