



CALIFORNIA COMMUNITY COLLEGES

CHANCELLOR'S OFFICE

PRESS RELEASE

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Board of Governors awards \$1 million to strengthen partnership with nonprofit program serving underrepresented students

SACRAMENTO, Calif. – Demonstrating its firm resolve to improve the completion rates of underrepresented California community college students, the Board of Governors this week approved a \$1 million contract to expand the services offered by the [Umoja Community](#), a partnering nonprofit serving those students, on its campuses.

“The partnership between the California Community Colleges and the Umoja Community has helped many underrepresented students to achieve their goals,” said California Community Colleges Chancellor Brice W. Harris. “Strengthening that partnership and helping the Umoja Community expand its services on our campuses will only serve to improve the academic fortunes of many other students.”

Umoja programs are designed to increase the retention rates as well as the graduation and transfer rates of underrepresented students, although program participation is open to all. Students enrolled in Umoja programs take classes to help them improve skills in reading, writing and critical thinking, meet with counselors at least twice a semester, receive tutoring support, attend workshops, and participate in field trips.

Contract funds will be distributed by Chaffey College to the Umoja Community to provide for state-level support and coordination for some of the following services:

- Expand the number of Umoja programs and increase the number of students served by existing programs;
- Expand existing partnerships with the University of California, California State University, Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU), and Association of Independent California Colleges and Universities to increase the number of its students transferring to those institutions;
- Hire staff, including a statewide Umoja executive director and regional coordinators; and
- Expand Umoja program training and dissemination of Umoja Community practices.

The Board of Governors officially recognized the Umoja Community as a statewide success program in January 2008. The first Umoja programs were established at California community college campuses that same year. The Umoja Community administers programs at 30 California community college campuses. Three additional

colleges plan to implement an Umoja program by fall 2015.

The Umoja Community program is modeled after two successful community college programs, the Daraja Project (Chabot College, Hayward, Calif.), and Project Success (El Camino College, Torrance, Calif.).

Daraja students (age 21 or under) successfully completed the Basic Skills to Freshman Composition sequence at a rate 19 percent higher than other students (age 21 or under) not in Daraja. Project Success students have persistence rates at 96 percent and earn associate degrees at a rate twice that of comparable students not in Project Success.

To find out more about the statewide Umoja Community program, please go to: <http://umojacommunity.org>.

The California Community Colleges is the largest system of higher education in the nation composed of 72 districts and 112 colleges serving 2.1 million students per year. Community colleges supply workforce training, basic skills education and prepare students for transfer to four-year institutions. The Chancellor's Office provides leadership, advocacy and support under the direction of the Board of Governors of the California Community Colleges. For more information about the community colleges, please visit <http://californiacommunitycolleges.cccco.edu/>, <https://www.facebook.com/CACommColleges>, or <https://twitter.com/CalCommColleges>.

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