



West Los Angeles College

2018 Achieving the Dream Leah Meyer Austin Award Application

1. Institutional Contacts: Complete contact information including phone and email addresses for three key contacts (application contact, President/CEO, and key communications contact)

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2. Overview Statement and Narrative Questions

Overview Statement: (maximum 500-word summary) Provide an overview describing why your institution should be considered for the Leah Meyer Austin Award. Briefly describe what has led to increased student success at the institution, with particular attention to the success of underrepresented and underserved students, and indicate how your institution has tried to close achievement gaps. Furthermore, indicate which of the seven areas of the Institutional Capacity Assessment framework (<http://achievingthedream.org/about-us/our-approach>) your institution has focused on in building capacity, why and how this is related to your student success agenda. It is not necessary to connect to all seven capacity areas.

West Los Angeles College joined the ATD network in 2011 and has presented at the D.R.E.A.M. Conference and regularly participates in the *Emerging Ideas Exchange* to share our ATD activities and showcase our ATD newsletter. In 2015, West earned Leader College designation and continues to focus on using data to inform policy and practice to help our students achieve their goals.

West is committed to ATD and has institutionalized the ATD Core Team with the Student Success Committee, provided 40% reassigned time for the Faculty Leader, and assigned the Dean of Teaching and Learning as the Administrative Leader. The ATD Data Team is closely connected with the Student Success Committee, and just last spring semester, co-sponsored the Annual College-wide Leadership Retreat with the Chair of the College Council. During the Retreat, participants reviewed disaggregated completion data and engaged in conversations about what West is already doing to support student success and what we can do to close gaps.

West is being considered for the 2018 Leah Meyer Austin Award based on the criteria of *IPEDS 3-year graduation rate change over four years (first-time, full-time students) of 3 percentage points or higher. West's rate change is 7%*. We also saw improvements in our English and math basic skills sequence completion rates over the last four years.

West's systemic change priorities informed by West's major college plans to improve student success and completion are (1) Facilitate Professional Learning for Student Success, (2) Enhance Instructional/Learning Support, and (3) Improve Basic Skills Sequence Completion Options (page 2). These established priorities have helped us focus on the ICAT capacities, Teaching and Learning, Equity, and Engagement and Communication. Our focus on these priorities has led to improving outcomes in the form of increased graduation rates and basic skills English and math completion rates and closing achievement gaps in course completion.

The difference between the overall college course successful completion rate in Fall 2014 (62.7%) and Fall 2016 (63.5%) is less than one percentage point. Given this extremely small difference, the trend over the past three years in the overall course success rate has been an increase in each of the past Fall terms.

In Fall 2014, African American, Hispanic, and Foster Youth course success rates fell below the college rate by 6%, 1%, and 11%, respectively. However, Hispanic/Latino students' successful course completion rate increased by 1.3 percentage points between Fall 2014 and Fall 2016. Since the increase for this group was higher than the overall college increase (0.8 percentage points), the gap between Hispanic/Latino students and the college average decreased. For both of the other groups, African Americans and Foster Youth, the successful course completion rate fell between Fall 2014 and Fall 2016, meaning the gap between these groups and the college average in this metric increased over that period. Data for Veterans shows a course success rate of six points above the college total for Fall 2014, and four points above for Fall 2016 suggesting this group outperforms the college average in successfully completing courses.

Narrative Questions: Please answer all of the questions in this section. Strong applications will clearly reference evidence throughout narrative responses, with references to specific chart/table numbers in the Evidence Section where appropriate.

- 1. Outline your institution's student success vision and priorities/goals and how these are integrated into one clear student success agenda. In your response, you must include: How the institution selected these priorities, how these priorities are communicated across the college community, and how they are embedded in the college's decision-making and resource allocation processes as well as how they are aligned with the college's strategic plan. (Maximum 400 words)**

West's three systemic change priorities named in our 2012 ATD Implementation Proposal and informed by West's major college plans to improve student success and completion, **(1) Facilitate Professional Learning for Student Success, (2) Enhance Instructional/Learning Support, and (3) Improve Basic Skills Sequence Completion Options**, were established through a rigorous process of data collection and analysis and cross-campus dialogues that included the college's Academic Senate, President's Cabinet, Divisional Council, College Council, collective bargaining units, academic divisions, and all attendees of our annual Leadership Retreat. Since Spring 2012, West's Student Success Committee has released 41 monthly newsletters through which we have updated the college community on our progress on our priorities.

First, **Professional Development** opportunities for all faculty, staff, and administrators have been prioritized and integrated into the college culture. As a result of that prioritization, our 2014-2020 Education Master Plan (EMP) includes two goals related to professional learning and one of the projects listed in our 2016 accreditation self-study Quality Focus Essay is "Professional Learning." West received grant funds from the California Community College Chancellor's Office to establish a Professional Learning Hub.

