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While our historical presence goes back to the 1960s, The RP Group officially formed in 1992 and serves leaders and institutions in the California Community Colleges (CCC) system by providing professional development and conducting research. This annual report encompasses the celebration of our 30 years of service and impact in strengthening student success.

At our roots, The RP Group is a membership-based organization representing institutional research, planning, and effectiveness (IRPE) professionals in California, and it has provided a place where CCC IRPE professionals have been able to gather, share ideas, support each other, and grow together as colleagues. As we have also grown into a research and professional development organization, we have helped to improve student learning, remove institutional barriers, and communicate what works to support community college students.

Key examples of The RP Group’s impactful professional development efforts include the Strengthening Student Success Conference and Leading from the Middle, both of which provide unique opportunities for a wide cross-section of CCC stakeholders — including faculty, administrators, and classified professionals — to engage each other on increasing equitable outcomes and institutional effectiveness, as well as to deepen their understanding of critical issues that shape student success.

The RP Group’s landmark research projects, Student Support (Re)defined and Through the Gate, have examined how community colleges can improve student success by focusing on what students say they need to succeed. The Multiple Measures Assessment Project has redefined how students are placed into college mathematics and English composition, helping to reduce barriers to completion for thousands of students.

We are honored to be celebrating our 30th anniversary. This milestone presents a unique opportunity to reflect on the breadth and depth of who we are and what we do. And yet, there is still more work to be done. Whether it is to improve equity and outcomes for students, to provide support and representation for practitioners, or to advocate for evidence-based decision-making, we are constantly seeking ways to fulfill our mission to better serve our IRPE community, our colleges, and, ultimately, our students.

We appreciate the ongoing support of our mission, vision, and values from our colleagues throughout the state over the years. It is only together that we will strengthen student success and equity in our California community colleges.

