

Building Data Literacy and Stewardship into the Budgeting Process at Riverside Community College District

Ensuring Informed, Transparent, and Strategic Allocation of Resources Aligned With Institutional Goals and Priorities

Institution-wide data literacy and stewardship are critical in building stronger connections and improving decision-making among data providers and users. Riverside Community College District (RCCD) is helping to empower its institutional communities to be sophisticated data consumers with a shared understanding of their environments. Its annual budgeting process focuses on aligning budget development with strategic planning goals and data terminology.

Call for New Approaches

For a significant period, RCCD colleges grappled with individual approaches to budget development, often struggling to ensure alignment with the mandatory state initiatives and funding streams. The introduction of the new California Community Colleges Student Centered Funding Formula, customized district Budget Allocation Models, and outcomes of statewide initiatives forced RCCD to critically examine its practices and identify specific strategies for improvement.

Specifically, RCCD saw the importance of addressing interoperability in the budgeting process and the need for standardized terminology to ensure equitable information across the district. RCCD also emphasized the necessity of directing resources towards initiatives that promote student success and equity.

About

The Riverside Community College District through its three colleges—Moreno Valley College, Norco College, and Riverside City College supported by the District Office—serves and enriches its diverse communities by offering certificates, degrees, and transfer programs that help students achieve their educational and career goals. The district strives to impact the social and economic mobility of its students by ensuring access, success, and equity for everyone who wishes to take advantage of the educational opportunities offered by the colleges.

- Covers 450 square miles in the western Riverside County, California
- Operates three regionally accredited colleges with each certified as a Hispanic-serving institution
- Serves over 60,000 students each academic year



“We’re required to have participatory governance which means that our budgeting process is very involved and very inclusive. This project helped us identify a need for defining common budgeting terms as well as tools to assist those that aren’t necessarily budget professionals.”

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Aaron Brown,

*Vice Chancellor, Business
and Financial Services, District Office*

Facilitating Literacy and Stewardship

To update their planning and budgeting processes, the colleges and district began to work closely together to ensure their faculty and staff leveraged essential data standards - asking the right questions, collecting the data, standardizing data format and meaning, interpreting the data, telling their story, taking appropriate actions and ensuring annual assessment. With the application of these standards, RCCD strived to increase data and budget literacy of all stakeholders, elevating the need to understand the impact by which budget, allocation, and spending decisions have on student outcomes.

Ensuring Consistency and Transparency

Looking ahead, RCCD plans to enhance its college budget allocation models to ensure consistency and transparency in resource distribution. These models will build upon the current work to prioritize assessment, data transparency, and alignment toward common goals in discussions across the district, ensuring that everyone is moving in unison toward shared objectives.