EXAMPLES OF ¡Excelencia!

2007 ★ LOS ANGELES, CA

WHAT WORKS FOR LATINO STUDENTS IN HIGHER EDUCATION

2007 COMPENDIUM

PROFILES OF SELECTED PROGRAMS

Excelencia! IN EDUCATION

Applying Knowledge
To Public Policy And
Institutional Practice

EXAMPLES OF *¡Excelencia!*

Location
Cabrillo College (www.cabrillo.edu/academics/wdba/)

Program Description
The Digital Bridge Academy (DBA) educational program consists of several interrelated courses. At the very core is the Foundation Course, taught during the first two weeks of the semester. Students spend 58 hours in the classroom during the Foundation Course, coming together to form a cohort and a learning community. Students learn how to recognize and understand their own learning and communication styles and those of others and how to form self-managing work teams taking this knowledge into account. Students then move into a 13 week integrated Bridge Semester which continues the transformation process through the Introduction to Team Self Management (ISM) course where the students explore and transform their work habits and behaviors using techniques like corporate strategic planning for describing alternative futures and predicting future strategies. The rest of their schedule is organized around a central social justice project-based course with four related classes that feed into and support it. Students are given both the academic and cultural-behavioral foundations to succeed in a variety of majors and to thrive in their future. Careers that currently interest students include lab technician careers (Biotechnology, Marine Science), Allied Health (Nursing, Radiology, Dental Hygiene, etc.), Computer Information Systems, Business, Management, Engineering, Criminal Justice, and other high-wage, high-demand fields.

Goals
In order to have a major nation-wide impact on the way that community colleges approach under-prepared students, the DBA helps students reassess their previous educational experiences, recognize their own and others' learning and interaction styles, and understand their true abilities and motivation profiles. The DBA teaches students how to work successfully in teams, which is required in many of these careers. It also helps them learn how to become effective leaders.

Outcomes
The DBA has shown remarkable effectiveness with rural Latino students in the Watsonville area of Santa Cruz County, and more recently with urban black, Asian, Latino and other students in Oakland, California. Most of the students are high-risk, but well over 80% of them have completed the DBA semester. Some of the students from the first cohorts are now preparing to transfer or have transferred to four-year colleges and universities. An analysis of the records of students in the DBA who had completed some courses at Cabrillo College before enrolling in the program found that about 80% of students maintained a substantially higher grade point average after the DBA's Bridge Semester than they had before enrolling in the DBA. In surveys and essays, DBA students have rated the program very highly, and many say that it has turned their lives around and given them a new start.

Key Personnel
Diego James Navarro, Director
Diego@cabrillo.edu
Cabrillo College, Digital Bridge Academy
6500 Soquel Drive
Aptos, CA 950038
831-477-3255