In service to our community,

Dr. Darla Cooper
Executive Director

Dr. Erik Cooper
Board President (2020–2022)
## Our Evolution Through Time

**Celebrating 30 Years of Service and Impact**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1960s</td>
<td>The <strong>Southern California Community College Institutional Research Association (SCCCIRA)</strong> and the <strong>Northern California Community College Research Group (NORCAL consortium)</strong> form.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1986</td>
<td>To address high community college dropout rates, California AB 3 mandates matriculation services and research, resulting in the <strong>first institutional, research, planning, and effectiveness (IRPE) roles</strong>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>The <strong>Research and Planning Group (The RP Group)</strong> forms to provide professional development for researchers and evidence-based research to highlight effective policy and practice in the California Community Colleges (CCC).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>The RP Group becomes <strong>incorporated as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization</strong>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>The first <strong>RP Conference</strong> is held for institutional researchers and planners to exchange local approaches to common issues, learn about the latest developments in the field, and strengthen relationships within the IRPE community.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>California establishes the <strong>Partnership for Excellence (PFE)</strong>, which provides additional funding to CCC in exchange for the commitment to improve student access and success.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>The RP Group's <strong>Center for Student Success</strong> forms.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>The first <strong>Summer Institute</strong> is hosted for IRPE professionals.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 2005 | In response to the passage of AB 1417, The RP Group develops the performance framework and indicators that help in the creation of the **Accountability Reporting for the Community Colleges (ARCC)** system.  
The RP Group conducts the **first statewide enrollment projection project** to investigate opportunities for improving the forecasts used to estimate the future facilities needs across the CCC system.  
The RP Group administers its **first IRPE membership survey**, which begins a biannual effort to provide a clear picture of research and planning throughout California. |
| 2006 | The first **Strengthening Student Success Conference (SSSC)** is held, hosting a wide cross-section of CCC practitioners. |
| 2007 | The RP Group's **Basic Skills as a Foundation for Success in the California Community Colleges** (known as "Poppy Copy") identifies effective practices in basic skills programs.  
The RP Group hires its **first Executive Director, Kathy Booth**. |
| 2008 | Through the **Basic Skills Initiative (BSI)**, the CCC Chancellor's Office (CCCCO) allocates funds for colleges to improve their basic skills instruction. |
| 2009 | The **Bridging Research, Information, and Culture (BRIC) Initiative** is launched to help strengthen cultures of inquiry and evidence in the CCC system. |
| 2011 | The Center for Student Success becomes the **Research and Evaluation Division of The RP Group**.  
**Completion by Design**, a multi-state initiative sponsored by the Gates Foundation, engages The RP Group to develop guides documenting approaches to transform students' experience and ultimate success in college.  
**Student Support (Re)defined**, a landmark study on student success, sparks a movement across the CCC system to use student voices as a motivator for change.  
The RP Group releases **Focusing Accreditation on Quality Improvement**, a study that examines accreditation policies and practices nationwide. |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>California establishes the <strong>Student Success and Support Program (SSSP)</strong> to increase access and success by providing effective core services and academic interventions.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 2013 | The first **Leading from the Middle Academy** is held.  
The RP Group employs its **second Executive Director, Michael Howe**. |
| 2014 | The **Multiple Measures Assessment Project (MMAP)** team releases its first set of guidance on how to use high school transcript information to place students into math, English, and credit ESL courses.  
The RP Group partners with the CCCCO on strategic projects, including the **Student Success Scorecard** and **Institutional Effectiveness Partnership Initiative (IEPI)**. |
| 2016 | California approves the **Strong Workforce Program**, a new annual investment of $248 million to enhance and expand career technical education and workforce training.  
The RP Group **doubles its staff and repositions itself** to reach a broader group of stakeholders.  
**Through the Gate** commences to identify strategies to increase transfer among students who complete all or most transfer requirements but do not make it “through the gate” to a university. |
| 2017 | **AB 705 is signed into law**, requiring CCC to maximize the probability that students will enter and complete transfer-level English and math coursework within one year.  
**Based on MMAP’s analyses**, a majority of CCC pilot the use of high school transcripts in the assessment process.  
**CCCCO launches Vision for Success**, an integrated framework aiming to improve student outcomes and close equity gaps.  
CCCCO receives $150 million to expand the **Guided Pathways framework** and collaborates with The RP Group to develop resources to support CCC with inquiry, design, and implementation. |
| 2018 | The **Student Centered Funding Formula (SCFF)** is adopted as a new way to allocate funding to CCC districts.  
The **Student Equity and Achievement (SEA)** Program consolidates the BSI, SSSP, and Student Equity to support system-wide goal to eliminate equity gaps.  
The RP Group Board of Directors **promotes its Director of Research and Evaluation, Dr. Darla Cooper**, to be the organization’s **third Executive Director**, leveraging her 20+ years of experience in the CCC system. |
| 2019 | The RP Group develops a **five-year strategic plan** that codifies the unique nature of its **dual role as a membership and research organization**.  
**AB 705 goes into effect in the fall and MMAP’s research and resources are implemented statewide.** |
| 2020 | In response to the **COVID-19 pandemic**, the CCCCO and The RP Group collaborate to design and administer surveys to CCC students and employees about their transition to a virtual environment, basic needs, and general well-being.  
The RP Group moves **all professional development offerings online**, including its first online conference (SSSC20), and adds online **PIER to PIER discussions** to preserve community.  
The **CCCCO’s Call to Action** actively strategizes and takes action against structural racism throughout the CCC system.  
The **African American Transfer Tipping Point study** launches to understand the factors that facilitate or hinder university transfer among African American/Black students.  
The RP Group’s Board **restructures to a regional representation model** with Board members elected by 12 regions. |
| 2021 | All **RP Group professional development events continue online**, including RP Conference 2021, SSSC21 (celebrating the conference’s 15th anniversary), webinars, workshops, and monthly PIER to PIER sessions.  
The RP Group establishes an **Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Committee.** |
| 2022 | The RP Group **celebrates 30 years of service and impact to the IRPE community.** |

You can also view the “Our Evolution Through Time” poster on The RP Group About Us page.
The RP Group is an independent nonprofit in service of the California Community Colleges (CCC) system to help minimize inequities for marginalized students and increase success for all students. **We focus on decreasing inequities while increasing success** by serving and supporting the IRPE community, advocating for the use of evidence-based decision-making, and fostering the professional growth of a wide section of CCC educators through a multitude of learning opportunities and high-quality research.

