



# WestWords

A bi-weekly communique from the Office of the President

ISSUE #5: February 21, 2017

WLAC Colleagues:

According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, food insecurity is “a condition of someone who does not have adequate resources to feed themselves.” When a food pantry for our students was suggested, I, like so many of us, was unaware of the extent of “food insecurity”—in other words, hunger—that our students deal with on a daily basis. However, a growing body of national news reports and independent research have convinced me of the seriousness of this issue.

For example, the College and University Food Alliance (an organization which West has joined) and three other “campus-based organizations—the National Student Campaign Against Hunger and Homelessness, the Student Government Resource Center, and the Student Public Interest Research Groups—surveyed college students on food insecurity between March and May 2016. The study sample included 3,765 students in 12 states attending eight community colleges and 26 four-year colleges and universities.” Here are some of their findings:

- Consistent with prior studies, 48 percent of respondents reported food insecurity in the previous 30 days, including 22 percent with very low levels of food security that qualify them as hungry.
- Food insecurity occurs at both two-year and four-year institutions. Twenty-five percent of community college students qualified as having very low food security, compared to 20 percent at four-year schools.
- Food insecurity was more prevalent among students of color. Fully 57 percent of Black or African American students reported food insecurity, compared to 40 percent of non-Hispanic white students.
- More than half of all first-generation students (56 percent) were food insecure, compared to 45 percent of students who had at least one parent who attended college.

We all want our students to have every possible opportunity, but trying to attend class and study while hungry will blunt the efforts of even the most dedicated student. The West Food Pantry—which officially opens today—will hopefully make a difference in the lives of our students and literally give many of them the strength to continue.

The Pantry would not exist without the dedication of several individuals on campus who committed themselves to addressing issues of student hunger: Tim Gilmore (Black Scholars), Kim Morera (Facilities) and his staff, and Jesus Reyes (ASO).

You’ll find more operational details on the Pantry elsewhere in this newsletter.

Sincerely,

*Jim Limbaugh*

Jim Limbaugh, President

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## The West Food Pantry Opens Today: Tuesday, February 21



The West Food Pantry represents an institution-wide commitment to addressing issues of student hunger. Located in the ASO Building (A9), the Pantry employs the “honor system” in serving students in need; i.e., we are not going to limit or question what students take unless we observe abuse of the program.

- > The Pantry is an evolving service; i.e., as we assess student needs, we will expand services, programs, and offerings as necessary.
- > **Operating hours are 9:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m., Monday through Thursday.** As of this writing, the Pantry will not be open during spring break or any holiday in which the campus is closed. We will assess the feasibility of summer services.
- > Students will be asked to sign in with their student ID number.
- > We are asking that you, as faculty and staff that work with students, help us in directing those students in need to the services of the Pantry.

We are not going to overtly advertise the Pantry.

- > Items available include “grab and go” items (granola bars, breakfast bars, self-made peanut butter sandwiches), microwavable items (soups, macaroni and cheese), and staples to take home (canned vegetables, soups, pasta, Ramen).
- > Because we are partnering with the Westside Food Bank, items in the Pantry will revolve based on what the Food Bank can provide us.
- > The Food Pantry is also available to faculty and staff who are experiencing food insecurity.



For the coming week (through Thursday, February 23), Trish Limbaugh has volunteered to staff the pantry. We will be holding campus discussions as to how to officially incorporate the Pantry into the College to ensure that it is fully staffed and maintained.

## LACCD's DACA/AB 540 Students: Numbers, Services, Advocacy

At the January 25, 2017, meeting of the Board of Trustees' Institutional Effectiveness and Student Success Committee, information about undocumented students enrolled in LACCD institutions was shared and discussed. Entitled "Undocumented Students in the LACCD: Report on Student Characteristics and Success Indicators," the presentation offered a compelling and relevant picture of a cohort of students to whom we are fully committed. Please note that data presented on student success is based on three years' data rather than the standard CCCO six years as reported on the Student Success Scorecard.

- As of fall 2015, 10,967 undocumented students were enrolled in LACCD colleges. This constitutes about 7.1 % of all enrolled students. Of these, 6,465 were credit students; 4,502 were non-credit students.
- At West, 288 undocumented credit students were enrolled, comprising 2.8% of the entire LACCD population. Only one undocumented student was reported as enrolled in a non-credit class.
- Undocumented students are overwhelmingly Latino/Latina (over 80% of credit and non-credit enrollments).
- Undocumented credit students tend to be younger, with higher proportions in the "under 20" and "20-24" age groups.
- Undocumented credit students mirror the overall student population in gender balance.
- Undocumented credit students are disproportionately part-time (78.3%) compared to all LACCD students (73.7%).
- Undocumented students generated approximately 2,500 FTES in fall 2015. This was about 5% of the total FTES for fall 2015.
- In terms of student success outcomes,
  - Undocumented students had slightly higher successful course completion rates (67.8%) compared to all LACCD students (65.9%).
  - Undocumented students had slightly lower fall to spring persistence (84%) compared to all LACCD students (88%).
  - A lower proportion of undocumented students completed six units in the first semester (49%) compared to all LACCD students (53%).
  - A much lower proportion of undocumented students transferred (1%) compared to all LACCD students (9%).

*Undocumented students are defined as those*

- *Who are not U.S. citizens, permanent or temporary residents, refugees or asylees, or visa students, AND*
- *Who are designated for residency purposes as AB 540 students or foreign non-resident students.*

The Los Angeles Community College District has assembled a District-wide task force to address the ongoing challenges faced by our AB 540/DACA students generated by a volatile national atmosphere. This task force will focus on ensuring consistency of programs, services, and information at all nine campuses. Marcela Hernandez, counselor, is serving as West's representative on this committee.