Since we established **Enhanced Tutoring** as an intervention strategy, a Supplemental Instruction program has been developed and expanded, and all tutor training has been strengthened. As a result of efforts in this area, student participation in tutoring services has increased (page 4).

West's third priority that has helped us achieve our vision is to **Improve Basic Skills Sequence Completion Options**. English faculty members created an accelerated course that gives students a one-semester option to prepare for college composition. West's math discipline faculty recently shortened a 4-semester algebra sequence into 3 semesters and developed a new math class (Intermediate Algebra for Statistics) for non-STEM majors.

These priorities are operationalized in our major college plans, which direct our strategic efforts toward student success. Two-thirds (31 out of 47) of West's EMP objectives directly address student success and equity issues, and many of them speak directly to the systemic change priorities described above (page 7).

College leaders are in the process of integrating the Basic Skills, Student Success and Support Programs, and Equity plans. All five 2017 Integrated Plan goals demonstrate the integration of West's ongoing student success agenda (page 4).

Regarding resource allocation, West's Rubric for Prioritizing Resource Requests from program review includes principles such as "Focus on various college Master Plan Goals" and "Safeguard Student Equity: avoid disproportionate student impacts."

- 2. Describe your institution's accomplishments in reaching your student success priorities/goals to-date and at what scale. Please reference relevant evidence provided in the Evidence Section and explain any fluctuations in the referenced data. Strong applications will also discuss how these improvements were achieved. For example, you may wish to include information on faculty and staff engagement, community partnerships, strength of leadership, or innovations in teaching and learning. (Maximum 600 words)**

The college-wide commitment to our systemic change priorities has led us to accomplish these goals: **(1) Facilitate Professional Learning for Student Success, (2) Enhance Learning Support, and (3) Improve Basic Skills Sequence Completion Options.**

For the last five years, West's ATD leaders have been committed to offer faculty, administrator, and staff ongoing access to meaningful professional learning activities designed to facilitate student success. We have supported ongoing Acceleration, Culturally Responsive Teaching and Learning (CRTL), Growth Mindset, and Reading Apprenticeship training across the campus. Twenty English instructors have been trained in the California Acceleration Project's methodologies, and 49 instructors have been trained in Reading Apprenticeship strategies. The 2015 and 2016 opening day speakers focused their presentations on CRTL and equity issues, so every full-time faculty member has been exposed to those topics, and both speakers presented again at the Spring Leadership Retreats where faculty, staff, and administrators come together for a day of professional learning. In West's campus climate survey, faculty members have been asked whether West provides an "Adequate opportunity for professional development." Since

2011, as a result of our increased prioritization of professional development, the percentage of instructors who agree or strongly agree has increased from 57 % to 74% (page 5).

Since 2012, West's student success leaders have supported faculty, staff, and administrators coordinating our learning support/tutoring programs to ensure high-quality services and increase participation. As a result, tutoring usage has increased by 11.3% in the past four years (page 4). West's 2014-2020 Educational Master Plan includes two objectives specifically addressing learning support: "Strengthen the effectiveness and coverage of the tutoring program" and "Create a Math Lab." This prioritization has led to the continuing expansion of efforts to improve coordination between instructional faculty members and the tutors in their disciplines. West also established a robust Supplemental Instruction program in 2014, and the program has continuously grown. In addition, a workgroup was formed to discuss improving learning support on campus. The workgroup formalized recommendations for the Academic Senate that were forwarded to the College President for approval. As a result, in his administrative reorganization this past summer, the college president organized all areas of tutoring and similar learning support initiatives to report to one dean, which has led to a number of exciting developments like the opening of a math lab and increased use of an online tutoring resource.

In addition, English and math faculty members have been committed to improving their rates of sequence completion. The English discipline piloted an accelerated curriculum in 2014, with three instructors trained. The number of accelerated sections has steadily increased, and 20 faculty members are now trained. The math faculty have been reviewing their algebra sequence student success data and considering different strategies to increase student learning and success. They piloted a three-course sequence, and after reviewing the data, they are considering phasing it out. They also have more recently piloted a non-STEM college algebra course, and five new full-time math instructors (42% of full-time math instructors) have been hired, and they have participated in campus professional learning opportunities.

When West first joined ATD, we set the following goals: (1) Increase by 3% (low) - 6% (high) (from 18% to 21%-24%) the number of West students who, within three years, successfully complete the English sequence from English 21 through English 101; (2) Increase by 1.5% (low) - 6% (high) (from 12% to 13.5%-18%) the number of West students entering Elementary Algebra who, within 2.5 years, successfully complete Intermediate Algebra. We accomplished these goals. West increased from 18% to 25% completion in English, and for math, increased from 7% to 17% (pages 2-3).