We also partner with other organizations, foundations, and system leaders on professional development and research to help increase student success and the effectiveness of postsecondary institutions in California and beyond.

**Mission**

As the representative organization for institutional research, planning, and effectiveness (IRPE) professionals in the California Community Colleges system, The RP Group strengthens the ability of California community colleges to discover and undertake high-quality research, planning, and assessments that improve evidence-based decision-making, institutional effectiveness, and success for all students.

**Vision**

The RP Group strives to build a community college culture that views planning, evidence-based decision-making, and institutional effectiveness as integral, collaborative strategies that work together to support student success, increase equitable outcomes, improve college operations, and inform policymakers.

**Core Values**

- **Quality:** Our projects, products, and initiatives are carefully researched, thoroughly vetted, and broadly informed.

- **Authenticity:** Our Board, staff, consultants, volunteers, and members have direct experience with community colleges and share a deep passion for ensuring the success of students and institutions.

- **Equity:** We are motivated to equip our community colleges to significantly improve achievement among students historically underserved by institutions and to provide a path to mobility for those most vulnerable in our society.

- **Collaboration:** Our engaging, action-oriented, and practitioner-based approach draws on the collective wisdom of the CCC system empowering our stakeholders and clients to lead their own meaningful inquiry and evidence-based decision-making.
About The RP Group

Our Members and Our Dual Role

Collaboration is fundamental to our organization and manifests most evidently through our engagement with the vibrant community of IRPE professionals and the CCC system at large. Our Board of Directors uses a regional representation model to ensure that each of California’s 116 community colleges and 73 districts is represented by a specific RP Group Board member.

In 2021–22, 86% of California community colleges and districts were RP Group institutional members, compared with 83% in 2020–21.

The primary role of The RP Group is to represent IRPE professionals within the CCC system. It also serves leaders and institutions in the CCC system by providing professional and leadership development and conducting research. Our members are leaders within the organization: serving as Board members, participating in Regional Research Groups, and supporting The RP Group in identifying, prioritizing, and conducting research and professional development offerings that drive institutional effectiveness and student success. The RP Group’s research and professional development further the interests of CCC by supporting data-informed decision-making throughout the system, elevating the role of the researcher, and nurturing a culture of evidence and inquiry.
Our Code of Ethics embeds in writing a common set of principles that reflects the link between The RP Group’s mission, vision, and values and the day-to-day decisions and behaviors of our staff, Board members, and consultants. Developed through a collaborative effort led by RP Group Board and staff members, the establishment of the principles in this Code of Ethics also supports collaboration, which stimulates dialogue between CCC researchers and other stakeholders, and encourages thoughtful responses to sensitive and important issues.

**Integrity & Authenticity**
Our role as data stewards is one of great responsibility, ensuring trust and a positive culture of inquiry.

**Inclusiveness, Diversity & Equity**
Our purpose is intrinsically tied to improving education for marginalized and disproportionately impacted students.

**Social Responsibility & Collaboration**
Our role is to help facilitate the understanding and use of data in our collaborative efforts with others who may learn and adapt in order to better serve students.

**Professional Responsibility & Quality**
Our ability to be effective as researchers requires that we consistently put forth high-quality research and treat ourselves and others with dignity and respect.
Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion
An Overview

The RP Group’s Commitment to Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion

Just as our Mission, Vision, and Core Values guide our approach to research, professional development, and representation, we believe we need to affirmatively and publicly articulate our commitment to equity, diversity, and inclusion.

The RP Group recognizes it is not enough to promote equity, diversity, and inclusion. We must proactively work to oppose racial inequity and lead social justice within the educational system. The RP Group must capitalize on its unique position as both a provider of research and professional development and as a representative body for IRPE professionals to advance equity and drive systemic change.

