



IEC Executive Summary

Academic Year	Name of Program	PUENTE
2013-2014	Date Reviewed	April 2014

Major Program Goals:

1. Help students complete their English 1A coursework and transfer to a four-year institution.
2. Provide students with additional support and encouragement (via regular counseling, mentoring, and enrichment activities) in order to increase the likelihood of retention and transfer.

Concerns/Trends:

1. Lack of administrative support available for program.
2. Need to increase the visibility of the program.
3. Transitioning of current staff.
4. Students mistakenly enroll in the Puente designated English 250 course.
5. Need to develop a program plan.
6. Successful model may merit expansion.

Plans for Addressing Concerns/Trends:

1. Increase administrative support for the program.
2. Update marketing strategies and website.

IEC Recommendations:

1. Develop a program plan to lay out objective and monitor any improvements.
2. Examine the prospect of expanding the program to double the students who can participate in this model approach.
3. Begin discussions with Management Information Systems and Admissions and Records staff to decrease the likelihood that non-Puente student will enroll in the Puente English 250 courses.
4. With the new Vice President of Student Services, discuss staffing options for increasing the administrative and clerical support for the program.



Self-Study Summary

Academic Year	Name of Program	PUENTE
2013-2014	Date Reviewed	April 2014

The Puente Project is a national award-winning program that for more than 32 years has improved the college-going rate of tens of thousands of California's educationally underserved students. Started in 1981 at Chabot Community College in Hayward, California, the program has since expanded to 36 high school sites and 63 community college sites throughout the state. Puente Statewide Staff train high school and community college instructors and counselors to implement a program of rigorous instruction, focused counseling, and mentoring by members of the community with the expressed goal of helping students successfully transfer from the community college to four-year colleges and universities.

In 1987, Gavilan's Puente Program was founded. The Puente Program is open to all interested students and remains dedicated to the goal of helping students complete their transfer-level English 1A course, as well as transfer to a four-year college or university. Student success can be directly linked to our Puente model, which consists of three components: English, Counseling, and Mentoring.

In Puente, students commit to the program for a full year in which they are obligated to take two consecutive English and Guidance classes with the same team of instructors. In the English classes, students write focused and well-developed essays, with an emphasis on research. Mexican American/Latino literature is incorporated into these English courses. In Guidance classes, the emphasis is on giving students a strong foundation for academic success by focusing on career development and student learning skills. Other Counselor duties include working closely with the Phase 1 and 2 students with academic, career and personal counseling. Throughout the semester, the Counselor and the English Instructor have weekly meetings to assess the needs of Puente students and to coordinate Puente events. Upon completion of the first year, the counselor continues to meet with the students (Phase 3) about their academic progress, transfer process, career development, and personal counseling until they graduate and/or transfer.

The Counselor has created a successful mentoring program. Every student participating in the Phase 1 (pre-transfer level) and Phase 2 (transfer-level) have been matched with a mentor from the service area. This has been done through training, ongoing correspondence, as well as by facilitating numerous mentor/student social events, both on and off campus. The goal is to match a student with a mentor who reflects that student's cultural identity.

Students in the Puente Program have scheduled visits to nearby college/university campuses once per semester. The goal is to help students visualize themselves on the campus, make connections, and develop socializing skills. Students are required to attend a Motivational Transfer Conference in which they meet with representatives from colleges throughout California and attend other college success workshops. By implementing such networking opportunities and transfer-oriented activities, Puente aims to create a strong community-building

foundation within our students. Support and Community building are key factors to student retention and transfer rates.

In 2011, we revitalized the Puente Advisory Board, which had been in existence from 1991-1997. This board has been developed to support the program. The Board mentors have served as presenters at mentor trainings, parent meetings, and student/mentor meetings. As well, they have taken on a leading role in recruiting new mentors. In 2014, the board assisted in a successful fundraising for scholarships and book grants. The Puente Advisory Board has made it a goal to have a fundraiser each year to provide two scholarships and book grants.

Along with support from the advisory board, the Puente English instructor and counselor benefit from ongoing professional development offered by The Puente Statewide Office, In addition to the statewide and regional trainings, ongoing support is afforded through program websites, phone/e-mail consultation, campus visits, as well as access to regional coordinators, trainers, and researchers.

Concerns for our program are few, but the following must be noted:

- a) Since the Puente Program's model relies on a strong working collaboration between Counselor and English instructor, it is important to avoid high turnover. High turnover of either instructor or counselor can impact program consistency and can create stress associated with retraining. Puente Counselor and English Instructor must make long-term commitments to assure a successful program;
- b) To better understand the mission and needs of Puente, it is important that Administration recognize the complexity of the program. While there are programs on campus which emphasize student support services (Trio, EOPS, CalWorks), Puente is the only college program that has both instruction and student support services working together;
- c) The Puente Project has been placed into a separate account from the Gavilan College foundation and placed into a general account funding. There is a need to closely monitor the financial transactions for the integrity of the program;
- d) To best support our students, Puente has specific scheduling needs. We have found that offering the English class (250/1A) on separate days from the Guidance courses (6 & 1) ensures that students receive four days of contact with the English instructor and/or the Counselor. As a result, students have more access to campus resources. More time spent on the college campus increases the likelihood that students will be more invested in campus life and activities, as well as develop peer interaction and involvement in study groups.

The Puente Program had many accomplishments:

- a) We have had 100% student attendance to the State Motivational Transfer Conference;
- b) We have well-attended Puente Celebrations, scholarship ceremonies, and student/mentor nights;
- c) Puente students have-contributed many hours as part of the Puente Ambassador's Club for fundraisers and community service;
- d) Puente students upon transfer have earned academic scholarships.
- e) Puente students who have earned their degrees have returned to their communities to serve as mentors or resources for the Gavilan Puente Program;

- f) Puente has co-sponsored visiting writer events on campus, most recently with noted authors, Reyna Grande, and poet Xochi Candelaria. These presenters interacted with both Puente students, as well as the wider Gavilan community, and, in the process, enriched our students, as well as promoted Puente's presence on our campus;
- g) Puente's Ambassadors Club has had successful fundraisers for their own activities, such as movie nights, beach picnics, and more;
- h) In 2012, Puente celebrated its 25th year as a successful program on the Gavilan campus.

While Puente has been a highly successful program, we do envision improvements that would benefit faculty, students, and program. Currently, due to several turnovers in the Counseling Department, the Puente Counselor has had to put in extra hours doing administrative tasks, such as mailings, facilities arrangements, producing mentor and student recruitment materials, and a wide range of other clerical duties. Administrative help would not only allow the counselor to do her job more effectively, but it would help to prevent potential faculty burnout. From 1987-2009, we had clerical support according to the UCOP agreement. Since then, however, the counseling department has expanded to more part-time faculty, which prevented the clerical support person to provide the 10 hours per week needed for Puente.

Some practical changes we plan on implementing within the next 1-2 years include increasing Phase 3 student activities to include Phase 1 and 2 students. We plan on having all incoming classes to enroll in the Guidance 210 course. This will increase retention by helping them to develop strong student success skills.

A long term goal of ours is to train a second Puente team. By having two teams, we can expand the program and benefit a larger group of students. We will look to other local Puente programs which have incorporated two teams of Puente instructors/counselors as a model for how to most effectively implement this step.