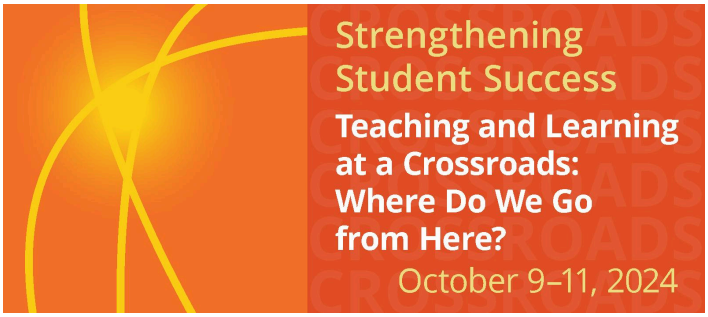


Strengthening Student Success Conference 2024 Evaluation Executive Summary

Strengthening Student Success Conference 2024 (SSSC24) was held at the Hyatt Regency Orange County in Garden Grove, California, from Wednesday, October 9, to Friday, October 11, 2024. Based on an online survey sent out after the conference, the event was a success, with 437 total registered attendees for the main conference and post-conference workshops. Attendees reported their appreciation for the conference and indicated that most of the conference was a very positive experience. Overall, people were excited about being at the conference and enjoyed the programming.

Attendees and Survey Response Rate

At the close of the event, the conference planning team sent an email to all attendees with a link to an online survey and an invitation to provide feedback on the conference. With 42 total responses, the response rate was 10%, which is significantly lower than the return rate of conference evaluations prior to the pandemic (20%–21%) but only slightly lower than the 12% return rate for the 2023 conference and the 11% return rate during the three years of post-pandemic virtual or hybrid conferences.

Conference Goals

The goals of the SSSC24 conference were for participants to

- Understand critical issues that shape student success in the California Community Colleges;
- Understand how colleges are scaling practical, equitable, race-conscious, and evidence-based practices to advance student success;

- Learn and commit to implementing concepts and ideas highlighted at the conference to create student-ready, race-conscious, and equitable institutions;
- Learn and commit to strategies that engage students in designing a race-conscious and equitable student experience;
- Exchange ideas with colleagues and other stakeholders; and
- Be empowered to lead change and speak truth to power.

The attendees who returned an evaluation survey indicated that overall, they enjoyed the conference. Attendees were asked questions regarding the conference goals (listed above). There were six questions (one question for each goal) asking respondents to indicate one of the following answers: strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree. Between 70% to 95% (depending on the goal) of respondents indicated they strongly agreed or agreed when asked to rate whether the conference met its goals.

Takeaways: Most and Least Impactful

Most Impactful

Attendees were asked which element of the conference impacted them the most. Respondents noted they felt most impacted by:

- The closing keynote panel
- Dr. Gina Garcia's keynote address
- The ability to network and meet new colleagues as well as connect with old friends
- The variety and caliber of conference sessions

Least Impactful

Conference attendees found the following to be least impactful to their experience at the conference:

- Sessions that felt like they were a sales pitch
- Technical sessions that didn't provide attendees with a hands-on way to engage with and practice using the material
- Sessions that didn't include enough explanation about how they brought about adaptive change
- The lack of audience engagement with the student panel

Improvements for Next Year's Conference

The following improvements for next year's conference were suggested:

- Make the conference more accessible by providing closed captioning on the screen during all general sessions
- Include sessions on AI and how campuses are utilizing it throughout their institutions
- Provide more Canvas workshops, including how to create content and flyers
- Provide opportunities to learn concrete examples of what people are doing to successfully address racism, sexism, and microaggressions

Light Bulb Moments

Beyond the evaluation survey, attendees were asked to submit comments about what resonated with them (their "light bulb moments"). The following are a select few responses that add substance to this evaluation:

What an empowering conference to remind us of the power we hold to empower our students and spur them on toward the excellence that is already within them!

During the student panel, the sentiment that the value of education HAS changed but not in the traditional way, which implies financial value. The value has changed in what education MEANS. It means an ability to change–you, your culture, the world.

After attending the sessions focusing on changing language and policies around academic probation, I discovered that as the faculty senate president, I could lead the change at my college.

I loved hearing about different schools' approaches to handling the transition away from the language of probation.

The RP opening land and LABOR acknowledgment was an exploding (in a good way!) light bulb moment for me.

I have been underestimating my power and privilege as a classified professional leader. Searching for the term HSI on our college website only returns the three classified professionals funded by that grant. I am going to make sure that since Classified Senate's mission and public website is under my locus of control that it will proudly

shout that we are a governance group committed to antiracism and elevating the experience and outcomes for Latine students.

“Student voices matter.” Include them in the planning process and reach out to ASG regarding how they feel on campus.