Here are some of the actions we have already taken to uphold our commitment:

• We have an Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Committee that has created and piloted tools for our Board, staff, consultants, and the IRPE field to use.
• We are undergoing significant Board and staff development around equity, diversity, and inclusion.
• We collected demographic information from our internal stakeholders to better position the organization to represent and support our constituents.
• We will continue to refine our professional development offerings by intentionally planning and curating events with a focus on equity, diversity, and inclusion.

As IRPE professionals, we have a privilege and responsibility to go beyond identifying gaps in students’ outcomes and must use the data to inform actions that help eliminate these gaps. Finally, we would like to recognize that we are all in different places in our personal journeys. The RP Group as an organization and as a group of individuals is no different. Our positions and documents will continue to evolve as we grow personally and professionally as an organization and as individuals.
Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion

Conceptual Framework

The RP Group Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Committee has developed an EDI framework whereby we can monitor our progress in achieving our goals, develop professional development that will help us advance equity, and help RP Group staff better represent equity in our research.

In order to advance our mission and support IRPE practitioners, we are curating resources to help researchers better incorporate equity and equitable practices into their research. These materials, located within our digital EDI library, are organized based on our advancing equity framework.

**Equity-Minded**
A perspective or lens underpinning the operations of the organization that centers on recognizing and redressing systems of oppression in its policies, practices, and actions. This underpinning includes self-reflection, examining and prioritizing who is/has been most directly impacted, and interrogating the status quo to ensure equity is at the forefront of the work.

**Distributive Leadership**
An equity-minded approach to leadership that represents a collective commitment to lead and implement change, unified by a shared vision. It welcomes a variety of perspectives and leadership potential, and is not limited to one person or position, ensuring those impacted by implementing the vision are valued, included, and empowered to implement change within their roles.

**Cultural Humility**
The ability to reflect critically upon and acknowledge our own biases, perspectives, shortcomings, as well as the limitations of our expertise is part of the process of learning and building the capacity to improve both our internal community and the communities we serve. Honoring the work, voice, perspectives, and experiences of those who interact with our organization and institutions across the state.

**Evidence-Based**
A commitment to collecting and analyzing data from multiple sources and perspectives to identify problems as well as solutions; recognizing that something does not work unless it works for all; and integrating both quantitative and qualitative analyses to provide necessary context/perspective.
Our Board members serve as the representatives for our IRPE members and community. They oversee the organization's fiscal standing and strategic direction, guide research, and act as conduits between practitioners' needs and the organization's resource offerings.

**Executive Committee**
President | Erik Cooper, Sierra College
President Elect | Pam Mery, City College of San Francisco
Vice President, Board Development | Jake Kevari, Moreno Valley College
Vice President, Professional Development and Membership | Bri Hays, Cuyamaca College
Secretary/Treasurer | Christopher Tarman, MiraCosta College
Executive Director | Darla Cooper, The RP Group

**Regional Board Members**
Jeremy Brown, Yuba College | Far North
Ryan Cartnal, Cuesta College | Central Coast/North Los Angeles
Chialin Hsieh, Los Medanos College | San Francisco East Bay
Wendy McEwen, Riverside City College | Inland Empire
Milagros Kudo, Los Angeles Community College District | Central Los Angeles
Amil Gehrke, Santa Rosa Junior College | North San Francisco Bay/Peninsula
Daniel Miramontez, San Diego Miramar College | San Diego/Imperial
Karissa Morehouse, Merced College | Central Valley South
Vinh Nguyen, Irvine Valley College | Orange County
Rosaleen Ryan, Monterey Peninsula College | South San Francisco Bay
Sabrina Sencil, Cosumnes River College | Central Valley North
Bryan Ventura, Cypress College | Los Angeles County