- 3. Explain any challenges your institution has faced and how you have addressed these or are working to address them. Note: While we are looking for institutions that have worked innovatively to overcome obstacles to accomplish their student success goals, we recognize that this process is by no means easy. Strong institutions are able to identify their weaknesses and challenges and are bold enough to address them. For example, you may wish to include information on state policy challenges, challenges moving pilots to scale or integrating initiatives, leadership transitions, financial or resource challenges as well as your plans for overcoming these challenges. You may also wish to reflect on the key findings from your ICAT and how your institution is working to address gaps. (Maximum 300 words)**

In 2012, just after joining ATD, West received a Warning from the ACCJC, which posed many challenges for the college. Over the next several years, we expended energy addressing the seven ACCJC recommendations. Then, our accreditation visit schedule changed to accommodate the ACCJC's desire to visit every college in the District in the same year. As a result, our next self-study was due only four years later, instead of the standard six-year window.

Since West joined ATD in 2011, we have had three different college presidents, four different vice presidents of student services and two different vice presidents of academic affairs. Several of those positions were filled with an acting manager, and those positions were not back filled, which forced administrators to juggle additional responsibilities. These changes in upper-level management have contributed to some level of uncertainty across the college and also required the student success team to adjust to new leaders' different styles and priorities.

The Los Angeles Community College District (LACCD) offered a supplemental retirement option, and as a result, by the end of 2017, West will have had 27 retirements, from classified staff and faculty members along with administrators. This large number of retirements contributes to the challenges of transitioning into a new era.

West has only had a dedicated Professional Development Coordinator for two of the six years since joining ATD. As a result, although professional development has become much more robust in the last six years at west, the activities and efforts have not been as consistently organized and consistent as we would have liked.

Finally, the LACCD adopted PeopleSoft as its new Student Information System, and it rolled out this fall. This rollout has led to a deluge of issues with admissions, registration, enrollment, financial aid, student records, access to data among others.

- 4. Describe your institution's approach to addressing equity in all aspects across the institution. In your response, you must indicate: How your college is working to close achievement gaps and achieve equitable outcomes for all students as it relates to your student success agenda, what the progress has been to-date, and identify your institution's principal challenge in this area and the steps you are taking to overcome this challenge. The review committee values candid responses that focus on the action steps the institution is taking to address challenges. ATD's equity statement sets an expectation that colleges must routinely scrutinize structural barriers to equity and invest in equity-minded policies, practices, and behaviors that lead to success for all students (Maximum 500 words)**

Since 2014 all California Community Colleges have been required to submit Student Equity plans to the State Chancellor's Office documenting gaps in success rates and strategies to close those gaps. In response to this charge, a workgroup was established to examine the data and explore actions for the college to take. This workgroup has historically reported out to the Student Success Committee and has selected initiatives to fund that align with the college's Student Success vision and priorities. Those activities include the hiring of a research analyst dedicated to support evaluation of the impact of equity-funded initiatives; development of acceleration and other basic skills interventions proven to improve success rates of students from disproportionately impacted populations; supporting cohort and other support programs such as Puente, Black Scholars, Guardian Scholars, and Veterans Services.

West's ATD Leaders have sought to raise awareness of equity issues through professional learning opportunities and channels such as the Academic Senate's annual themes that have been tied to student success and/or social justice since 2012. Even before the state-mandated equity planning began, we were already prioritizing such opportunities and finding ways to offer them to our faculty and staff. For example, with the support of the college president, West hosted the Academy for College Excellence Five-Day Experiential Learning Institute twice, impacting forty-nine faculty and staff members in Summer 2013 and 2014. Then, in 2015, 2016, and 2017 West hosted keynote speakers for our mandatory Professional Development Day with expertise in issues of equity and CRTL. West's ATD Leaders have also promoted LACCD and state-wide professional development opportunities related to equity like California Community College Success Network's Annual Fall Equity Institute.

As a result of all those efforts, West received these two commendations after our 2016 accreditation visit:

"The team comments West Los Angeles College for earning the Achieving the Dream Leader College distinction for their commitment to closing achievement gaps."

"The team commends West Los Angeles College for its commitment to sincere dialogue and embracing the college mission and its commitment to equity." (page 8)

As a result of an administrative reorganization, West is planning to hire a new associate dean charged with focusing on the issue of equity, West's equity plan, and coordinating related activities.

