Southern California College
Advising Corps

IMPA C T
REPORT
2014-2015

USC Rossier
School of Education
Center for Enrollment Research, Policy, and Practice
Mission and Goal

The Southern California College Advising Corp's (SoCCA) mission is to improve college outcomes for low-income, first-generation, and underrepresented students. The program’s goal is to raise the number of California students who attend and complete college by encouraging and assisting high school students with their college searches, applications, financial aid, and transition to postsecondary education.

History

The College Advising Corps (CAC) partners with universities to place college advisers on high school campuses; currently it works with 25 universities in 14 states, serving 483 high schools with 456 advisers. USC is proud to be the CAC partner covering Southern California—an area that both USC and CAC see as a prime market for growth in college advisement.

- Year 2 (2014-15) Expanded to 16 advisers in 16 schools in Los Angeles (LAUSD), Long Beach (LBUSD) and Garden Grove Unified School Districts (GGUSD).
- Year 3 (2015-16) Further growth to 22 advisers with two advisers at all of LBUSD’s comprehensive high schools.
- Year 4 (2016-17) Expansion planned for up to 32 advisers.

High School Partners

Garden Grove Unified School District
Garden Grove
Santiago
Los Amigos

Long Beach Unified School District
Long Beach Polytechnic
Wilson Classical
Millikan
Lakewood
Cabrillo
Jordan

Los Angeles Unified School District
Jefferson
Rancho Dominguez Preparatory
Diego Rivera Learning Center
Santee Education Complex
Torres
Bell
Roosevelt
Our Approach

Near Peer Advisement

SoCCA is a “near-peer” advising model, recruiting recent college graduates with experience working with youth and families from diverse backgrounds, demonstrated commitment to public service, and similar backgrounds to the students they advise.

Our advisers are available to all students for one-on-one consultations. We assist students in one-to-one, small and large group settings with all things college related—ranging from A-G planning, college prep, research, selection, application, ACT/SAT registration, financial aid and scholarship applications to college enrollment and transition. The college adviser becomes a member of his or her campus with a laser focus on college outcomes for juniors and seniors. In addition to working directly with students, the adviser also works with the school community to build the college-going culture for all students on campus. Therefore, SoCCA is impacting the college-going culture at 16 high schools with over 41,000 students and over 9,700 seniors in the greater Los Angeles area.
Our Impact

One-to-One Meetings
Advisers met with 3,179 students in 10,234 one-to-one meetings

Group Meetings
Advisers met with 4,894 students in group settings

3,951
Students we helped submit 1+ college app

16,216
Total adviser assisted college apps submitted

On average each student submitted 4 apps

68%
% of students who applied to 4 year schools

82.3%
% of A-G seniors we helped submit a college app.
Our Impact

College App Fee Waivers
Advisers assisted students obtain 5,909 fee waivers, saving them a total of $204,259

SAT & ACT Assistance
2,216 Fee waivers
1,917 Registrations

Our advisers directly assisted 45% of ALL seniors in submitting the FAFSA

4,390 seniors submitted the Free Application for Federal Student Aid

Student Body Profile
41,832 Students total
9,782 Seniors total
4,799 Graduating A-G seniors
77% Low income
83% Underserved minorities

Dream Act apps submitted
262 for undocumented students
SoCCA in the CAC

In its second year, SoCCA made great strides in key performance indicators amongst its 23 peer Corps. Our 16 advisers were second in the nation only to Texas A&M’s 48 advisers in the following categories:

- Students with at least one university application completed – 3,951
- Total applications submitted – 16,216
- FAFSA completions – 4,390

Also, despite the relatively large size of the schools we serve in comparison to our sister Corps, we were 5th in percent of seniors completing a FAFSA—45%. Finally, our team achieved these results with a relatively low number of one-to-one and group meetings, placing 10th and 8th in those categories respectively. This points to a high level of efficiency and impact in our model. Each meeting resulted in a greater likelihood of college access outcomes for students.

Partnership and Funding

Along with funding from our national partner, CAC, the Southern California College Advising Corps also benefits from generous funding provided by:

- Rosalind and Arthur Gilbert Foundation
- Los Angeles Scholars Investment Fund
- CTBC Bank
Success Stories
(all student names have been changed)

Shoot for the Stars
Max Reza, College Adviser, Long Beach Polytechnic High School – LBUSD

Patrice is a first generation college student who comes from a single-parent household. She had gone through some tough times her senior year as her brother was recently incarcerated and her mother has struggled to find employment. Patrice has a 3.75+ GPA and at the beginning of the school year was set on attending a community college the following year because of financial reasons. After meeting with her, I was able to convince her that a 4-year may be a better option for her. I told her to research some colleges and bring me back a list of schools she may be interested in; she brought me back a list of 12! From there, we began the planning process and scheduled when she needed to submit each application.