**At-Large Board Members**
Marcell Gilmore, Mt. San Antonio College
Jeremy Smotherman, Santa Rosa Junior College

**Strategic Advisors**
Trevor Albertson, Chief Executive Officers of the California Community Colleges (CEOCCC)
John Hetts, California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office (CCCCO)
Valerie Lundy-Wagner, California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office (CCCCO)
Leslie Minor, California Community Colleges Chief Instructional Officers (CCCCIO)
Robert Pimentel, Chief Student Services Officers Association (CSSOA)
Denise (Cynthia) Richardson, California Community Colleges Chief Instructional Officers (CCCCIO)
Craig Rutan, Academic Senate for California Community Colleges (ASCCC)
Improving Equitable Outcomes
Elevating Student Experience and Using Data in Decision-Making

In 2021–22, our work continued to center on improving equitable outcomes for historically disadvantaged student populations such as veterans, African American/Black students, students from low-income backgrounds, and Hispanic/Latina/o/x students.

In the past year, we collaborated with several key community college system partners to examine the following three critical programs that reflect the importance of building a sense of belonging for students and the role caring and supportive college staff play in helping students achieve this feeling at their institutions:

Open Educational Resources (OER)

Conducted beneficiary analyses of Open for Antiracism (OFAR) to understand the perceived impact antiracist training and strategies such as open educational resources (OER) can have on teaching and learning.

Extended Opportunity Programs and Services (EOPS)

Completed a mixed-methods research study to understand the impact EOPS participation has on students’ progress and completion outcomes, and their experience of how the program has helped them succeed.

Veteran Resource Centers (VRCs)

Deployed a statewide survey and conducted focus groups and interviews to amplify and elevate the experience of community college veteran students to better understand their needs and how community colleges are meeting or not meeting those needs.

“...It’s the community that brings you this sense of belonging to the college.... So, sometimes I think about it—still to this day—that if I hadn’t gotten into college and met EOPS, I would have been lost, and I probably wouldn’t have continued being in college [because] I wouldn’t think that I was worth it. — EOPS Student Participant
In its sixth year, our Through the Gate transfer research delves deeper into the experiences of historically underrepresented students and the impact the pandemic has had on their transfer experiences. In our research, we found that students experienced diminished contact and connection with their colleges and prospective transfer destinations and expressed increasing concerns over college affordability.

In this past year, we accomplished the following:

- **Published two briefs** that describe the impact the COVID-19 pandemic had on students' transfer experiences and plans and share reflections from transfer professionals about the efforts their institutions made to meet students' transfer needs.

- **Co-designed two resources to translate findings into action**, in collaboration with system partners whose work and experiences are directly related to transfer.

- **Launched a statewide mixed-methods study** to uplift the transfer experiences of African American/Black community college students, identifying the academic and non-academic tipping points in their journeys that bring them closer to or further away from their transfer goals.

Our Through the Gate research efforts are generously funded by College Futures Foundation, ECMC Foundation, and Lumina Foundation.
Focusing Our Research on Equity

Since 2014, the Multiple Measures Assessment Project (MMAP) team has conducted research that includes quantitative analyses focused on access to and completion of transfer-level math, English, and English as a second language courses, paired with qualitative research to uplift promising practices that help close equity gaps in access and completion for historically disadvantaged student populations.

Since the implementation of AB 705 beginning in 2018, we continue to conduct research to highlight the potential gains and opportunities in enrollment and completion of college-level math and English courses for the vast majority of CCC students, including special student population subgroups (e.g., students with disabilities, veterans).

In the past year, the MMAP team completed the following:

Three research reports summarizing the impact AB 705 has had on transfer-level course completions for special student populations and high school to community college transition math patterns, and the impact of Algebra 2 completion in high school on transfer-level math completion rates.

One dashboard, the Transfer-Level Gateway Completion Dashboard, which provides a statewide snapshot of throughput rates by three different levels (statewide, college, and regional), was co-developed with the California Community Colleges Chancellor’s Office and published on its website.