West's Student Equity Plan included a goal to increase the numbers of African American students who complete the math basic skills sequence and enroll in transfer level math courses. Data show that students starting Math at two levels below college-level complete the college level course at increasing rates over the past four time periods. This increase seems generally relevant for African Americans, as 4.0% of African-American students starting Math at two-levels below college-level in Fall 2012 completed a college-level Math course by Spring 2014, compared to 18.0% of those starting in Fall 2015 completing by Spring 2017. The increase in Math progression among African-American students was much more pronounced in the most recent year compared to the college overall rate, causing the gap between these rates to decline dramatically (page 3).

- 5. Describe how your institution has achieved a student-centered culture through systemic institutional changes. Achieving the Dream Institutions are expected to strive for organizational and cultural improvement focused on the success of all students. Describe how your student success efforts have improved--or are improving--the institution's organization, processes, and culture and outline your plans for ensuring the continuation of this work. Please also reflect on how your institution will periodically revisit and adapt your work. (Maximum 500 words)**

West has embraced a student-centered culture and formalized this focus through establishing the 2014-2020 Educational Master Plan (EMP) Strategic Direction *1: Dedication to Learning* and *3: Programs and Services Responsive to Student Needs*. In addition, two-thirds (31 out of 47) EMP objectives are directly related to student success. Through the college-wide Program Review process, areas set goals and 18 have mapped 49 planning goals to 29 EMP objectives in the 2017-2018 Program Review cycle (page 7).

West's Student Poster Showcase has been an annual college-wide event for the last seven years, started by a lone faculty member to challenge her basic skills English students. Since then, the showcase has grown to include as many as 15 classes. Faculty and staff attend the showcase and many participate by serving as judges. This initiative, supported by the Student Success Committee, has contributed to college-wide attention on project-based learning, a high-impact student success strategy.

In the District-wide student survey, there was a 23% increase in students reporting talking about/discussing educational or career plans with an instructor. In response to the open-item question related to what students liked best about West, students commented about the positive interactions on campus from dedicated faculty and supportive staff committed to their success (page 6).

West has hosted five annual Semester Kickoff events, each serving around 200 students. This event has provided a unique annual opportunity for faculty members, staff members and administrators to work together to greet students and support them in getting oriented to the

campus and learning about specific programs that interest them. This event has also contributed to West developing a culture of student success.

After many months of discussion and deliberation and support from the current college president, a Food Pantry for students opened last year, and a Welcome Center opened this semester. These initiatives, focused on serving the needs of students, demonstrate West's increased college-wide focus on students' needs.

The Student Success Committee helped bring increased campus attention to West's Learning Support services and noncredit offerings, which led to recent changes as a part of the president's administrative reorganization.

Also, since West joined ATD in addition to increased structured professional learning opportunities mentioned earlier, we have worked to offer more opportunities for community building across the campus. The Student Success Committee in collaboration with the Academic Senate organizes at least two social activities open to faculty members, staff members, and administrators, every semester.

When we joined ATD in 2011, West had one researcher, a Dean of Research and Planning. Since then, as our priorities shifted toward more data-driven decision making to support student success, three additional researchers were hired, two research analysts and one assistant research analyst. Now that we have a team of four in our research office, we are better able to evaluate our existing practices as well as new student success initiatives. With the increase in research requests, the office has created a form to track the status and volume of incoming data requests from across the campus.

President/CEO Signature Confirmation Page

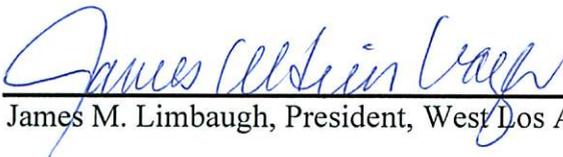
To: Achieving the Dream
2018 Leah Meyer Austin Award Selection Committee

From: James M. Limbaugh, Ph.D.
President, West Los Angeles College
9000 Overland Ave.
Culver City, CA 90230

West Los Angeles College is honored to submit an application for the 2018 Leah Meyer Austin Award for your review.

I confirm that the application reflects West's student success journey, and I believe the 2018 Leah Meyer Austin Award application accurately reflects the culture and substance of this institution. Thank you for the consideration.

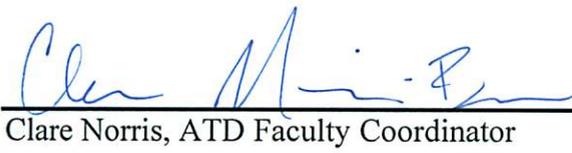
Signatures:

9.27.17

James M. Limbaugh, President, West Los Angeles College Date

9/27/17

Mary-Jo Apigo, Dean of Teaching & Learning, ATD Administrative Coordinator Date

9/27/2017

Clare Norris, ATD Faculty Coordinator Date

9-27-2017

Agyeman Boateng, Research Analyst & ATD Data Team Co-Chair Date