

DeAnza College
Office of the President

April 17, 2025

Mr. David Andrus, J.D.
Interim Superintendent/President
College of the Canyons
26455 Rockwell Canyon Road
Santa Clarita, CA 91355

Dear President Andrus,

Greetings from northern California and De Anza College, where I hope that you and our colleagues at Canyons are all doing well. Since my departure from Canyons on January 2, I have had the privilege of engaging in a “100 days of listening” tour, throughout De Anza College and across the Foothill-De Anza district and community, learning from students, faculty, classified professionals, and administrators about the current and future needs of our campus, and how these needs align with the state’s Vision 2030 goals and our strategic planning at the district level, while embracing the culture and pride that permeates throughout our college community. As De Anza’s accreditation was reaffirmed for seven years by ACCJC in January 2025 with a commendation for its use of disaggregated data to guide funding, programmatic, and strategic decisions that have led to increased access and success for disproportionately impacted student populations, it is now time to take this work to the next level for our students, workforce, and community.

I am writing to convey De Anza College’s **interest in receiving technical assistance from a Partnership Resource Team (PRT) associated with the Institutional Effectiveness Partnership Initiative (IEPI)**. Having served and led various IEPI PRT teams over the years, I recognize the extraordinary value of this process as a service to our system and commend Canyons for their leadership in supporting this work. It is therefore with great pride that I make the request for De Anza’s first IEPI PRT.

Below are the critical areas of interest requested by De Anza College, to be supported by an IEPI PRT team, in alignment with the CCCCO’s Vision 2030 Equity in Success goals and outcomes 1 (completion) and 3 (workforce outcome):

- a comprehensive overview on the value and promise of **noncredit (continuing education)**, with special emphasis on short-term vocational and workforce preparation, and **not-for-credit (contract education)** courses and programs, aligned with meeting local labor market, regional, and state workforce priorities
- resources referencing models, colleges, and professional development across the state that offer successful continuing education and contract education courses and programs
- tools and guidance on how to best partner with statewide constituencies such as the Employment Training Panel, local workforce boards (e.g., Silicon Valley Workforce Development Board), America’s Job Centers of California (e.g., NOVAworks), local chambers of commerce, Centers of Excellence, etc. to develop workforce training opportunities for local businesses and industry

- grant opportunities and guidance on setting up contracts to support the establishment of continuing education and contract education offerings
- development of a data visualization or repository that allows for the tracking of student and employee successes, completions, and certifications

The proposed project to focus on the development of noncredit (continuing education) and not-for-credit (contract education) courses and programs helps to strengthen our ability to:

- ✓ respond to regional priority sectors, established by the Bay Area Community College Consortium, to further advance economic and workforce development across our region
- ✓ provide just-in-time training, upskilling, and reskilling opportunities for employees
- ✓ pilot the potential future creation of noncredit (and credit) curriculum by first beta-testing the demand through contract education, where employers can quickly educate their employees and not wait on traditional state chaptering/approval processes
- ✓ create alternative skill building opportunities whereby workers that already completed coursework leading to degrees and certificates can fine-tune or even modernize their skills quickly and swiftly through short-term vocational and workforce preparation coursework, that is more flexible and responsive to industry needs, without necessarily having to enroll in a more traditional (and sometimes time intensive) credit course
- ✓ support a college-going culture for new (and returning) adults, looking to enter into higher education for the first time (or perhaps after an extended period away), that may first require a less intrusive, low stakes transition through noncredit or not-for-credit

It is imperative that colleges remain responsive to the quickly changing evolutions in artificial intelligence, emerging technologies, and imposed tariffs on imported materials, and that our state remain responsive and nimble in our strategic approach to workforce innovation and economic advancement. This aligns with Governor Newsom's California Master Plan for Career Education, which emphasizes strengthening regional coordination (goal 2), workforce training for young people and adults (goal 5), and access to and affordability of education and workforce training (goal 6).

De Anza College is ready to design, plan, and prioritize strategies that will help us make enhancements in how we invite others to our college community, open the doors to create new opportunities for them, while removing barriers for employers and the workforce, so that our community can continue to thrive. The ideal time for the first IEPI PRT visit would be **Fall 2025** with a follow-up visit in **Spring 2026** or **Fall 2026**.

Thank you for considering our IEPI PRT technical assistance request. Please feel free to contact me with questions at torresomar@fhda.edu or 310.210.0986.

Sincerely,



Dr. Omar Torres
President, De Anza College