Eighteen presentations via webinars, in- and out-of-state conferences, and events hosted by national organizations such as the American Educational Research Association, Conference on the Acceleration of Developmental Education, and the Association for the Study of Higher Education.
The RP Group increases institutional effectiveness through many content- and community-rich professional development programs, events, offerings, and platforms, including our Leading from the Middle academies and annual Strengthening Student Success Conference designed for a broad range of CCC professionals, as well as our bi-annual Summer-to-Summer Institute, annual RP Conference, workshops, webinars, and monthly PIER to PIER community discussions designed specifically for our IRPE community.

The information below demonstrates the breadth, depth, and reach of The RP Group's professional development programming for the IRPE community in the CCC system during the 2021–22 academic year.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Events Hosted</th>
<th>Institutions Reached by IRPE Professional Development Events</th>
</tr>
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</table>
| 10 PIER to PIER Discussions | Allen Hancock College  
American River College  
Antelope Valley College  
Bakersfield College  
Barstow College  
Berkeley City College  
Butte College  
Cabrillo College  
Calbright College  
Cañada College  
CCC Technology Center, Butte College  
Cerritos Community College  
Cerritos College  
Chabot College  
Chaffey College  
Citrus College  
City College of San Francisco  
Clovis Community College  
Coastline Community College District  
Coastline Community College  
College of Marin  
College of San Mateo  
College of the Canyons  
College of the Desert  
College of the Redwoods  
College of the Sequoias  
Columbia College  
Compton College  
Contra Costa Community College District  
Cypress College  
De Anza College  
De Anza Community College  
Evelynza College  
Folsom Lake College  
Foothill College  
Fresno City College  
Fullerton College  
Golden West College  
Grossmont College  
Grossmont Community College District  
Hartnell College  
Imperial Valley College  
Irvine Valley College  
Irwin Community College District  
Lake Tahoe Community College  
Los Pinzón College  
Lassen College  
Long Beach City College  
Los Angeles City College  
Los Angeles Community College District  
Los Angeles Harbor College  
Los Angeles Mission College  
Los Angeles Pierce College  
Los Angeles Southwest College  
Los Angeles Valley College  
Los Medanos College  
Los Rios Community College District  
Madera Community College  
Mendocino College  
Merced College  
Meridian College  
Miraleste College  
MiraCosta College  
Mission College  
Modesto Junior College  
Monte Carlo Peninsular College  
Monterey College  
Moreno Valley College  
Mt. San Antonio College  
Mt. San Antonio College  
Napa Valley College  
Napa College  
North Orange Continuing Education  
North Orange County Community College District  
Palo Verde College  
Palomar College  
Paraclete City College  
Paradise Valley Community College District  
Porterville College  
Riverside San Bernardino Community College District  
Rocky Valley  
Roosendaal College  
Riverside Community College District  
Riverside City College  
Sacramento City College  
Saddleback College  
San Bernardino Community College District  
San Bernardino Valley College  
San Diego City College  
San Diego Community College District  
San Diego Continuing Education  
San Diego Mesa College  
San Diego Miramar College  
San Joaquin Delta College |

Event Outcomes

- Overall participant satisfaction rate: 99.5%
- Event participants: 1,382
- Increase in participation since 2018: 296%
Increasing Learning and Development

Leading from the Middle

Leading from the Middle (LFM) is a change-focused leadership development program whose mission is to cultivate the individual and collective leadership capacity of community college practitioners committed to advancing systemic transformation. Through experiential learning, coaching, and facilitation by former program graduates, our program develops and equips campus-based teams of tenured and adjunct faculty, administrators, classified professionals, and researchers with skills and strategies to “lead from the middle.”

In 2021–22, LFM engaged over 25 program alumni to participate in a strategic planning and redesign process to ensure the program continues to be relevant into the future. The program now offers CCC middle leaders an expanded skill set to lead institutional transformation in a volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous environment.

