

College-Going Initiative seeks to send more local students off to universities, four-year colleges

Contributed by Harold LaBonte and Elizabeth Larson
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LAKE COUNTY — Efforts to increase the number of local students who will attend four-year colleges are seeing results, say county education officials.

The Lake County Office of Education's College-Going Initiative, now in its fourth year, seeks to give students the knowledge they need about college requirements in order to move them on to higher education, said Jamey Gill, a curriculum and instruction specialist.

It appears to be working based on a few years' worth of data, although the county's college attendance numbers still aren't huge.

Gill said last year 105 local students were accepted to four-year colleges. That number edged up slightly this year to 108. Gill called the numbers "encouraging."

This year the program has begun tracking community college students making the move to a four-year school this year, said Gill. Five students from Yuba College are going on to new schools, and the Lake County Office of Education is working with Mendocino College to track how many local students are moving to four-year institutions.

Twenty-six local graduates were accepted at University of California institutions, among them Santa Cruz, Berkeley and Davis, said Gill. Popular California State Universities include Sonoma State — one of the schools with the largest Lake County student population — along with Humboldt, Chico and Sacramento.

A few students are even on their way to out-of-state schools, Gill added.

The business of getting to college, said Gill, is much bigger than just having good grades or filling out the application.

A great deal rests on completion rates for "A" through "G" courses, which are completed in high school and make students eligible to attend four-year colleges or universities, she explained.

"We are below the state average, though, and that's what we're really working on," she said. "We want to get kids eligible."

Gill said many students don't understand the course requirements until it's too late. "It makes many voices" outside of school counselors — including parents, teachers and others — to get the message across, she added.

Lake County Office of Education Superintendent Dave Geck said the resources that go into the program are a combination of his agency's staff coupled with the staff efforts of higher education partners such as the University of California, San Francisco.

The Office of Education receives money from the University of California to assist in some of the program's projects, said Geck.

The College-Going Initiative includes special grade-level activities to get students to the point of meeting all the criteria for higher education, said Geck.

Those activities include special presentations, college visitations, SAT preparation classes and financial aid workshops, and algebra academies for eighth graders, he said.

The initiative tops off the year with a celebration of students who are making that next big step in their education.

On April 28, the Lake County Office of Education held its third annual dinner and reception for students accepted to four-year institutions.

Eighty-five of the 113 students honored — along more than 100 family members, friends and teachers — attended the evening event, held at Kelseyville High School.

Also there to recognize the students were two dozen top officials from a cross section of Lake County school districts.

Guest speakers included Dr. Blas Guerrero from the University of California Office of the President, Geck and Kathy Kelley from the office of state Sen. Pat Wiggins.

Guerrero offered comparisons of his personal experiences of his growth and education in California to the future opportunities the soon to be graduates may look forward to and advised that they could return to Lake County as "the role models of the next class of graduates."

Geck said Guerrero has personally helped Lake County's College-Going Initiative in its efforts.

The Kelseyville High School Jazz band provided the evening's music and several Kelseyville high students contributed their time and efforts in the kitchen as well as serving and bussing tables during the dinner hour.

Gill said the students "were really excited" at the event.

"It just pumps the kids up," she said.

The dinner is meant to encourage the students and make sure they take the next steps to get to college in the fall, said Gill. It's also an opportunity for families to celebrate and be recognized.

Many of the young people served by the initiative are the first in their family to make it to college, she noted.

Gill said the initiative is trying to keep the upward growth trend for college attendance going. In the coming years she believe some local education programs like algebra academies are going to increase the pool of students eligible to attend college.

Just around the corner is another College-Going Initiative event, Higher Education Week II, scheduled for May 12 and 13. The two days of workshops are aimed at all local students – upper elementary, middle and high school – and their parents, and offer the chance to learn more about several visiting colleges, as well as the college and financial aid application processes.

