

Orange Coast College has received the second disbursement of a grant for its participation in a study through the University of California, Irvine (UCI) titled "Improving Transition of Community College Students into University STEM Programs through Cross-Enrollment." The

2701 Fairview Rd., Costa Mesa, California • (714) 432-5072





“The underlying goal of this project is to find the hidden underrepresented students in science who have more barriers to transfer to begin with — the interventions study is really targeted to help students see their path to UC and Cal State,” says Giblin. “We are trying to figure out: how do we help students imagine themselves as a transfer student?”

The funds provided by the NSF cover the cost of participant fees, dedicated academic counseling, and travel to research conferences.



Coast Professor Arnold Guerra Nominated for UCI Lecturer of the Year

Orange Coast College Physics Professor Dr. Arnold Guerra has been nominated for the Lecturer of the Year award through the University of California, Irvine’s “Celebration of Teaching” awards.

Guerra, who has taught full-time at OCC since 2002, completed his doctorate in condensed matter physics at UC Irvine in 1999 and has been a lecturer at the research university for many years. From 1993 until 2017, he worked in the Summer Science Academy of the California Alliance for Minority Participation at tollmeuAAe632O4 Pward 17,

College received \$81,605 in January, the second payment of a five-year project being led by UC Irvine Professor of Education Rachel Baker and funded by the National Science Foundation (NSF).

Baker’s research stems from two California Senate Bills that require the University of California or California State University systems to allow community college students to cross-enroll in one class per term at a reduced tuition, as space allows. Originally intended as a way to increase transfer rates of underrepresented students from community colleges to four-year institutions through cross-enrollment, Senate Bill 1914 and Senate Bill 361 remain under-utilized.

“Dr. Baker contacted us two years ago to see if we would be interested in participating in a study looking at whether community college students are taking advantage of the opportunity to enroll in classes at UC Irvine,” says OCC Dean of Math and Science Dr. Tara Giblin. “This project is predicated on research that shows students who are exposed to four-year university campuses can see themselves as part of that campus.”

Approximately 100 students are participating in the study, including students from Irvine Valley College and Saddleback College. Researchers currently are finishing the “Data Collection” stage, with focus groups and surveys taking place over the past year. “We organized focus groups almost exactly a year ago, with a goal of designing interventions that encouraged more students to take a class at UCI while still enrolled at OCC,” explains Giblin. “COVID slowed down progress in terms of the surveys we had planned, but it’s picking back up as everyone is adjusting to a virtual environment.”

Based on the findings from the focus groups and surveys, the study team will design and implement interventions to increase cross-enrollment. The study also involves a longitudinal analysis of participating students to examine if the interventions reduce barriers to cross-enrollment and the effects of cross-enrollment on eventual transfer.



First Choice also has provided OCC's CLEEO Project with a grant through the Orange Coast College Foundation that will go toward additional scholarships awarded at the College's annual scholarship event — Honors Night — in May. Additional planning is under way to establish a workshop series at Coast that will help students and employees learn about financial literacy and cultural competency.

"Like all financial institutions in United States, First Choice Bank takes steps to remain compliant with the Community Re-Investment Act, which asks banks to address financial literacy, especially in low to moderate income populations within the communities in which they serve," says OCC Associate Professor and CLEEO Project Coordinator Eric Cuellar. "I am pleased to see First Choice Bank being proactive in reaching out to diverse communities in Orange County, including at Orange Coast College."

Cuellar shares that an OCC alumnus who works at First Choice Bank helped to facilitate the partnership upon realizing that the two organizations share many of the same goals that the CLEEO Project is working toward. "[The student] graduated from OCC and eventually transferred to Cal State Fullerton and plans to attend law school. He has kept in touch over the years, and has continued to attend events organized by CLEEO," Cuellar explains.

The CLEEO Project was founded in 2016 by Cuellar and OCC professors Jordan Stanton and Rendell Drew. The Project, which organizes learning cohorts that focus on developing an educational pathway for college students with an emphasis on the successful development of life skills, hosts several events throughout the year, including guest lectures, workshops or "Summits," and art exhibits. In 2019, the CLEEO Project was successful in bringing Civil Rights activist and Presidential Medal of Freedom Recipient Dolores Huerta to campus as a guest speaker.

"Research has shown that only 2–4 percent of Latinos in the U.S. hold doctorate degrees. So, one of the main tenets of OCC's CLEEO Project is to establish an education pipeline from community college to post-graduate education," says Cuellar. "Students can participate as much as they want. But already we have seen many of our CLEEO students successfully transfer and obtain their bachelor's degree, and even continue on to law school, MBA programs, and other postgraduate programs of study."

The CLEEO 10.0 Virtual Summit, "COVID-19 & Latinos: Opportunities to Strengthen Student Leadership for Community Engagement," began on Feb. 18 and will run through May 13. The 8-session seminar will be presented by Dr. David E. Hayes Bautista, Professor at UCLA School of Medicine.