## SCHEDULE CHANGE: Two Special-Topic Luncheon Meetings Scheduled for Spring 2017

In the last newsletter, I posted the following announcement (excerpted):

*... I hosted a morning meeting and luncheon last month ... on a very timely topic: the Strong Workforce/Doing What Matters career/technical education initiative.*

*By all accounts, the morning was successful, with productive dialogue between and among multiple departments and units that continued over lunch. As a result, I am scheduling two more special-topic luncheon meetings this spring, and I am expanding the invitation list to include any member of the West community who is interested in learning more about programs and initiatives that have ongoing campus-wide impact.*

Since that time, I've had several faculty express their interest in attending, but noting that the timing (late morning through lunch) precludes their participation due to teaching commitments. Therefore, in order to provide more opportunities for attendance, please note the following time change for April's luncheon:

Tuesday, March 14, 10 a.m.—12:30 p.m., "Categorical Programs and Funding: SSSP, Student Equity, and Basic Skills;" (this time will not change due to conflicts with Academic Senate);

and

**Tuesday, April 18, 10 a.m.—1:00 p.m. 12:30 p.m.-3:00 p.m.**, "Community Outreach," including dual credit and marketing.

If you are interested in participating, please RSVP to Vicky Nesia.

## Results of the 2016 LACCD Mental Health Survey Show Negative Impact of Stress

The results of the LACCD Mental Health Survey, conducted in fall 2016, were shared with the Board's Educational Programs and Institutional Effectiveness Committee on January 25. I am glad to provide a copy of the report upon request. Following are some of the report's highlights.

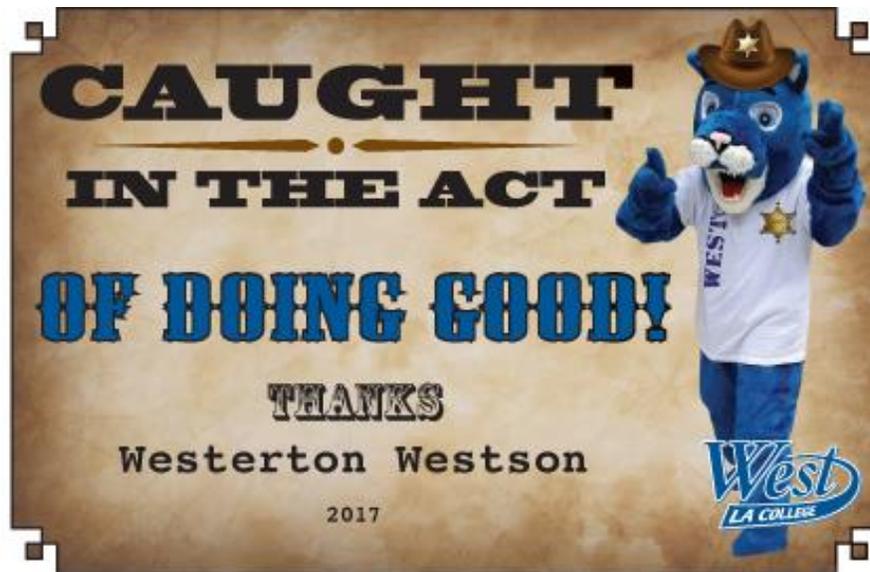
- A total of 2,754 LACCD students completed the survey. Of these, 49% were less than 25 years old, 70% were female, and 55% self-reported as Latino/Latina. The majority (57%) were full-time students, and 60% had the goal to transfer to a four-year college.
- Nearly half the students surveyed (49%) reported experiencing more than average to tremendous stress levels, which was persistent over time.
- More than half (52%) stated that stress was a factor in them either receiving a lower exam or course grade, dropping a class, or causing a significant disruption that resulted in a leave of absence.
- The survey revealed that the proportion of students whose academic performance is affected by anxiety, depression, or stress is significantly higher if they identify as belonging to one of the following groups: lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and questioning (LGBTX); first generation college students; foster care youth; ethnic minority; homeless youth; or disabled.
- Homeless youth appear to be the most at-risk population, as they are also significantly more likely to be affected by alcohol use, death of a friend or family member, and/or an eating disorder/problem.
- Fourteen percent (14%) of the students surveyed stated that they did not know where to go for help with a personal problem, and 31% were unaware at all where to go on campus if they needed mental health, or other similar, services.
- The majority (81%) indicated that they would consider seeking help from a mental health care professional, and 85% of the students who are open to receiving services would consider seeking help from a college counseling or health service program.
- In general, students indicated that their campus was friendly, caring, tolerant of diversity, and safe. However, 23% of students did not feel that their college did a good job of communicating to students about the available mental health services on campus.

The survey results suggest the need for more mental health awareness activities on campus and through social media. Many students said they would be willing to receive mental health services and access service on campus, but did not know if they were eligible to receive services, what services were offered, and how to access those services.

Two questions for the West community:

1. How equipped are we to handle students' mental health issues?
2. What should we do to improve/refine/expand our services?

Thanks for any input you might provide.



*Do you know a West employee who deserves*

## The “Caught in the Act” Award?

With the “Caught in the Act” award, we will recognize and celebrate the dedication of our fellow staff and faculty. “Caught in the Act” is an “occasional award,” given roughly on a monthly basis and presented when the honoree will least expect it.

**If you have someone you’d like to nominate, simply send an email directly to Vicky Nesia that provides the following information:**

- **Name of the nominee;**
- **Position (e.g., English faculty, Admissions and Records Analyst, etc.);**
- **Why you think this individual personifies the mission and vision of West Los Angeles College; and**
- **An anecdote or example illustrating/supporting your nomination.**

We have so many dedicated individuals that make West a true community of educators. Please join me in recognizing their contributions by submitting a nomination.

Thanks.