Lake County students accepted at four-year colleges or universities

Karina Acosta, Saint Mary's College Jayson Adair, DeVry Myrna Aleman, CSU Sonoma Rathid Aliji, UC Riverside Cecily Anaraki, UC Irvine Johnathan Bateman, CSU Humboldt Katrina Beaudin, CSU Sacramento Cassie Belden, UC Santa Barbara Nathan Bell, UC Irvine Amanda Bettencourt, UC Davis Danielle Bettencourt, Pacific Union College Cole Bordisso, CSU Sonoma Casey Bowlin, UC Santa Barbara Kasey Bresso, University of Wyoming Bianka Buchanan, CSU Long Beach Celestine “CeCe” Burgher, CSU Sacramento Rawley Butler, Silver Lake College (Wisconsin) Annemarie Catrambone, Art Institute of San Francisco Daniella Cazares, CSU Long Beach Luis Cazares, CSU Sacramento Cori Cockerton, CSU Sacramento Noemi Cocone, Saint Mary's College Krista Collins, CSU Sonoma Guy Conger, Whitworth University of Washington Ashley Crawford, CSU Humboldt Kristin Currier, CSU Sonoma Nikeedra Davis, CSU Chico Katie Davis, CSU Humboldt Candy Diener, CSU Sonoma Nicholas Driver, UC Santa Barbara Chyere Duncan, CSU Sacramento Antoine Ellis, CSU Sacramento Zoe Everett, University of Minnesota Jennifer Frazell, University of Nevada Las Vegas Daniel Gildea, UC Davis Tyler Glazier, Brigham Young University, Idaho Ashlee Graham, UC Santa Cruz Robin Grayhorse, UC Santa Cruz Rebecca Grupe, CSU Sacramento Vanessa Guerrero, CSU Sonoma Tracy Herrmann, Pillsbury Baptist Bible College Jameson Holder, Crown College, Minnesota Tyler Hunt, UC Santa Cruz Erik Jameson, UC Davis Trevor Johns, CSU San Diego Loren Jones, DeVry Norris Jones III, DeVry Correy Koshnick, CSU Cal Poly San Luis Obispo Ashley Lamb, CSU Sonoma Bobby Latona, CSU Humboldt Anna Lopez, Southern Oregon University Benjamin Lopez, CSU Humboldt Kyle Lowry, DeVry Beatris Lozano, CSU San Francisco Kate Lyons, UC Berkeley Haley Mabery, University of Oregon Benjamin MacDonald, Whitworth University of Washington, California Baptist University Armando Martinez, St. Mary's College Samantha Mattern, CSU Northridge Maria Mendoza, CSU Sacramento Jennifer Miller, CSU Chico Stephanie Mitten, CSU Humboldt Teina Moore, CSU Chico Amanda Moore, UC Santa Cruz Kayla Myrick, UC Davis Klynn Nelson, DeVry Sarah Norris, UC Davis Tyler O'Brien, Lourdes College Kersti Olof, CSU Sonoma Kellen Olson, CSU Chico Francisco Olvera, DeVry Victor Padilla, UC Davis Hina Parmar, CSU San Jose Aryn Pauly, CSU Cal Poly San Luis Obispo Cierra Peel, CSU Long Beach Valerie Peng-Plevney, CSU Sacramento Danielle Peterson, SF Academy of Art Cynthia Pimentel, UC Davis Joseph Rebolledo, CSU San Diego Gabriela Reyes, CSU Sonoma Victor Rico, CSU Sacramento Darcy Rogers, CSU Humboldt Chuck Rosencrans, UC Berkeley Mary Ruffcorn, CSU Humboldt Geneve Rupert, Schiller University Joshua Salazar, UC Davis Juan Salguero, CSU Humboldt Jesse Salmeron, UC Santa Cruz Austin Schader, CSU Cal Poly San Luis Obispo Kelsey Sills, CSU Sacramento Ashley Smith, Simpson University Brent Smith, Masters College Corey Smith, CSU Humboldt Jodi Snider, Lewis & Clark Conor Sullivan, CSU Cal Poly San Luis Obispo Maegan Taylor, CSU San Diego Noah Thorn, CSU Sacramento Keith Todd, UC Davis Nancy Trejo, UC Santa Barbara Ashley Underwood, CSU Sonoma Veronica Valadez, CSU Sonoma Enrique Villanueva, CSU Chico George Weiss, UC Berkeley Andy Weiss, CSU San Jose Nicole Wells, UC San Diego Eric Wessendorf, UC Santa Cruz Alexandria Williams, CSU Sonoma Beau Woodson, UC Berkeley Alicyn Yaffee, CSU Sacramento Megan Young, CSU San Marcos Jonathon Ziemanski, DeVry Elise Zolczynski, UC Santa Barbara

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