San Bernardino Valley College
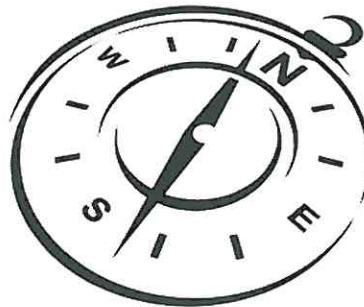
Basic Skills Proposal

Learning Communities and Programs for the Achievement of Student Success

Learning COMPASS

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Learning COMPASS
(Learning Communities and Programs for the Achievement of Student Success)

Purpose: The purpose of Learning COMPASS is to expand the support of and resources for faculty projects that enhance learning experiences for students. This program will continue to strengthen the academic culture of student centered-learning that already exists at SBVC, and will support programs that implement best practices by providing resources to learning communities and encouraging dialogues across disciplines. Learning COMPASS will coordinate activity among the learning communities in an effort to expand those services in support of the Student Success Initiative. Learning COMPASS will provide an umbrella for student success projects.

Mission: The primary mission of Learning COMPASS is to create a centralized program that brings faculty members from across the disciplines together to dialogue about teaching and learning and to provide support to faculty members who choose to participate in the learning communities and other programs supporting students' achievement of success.

Success Rates: There are a number of Learning communities that currently exist on campus that are included in this proposal: (a) Tumaini, (b) Puente, (c) accelerated learning, (d) linked classes, (e) Valley-Bound Commitment, (f) supplemental instruction. These learning communities have been shown to have positive impacts on student learning (see attached information re: success and retention rates.

Tumaini: The Tumaini Program is a learning community designed to increase academic and personal success of students and to promote transfer to four-year colleges and universities. Tumaini targets students who are interested in learning about African-American history, literature, and culture. Tumaini instructors and counselors use collaborative and other community building strategies to enhance students' learning potential in and out of the classroom. Tumaini combines elements of counseling with courses (English, Math) to assist students with adapting to the rigors of college life. The 2012/2013 Tumaini cohort had a 74% success rate and a 92% retention rate. These rates were above the campus-wide rates, which were 69% success rate and 89% retention rate.

Puente: The mission of the Puente Project is to increase the number of educationally under-represented students who enroll in four-year colleges and universities to obtain their bachelor's degrees and return to the community as leaders and mentors of future generations. Students build confidence in their writing skills through an exploration of Mexican-American/ Latino literature. Puente is a successful statewide transfer program consisting of counseling, mentoring, and writing components. The 2012/2013 Puente cohort showed an increase in success and retention rates over the college-wide average. The success rate for the Puente cohort was 81% and the retention rate was 94%—as compared to the college-wide averages of 69% success rate and 89% retention rate.

Accelerated Learning: Because research shows that basic skills students have a greater chance of success in moving into college-level courses if they quickly complete the basic skills sequence, Math has offered cohorts of courses to do this. The Fast-Track Math Courses, which offer two basic skills Math classes together in one semester) have proved successful in both success and retention rates:

STUDENT SUCCESS
MATH FAST-TRACK VS. ALL STUDENTS
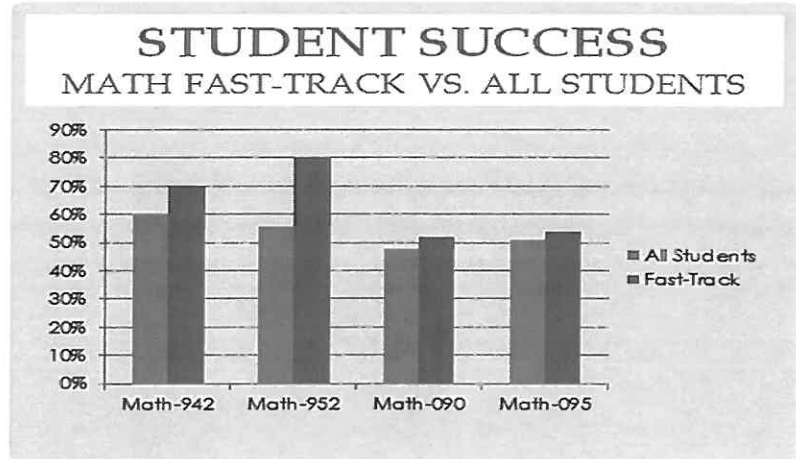
Table 1. Comparison of Math Fast Track Sections with Students in the General Population							
Course	Term	Retention Rate for fast track courses	Retention for all sections of same course	Retention Difference	Success Rate for fast track courses	Success for all sections of same course	Success Difference
Math 090	Sp13	97%	83%	+14	54%	44%	+10
Math 095	Sp13	95%	85%	+10	52%	48%	+4
Math 942	Fa12	93%	90%	+3	70%	60%	+10
Math 952	Fa12	96%	89%	+7	80%	57%	+23