She was accepted to the University of Arizona, University of Alabama, Boise State University, and San Diego State and awarded renewable merit scholarships at each institution! Her mother, while skeptical at first, has come around and is now on board with Patrice attending a 4-year. Patrice was always upbeat, but even upon receiving those first few acceptances you could see she had a little extra pep in her step. She is currently a freshman at San Diego State and will be on their track team this upcoming season! When I first met with Patrice she told me, "People like me don't leave Long Beach." It's been awesome seeing her development and seeing her have so much success.

Motherhood and College
Pilar Dawson, College Adviser, Garden Grove High School – GGUSD

Two seniors, Carla and Sharise, became a part of my favorite group of people because they made a concerted effort to attend the various college presentations, programs, and college visits that I hosted in the fall. One day they informed me that they were not only best friends, but both teen mothers as well. What struck me most was their eagerness to learn and their earnest pursuit of higher education; they wanted my help and they wanted to help themselves. I immediately understood the added burden and obstacles they would encounter as young mothers trying to go to school.

After meeting with Carla, she informed me that her parents were not going to let her go away to college as she hoped. She was also very concerned about the idea of financing. Together we constructed an alternate plan and she is now a freshman at Fullerton College with a $5k Pell Grant.

In the fall I inspired Sharise to apply to 4-year schools despite her lack of confidence. Once I began sharing my undergraduate experiences, she was enthused enough to pursue various California schools (she even applied to my alma mater, Mills College). She applied to seven 4-year schools, gaining acceptance to more than half of them! After filing her FAFSA she was also awarded a $5k Pell Grant and is now a freshman at California State University Fullerton!

Everyone has their own path and I am proud to have been a part of the development of these two students’ futures. This just goes to show that anything is possible as long as you have the will and put forth the effort. Fostering these connections and inspiring youth to reach beyond their boundaries is what makes this job so fulfilling.
Success Stories

From Juvenile Hall to the Hallowed Halls
Jennifer Escalante, College Adviser, Jefferson High School – LAUSD

I have been working with a senior named Alfred who has faced significant barriers to success. A couple of years ago he got into some trouble and was placed in juvenile detention. After being released, he wanted to pick up where he had left off at school. However, instead of receiving credit for all the classes he had completed while in detention, his transcript reflected all F’s, making him ineligible to apply to a 4-year university.

For a student who already felt let down by multiple systems, and felt that he may not be college material, this was nearly a fatal blow to his college aspirations. Working collaboratively with the other College Center staff, I constantly worked to motivate him to apply and continuously assured him that he can go to college. We worked together to clear up his transcript issues so that all of his classes were reflected. And then we began working on college applications!

Alfred constantly came in for help throughout the application process and when he became frustrated that he wouldn’t make it, we always reassured him. And finally, one day, he received notice from my own alma mater, CSU Northridge, that he had been admitted! He came into the College Center ecstatic to share the good news. Alfred sees education as the ticket out of his current situation and is extremely happy. Ever since then, Alfred’s life outlook has been much more positive; he is currently a freshman attending CSU Northridge.

Persistence
Dennis Funes, College Adviser, Millikan High School – LBUSD

I want to let you know about one of the most motivating students I have ever encountered, Carlos. When I first began advising, Carlos came in to the College Center and wanted only to introduce himself. As the weeks went by, he kept coming into the college center and asking me questions regarding what is required to attend college. I found out that he had autism. Working with children who had ASD (Autism Spectrum Disorder) prior to this job, I knew Carlos needed extra support and I set a personal goal to help him apply to his dream school, CSU Long Beach. Carlos kept coming into my office and I told him that he needed to sign up for the SAT. I requested he bring his mother so that she would be aware of his plans, and she was so grateful for my work with her son.

I assisted Carlos in opening up a CSU Mentor account and we both began to work on his CSULB application. As he entered in his personal information, I went over his transcripts and saw his GPA—an impressive 3.82! I assisted him inputting his grades and he met every single requirement for his classes. I also attended a Counselor Conference at CSULB and I visited the DSS (Disabled Student Services) booth to research services for students with autism. I made sure to pass this information on to Carlos’ mother, and she thanked me for everything I was doing for her child.

Three months later, came the day that Carlos and I had been waiting for! He got his acceptance to Cal State Long Beach! Having Asperger’s syndrome, his mom wanted him close to home, so CSULB was the only school he applied to! He is now a freshman at CSULB majoring in biology. He’s expressed his thanks and his experience brings me overwhelming joy.
2015-16
Southern California

College Advising Corps