

LOCAL NEWS

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Cabrillo programs nationally recognized

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Cabrillo College has been recognized for its ability to train disadvantaged students for jobs that pay living wages.

This week, the Brooklyn-based Workforce Strategy Center released a study naming the community college as "one of only a handful of notable programs in the country for its work in connecting low-income individuals with limited English skills to local jobs and career opportunities."

The study was sponsored by The James Irvine Foundation, The Ford Foundation, The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation and The Annie E. Casey Foundation.

"Much of the credit for the recent recognition of Cabrillo's innovative instructional programs cited in the report ... is due to the vision, support and instructional planning efforts of our Vice President of Instruction Claire Biancalana," said Cathy Summa-Ford, Cabrillo spokeswoman.

"Claire is a former Cabrillo College student, instructor and dean," Summa-Ford said. "Her commitment to students and the community has been a driving force behind a myriad of instructional accomplishments."

In its study, "Building A Career Pathways System: Promising Practices in Community College-Centered Workforce Development," the center found that "in Watsonville, which is 70 percent Latino and heavily agricultural, Cabrillo has successfully implemented a career pathways model within a few key programs and is attempting to integrate it into the overall institution."

Those key programs are:

- The Career Ladders Health Care Partnership, which involves the local health-care industry in educating students and filling job vacancies.

- The Fast Track to Work program, a nationally recognized program that helps put low-income working parents into higher-paying jobs in 18 to 24 months.
- The ACHIEVE vocational English as Second Language Program, which introduces students to the American office culture in teaching interpersonal skills in real life situations.
- A computer certificate program, which provides employers a tool to verify basic computer skills.

Each of these programs fall into the career pathways categories because they help school administrators improve student recruitment and increase enrollment, improve student retention and success, raise the stature of the institution, provide access to new funding and improve the quality of education, the report said.

That's evident by statements made by the hundreds of students who have gone through Cabrillo's programs. They credit their successes to the career education dean's strong leadership, financial support from The Packard Foundation, partnerships between local training and adult education providers, the county's welfare agency and the work of committed and experienced faculty from both Cabrillo and the Adult School, the study said.

Other instructional institutions the study highlighted were North Carolina's Guilford Technical Community College and Austin Community College in Texas.

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