Linked Courses: Courses have been paired in a variety of disciplines to provide students with learning communities that reinforce learning in both courses. Students who enrolled in English 015 found this format particularly beneficial. Faculty in these communities work together to link the curriculum and to support the learning environment in each other's classes. In addition to the links made through

SUCCESS RATES FOR STUDENTS IN PAIRED-COURSES LEARNING COMMUNITIES
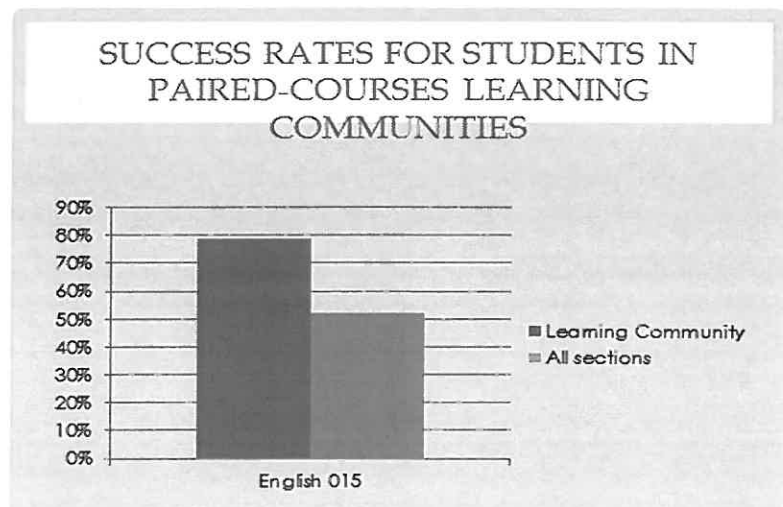
Tumaini and Puente—which link content courses to Student Development courses, other classes link content areas: (a) English/Chemistry, (b) English/Spanish, (c) Auto/Reading, (d) Math/Water Supply Technology, (e) History/Philosophy. In most instances, both success and retention rates for the learning community cohorts exceed the college-wide rates. See Table 7 (at the end of this document) for "Paired Courses" breakdown of success and retention rates for each cohort.

Valley-Bound Commitment: The Valley-Bound Commitment Program at San Bernardino Valley College has blossomed into an award-winning program that has led to greater levels of student success for hundreds of Inland Empire residents. Since its inception in 2008, participants in the Valley-Bound Commitment (VBC) have achieved higher grades than their peers, continue their education beyond their first year at a higher rate than typical students, and transferred to four-year colleges throughout California. The program is aimed at removing all economic barriers to the first year of college while providing critical guidance and support that is essential to a student's continued striving towards individual educational and career goals. The 2012/2013 Valley Bound cohort showed an increase in success and retention rates over the college-wide average. The success rate for the Valley Bound cohort was 73% and the retention rate was 94%—as compared to the college-wide averages of 69% success rate and 89% retention rate.

Supplemental Instruction: Supplemental instruction provides students with additional instruction that takes place outside of the classroom facilitated by peer leaders. Peer leaders (also referred to as supplemental instructors) are trained by lead faculty members in the disciplines to conduct workshops and provide one-on-one tutoring to students in identified courses. STEM courses currently participating in supplemental instruction include biology, chemistry, computer science, geography, math, and physics. This semester, a modified supplemental instruction cohort from across the disciplines was piloted to include Reading English, Modern Languages, Music, and Automotive. Since the cohort across the disciplines did not begin until October 2013, data is not available. However, data for the math and science cohort success and retention rates are presented below. Data spans a two-year period— 2011/12 and 2012/2013:

Table 2. Comparison of Students who received tutoring in biology with biology students in the general student population.			
Biology	Tutored Students	All Students in Biology Courses	Improvement Difference
Retention 2011-12	83%	76%	+7%
Retention 2012-13	89%	85%	+4%
Success 2011-12	68%	57%	+11%
Success 2012-13	70%	57%	+13%

Table 3. Comparison of Students who received tutoring in Chemistry with chemistry students in the general student population.

Chemistry	Tutored Students	All Students in Chemistry Courses	Improvement Difference
Retention 2011-12	83%	80%	+3%
Retention 2012-13	89%	85%	+4%
Success 2011-12	64%	54%	+10%
Success 2012-13	62%	54%	+8%

Table 4. Comparison of Students who received tutoring in math with math students in the general student population.

Math	Tutored Students	All Students in Math Courses	Improvement Difference
Retention 2011-12	85%	81%	+4%
Retention 2012-13	89%	87%	+2%
Success 2011-12	66%	59%	+7%
Success 2012-13	64%	59%	+5%

Table 5. Comparison of Students who received tutoring in physics with physics students in the general student population.

Physics	Tutored Students	All Students in Physics Courses	Improvement Difference
Retention 2011-12	98%	88%	+10%
Retention 2012-13	95%	96%	-1%
Success 2011-12	93%	82%	+11%
Success 2012-13	90%	82%	+8%