

# Equity in Access



## Students with Disabilities

### ISSUE

The California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office has mandated that community colleges increase success outcomes for historically underrepresented students, which includes students with disabilities. This expectation supports moving disabled student support service programs, a 21st century model of supporting the whole student. Throughout the California Community Colleges system, students with disabilities make up five percent of the total student population, with some districts having higher percentages, like the 8.45 percent student population registered within the Riverside Community College District.

Current funding to provide equal access through accommodations leaves little opportunity to expand support services to improve

persistence, retention and success outcomes. An emerging best practice by California Community Colleges is providing coaching to students with disabilities. This type of coaching provides students with disabilities with the support necessary to navigate transition into college as well as the potential daily nuances of being on campus daily. Barriers for students with disabilities include removal of the structure provided by secondary schools and parents; disruption of routines; difficulties navigating the psychosocial aspect of higher education such as group work and meeting with professors; and self-advocacy which leads to lack of retention and results in failure.

### REQUEST

Title V in the California Code of Regulations is specific as to how disabled student support services funding can be used as related to

academics and accommodations which creates a barrier to expanding support and services. The District requests \$500,784 to provide three coaches, one for each college. Coaches would support students with organization and time management assistance, skills connected to executive functioning to make navigating college less overwhelming, and self-advocacy and self-empowerment skills as well as understanding and navigating the psychosocial aspects of college. Additionally, the District requests \$60,000 to cover supplies, outreach and engagement opportunities for disabled students, along with professional development opportunities for each coach. Supporting students with disabilities to minimize these potential barriers creates more opportunities for success, persistence and completion.