In fall 2021, we launched our newly redesigned LFM Academy with curriculum, tools, and strategies that address the layered leadership development goals of individuals, teams, and colleges. The new 15-month experience includes the following:

• Virtual pre-academy preparation activities
• Three in-person convenings in a retreat setting, during which campus teams engage with and learn from each other
• Follow-up meetings to ensure the sustainability of the work

As part of LFM’s experiential learning model, participants apply their knowledge to a “real world” problem at their college. During the 2021–22 academy, campus teams worked on projects that aligned with their college’s strategic priorities and sought to address institutional inequities, diversity, inclusion, and racial injustice. Some examples include:

• Ensuring full access to degree and certificate programs and creating an equitable learning environment for Native American students
• Updating courses through an equity lens
• Increasing access to Credit for Prior Learning
• Revamping assessment procedures

“The activities helped me develop my skills as a leader and active team member. I also appreciate the networking opportunities to learn from other campus leaders how they are addressing similar issues on their campus.” — LFM participant
Increasing Learning and Development

Strengthening Student Success Conference

The annual Strengthening Student Success Conference (SSSC), held each year in the fall, provides a unique opportunity for a wide cross-section of CCC attendees to come together to share knowledge, learn, and connect, with a focus on improving institutional effectiveness, student success, leadership capacity, and equitable outcomes.

Strengthening Student Success Conference 2021 (SSSC21) marked the 16th anniversary of the conference and was held virtually, October 13–15, 2021. The theme of the conference was Leading with Clarity, Determination, and Purpose, which called us to action as our colleges, communities, and country began to map out “getting back to normal” with a renewed commitment to increase equity-mindedness, provide greater flexibility for our students, and foster inclusive institutions that champion antiracist teaching and learning.

Programming consisted of three plenary sessions, including a student panel and inspirational leaders who could offer national and statewide points of view and 36 breakout sessions presented by CCC practitioners. In addition, attendees had an opportunity to start conference days with a guided mindfulness session and join fellow colleagues in lunchtime discussions on timely topics related to student success in the CCC system.

497 registered participants

142 first-time attendees

77 CCC and district offices represented

102 presenters, including student co-presenters

92% satisfaction rating

Value of Student Voices and Participation

The RP Group values the participation of students and the inclusion of student voices in the conference. In recent years, SSSC conference planners have focused more on including students’ voices and strongly encourage presenters to include students and/or student voices in their sessions. In 2021, in addition to the student panel, there were nine breakout sessions that included students as co-presenters or shared student voices from campus research and focus groups.

“The students in the opening session were powerful. We just do not hear these voices enough. So, that was a high point that I want to share with my college.”

— SSSC21 participant
Our annual **RP Conference** is the **largest gathering of IRPE professionals in the CCC system**. The conference provides opportunities to exchange local approaches to common issues, learn about the latest developments in the field, and strengthen relationships within our community.

RP Conference 2022 was a return to our traditional in-person conference format after a virtual RP Conference offering in 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The conference was hosted at the Hyatt Regency Orange County in Garden Grove, California, April 12–14, 2022, and the theme was *The Evolving Role of IRPE: Supporting Equitable Learning Across the Institution*. Programming included two keynote presentations, 24 breakout sessions, Birds of a Feather topic-based discussions, a screening of a video production covering IRPE career trajectories, updates from The RP Group and the California Community Colleges Chancellor’s Office, and a post-conference workshop. For those who could not attend in person, we offered a Virtual Session Sampler, which included four live conference presentations via Zoom the week before the in-person conference, plus post-conference access to the recordings of the three plenary sessions presented at the in-person conference.

**216 registered attendees**

**65 colleges and districts represented**

**92% satisfaction rating**

In response to feedback from previous Summer Institute participants, our newly redesigned **IRPE Summer-to-Summer Institute** now provides an **immersive 10-month, two-track learning experience for both IRPE newcomers and seasoned professionals**. The program serves as a professional development opportunity for IRPE professionals focused on equity-minded leadership, specifically on advancing racial equity and social justice across our colleges. Within this context, participants identify, apply, and evaluate essential skills as IRPE professionals.

The institute, which launches in 2022–23, includes two in-person convenings at the Kellogg West Conference Center in Pomona, California, to kick off and conclude the 10-month engagement, with monthly synchronous virtual sessions offered in between.
Increasing Learning and Development

PIER to PIER (IRPE to IRPE)

Launched at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic as a way to help our members stay connected, PIER to PIER (IRPE to IRPE) virtual monthly convenings are a space for IRPE professionals to discuss practice, share strategies, develop solutions, and collaborate.

99% of participant survey respondents found value in PIER to PIER discussions in 2021–22.

Featured topics included:

- AB 705 research, findings, and courageous conversations
- Dashboard showcase
- Facilitating conversations about instructor effects on student success
- Imagineering summer for actionable learning and planning
- IRPE career trajectories
- IRPE life hacks
- Qualitative inquiry to inform equity planning
- Reimagining IRPE offices in the new virtual normal
- Research and planning with LGBTQ+ students in mind
- Student advocacy efforts, data governance, and privacy considerations

Virtual Workshop Series: Building IRPE Capacity to Advance Equity-Driven Change

Held over three consecutive Fridays in January and February 2022, this workshop series focused on methods and practices IRPE offices can utilize to foster campus cultures that are able to activate racial equity data and inspire positive change for racially minoritized students. Attendees discussed approaches and strategies to assess the institutional data culture, facilitate equity data conversations, and cultivate inquiry and curiosity amongst campus practitioners.

I really enjoy hearing diverse perspectives and engaging in discussion about heady topics.
— PIER to PIER participant

I love seeing the cool tools that people are using.
— PIER to PIER participant
Sharing Our Work Advances Our Mission
The Wide Reach of Our Efforts and Programs

The RP Group’s research projects and professional development events have advanced our mission beyond our organization. Throughout 2021–22, The RP Group’s efforts have been featured in news, publications, and blogs. In addition, we began to share our work through the use of a press release distribution service.

In December 2021, The RP Group announced the publication of our research brief, *Students Speak: Understanding the Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Their Transfer Journeys*, which highlighted the unique challenges facing California community college students on their transfer paths to four-year universities.

In January 2022, we broadly shared the importance of transferable, college-level math classes for student success in our research brief, *Maximizing Math Throughput of Students Who Did Not Complete Algebra 2 in High School*.

The press releases for these two briefs were picked up by nearly 90 media groups, 45 within the Associated Press, reaching an estimated audience of 101.6 million.

In February 2022, we took the opportunity to celebrate the 30th anniversary of The RP Group and its service to institutional research, planning, and effectiveness (IRPE) professionals in the California Community Colleges (CCC) system, which included sending out a statewide press release to build the brand recognition of our organization.

In March 2022, we announced the 2022 RP Group Award winners, which recognized CCC IRPE professionals for their exceptional contributions to student and institutional success through community college research, planning, and institutional effectiveness efforts. We also celebrated our 2022 Lifetime Achievement Award Winners for their extraordinary career-length involvement and service to the CCC IRPE community.

These two press releases were picked up by nearly 85 media groups, 43 within the Associated Press, reaching an estimated audience of 97.3 million.

This additional evidence helps to further bolster the work of the California Community Colleges as we ensure students’ entrance into, support in, and successful completion of these courses is maximized. *We thank the MMAP team from the RP Group for this important work.*

— Dr. Aisha Lowe, CCCCO Vice Chancellor for Educational Services and Support

We are honored to be celebrating 30 years of service and impact. This anniversary presents a unique opportunity to promote our mission, vision, and values and reflect on the breadth, depth, and scope of who we are and what we do.

— Dr. Darla Cooper, Executive Director, The RP Group
Our Thanks for Your Partnership

We extend our deepest gratitude to Connie Tan for her artistry, to The RP Group staff for their thoughtful efforts in creating this report, to the CCC IRPE professionals we serve, and to our Board members for their ongoing support of our mission.

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For more information about The RP Group, to learn more about our research and professional development efforts, to get involved in our activities and events, or to become a member, please visit our website, www.RPGroup.org.