

# Salt Lake Community College

## Student Success (Bruin Scholars) and Summer Bridge Orientation and Student Success

### Fiscal Year 2024 Program Review

#### Program Review Team Members:

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#### Introduction and Executive Summary:

First, thank you. As the program review team, we were impressed with the level of attention, dedication, and professionalism exhibited by Salt Lake Community College (SLCC) staff, particularly the Orientation and Student Success (OSS) Student Success (i.e., Bruin Scholars) and Summer Bridge teams, including their remarkable student leaders. Our experience as internal and external program reviewers was exceptional leading up to and during our site visits from Tuesday, April 2, to Wednesday, April 3, 2024. Unsurprisingly, the senior leadership of the SLCC Student Affairs division regards OSS as having found the “secret formula” for student success. A special thank you to OSS Director Richard Diaz, OSS Assistant Director for Student Success Erin Stirling, and OSS Assistant Director for Summer Bridge Agustin Bautista Silva. A special recognition to Administrative Assistant Marcus Webster for ensuring we had a pleasurable experience and snacks throughout our review.

Below, we present our program review commendations and recommendations based on our analysis of the documents provided by the Student Success (Bruin Scholars) and Summer Bridge teams and a series of 21 interviews with 69 SLCC stakeholders (See Appendix A for a complete list of interviewees). As we present our findings, we will pay particular attention to the following five areas of interest identified in their self-study:

1. Partnering with parents and family members of our college students
2. Strengthening our partnership with faculty and Academic Affairs
3. Expanding and securing funding for Bruin Scholars and Bridge
4. Finding ways to expand our presence in other SLCC campuses
5. Strengthening our on-campus partnerships and refining our organizational structure

## *Executive Summary*

Salt Lake Community College (SLCC) is committed to fostering an environment that not only welcomes but thrives on the success of its students. The Orientation and Student Success (OSS) department, under the exemplary leadership of Director Richard Diaz, Assistant Directors Erin Stirling, and Agustin Bautista Silva, plays a pivotal role in realizing this commitment. The department's flagship initiatives, the Bruin Scholars and Summer Bridge programs, stand as testaments to SLCC's dedication to academic excellence and student development. These programs are designed to prepare students for the challenges of higher education and beyond, nurturing emerging leaders, fostering a strong sense of community, and ensuring a robust curriculum that engages and empowers students.

This report highlights the overarching commendations of the OSS department's efforts through a series of comprehensive reviews, including interviews, program analysis, and student feedback. It acknowledges the strong leadership, sense of belonging, communication, curriculum, connection to campus resources, and cultural competence that define these programs. Additionally, the review offers targeted recommendations to expand the programs' reach and impact, including increasing funding, enhancing data practices, addressing the needs of multiple sites, revitalizing key program components, improving communication, engaging with local businesses, celebrating achievements, and fostering SME collaboration.

This executive summary serves as an introduction to a detailed exploration of the Bruin Scholars and Summer Bridge programs' successes and areas for growth. It underscores the importance of these programs in the broader context of SLCC's mission to provide a transformative educational experience to its diverse student body.

### Overarching Commendations:

- **Strong leadership:** Throughout the series of interviews, it was unmistakably clear that the OSS department is flourishing, thanks to the adept leadership of Director Richard Diaz alongside Assistant Directors Erin Stirling and Agustin Bautista Silva. This triumvirate exemplifies professionalism and excellence, setting a high standard within their department. Their leadership directly contributes to the development and execution of programs that consistently yield outstanding student outcomes.
- **Preparing emerging leaders (Investing in their development):** OSS excels in nurturing future (and current) leaders in higher education through its exceptional mentorship and comprehensive preparation programs, extending from peer mentors to coordinators to top administrative roles. These initiatives are characterized by their intensive training sessions, reinforcing the professionals' dedication to the department, and significantly enhancing student success outcomes.
- **Strong sense of belonging and community:** Both staff (full- and part-time staff members and peer mentors) and students involved in the Bruin Scholars and Summer Bridge

programs exhibit a profound sense of belonging and community. These programs are outstanding in their ability to make participants feel not only welcomed but also integral to a community that extends beyond the individual. By fostering an inclusive environment, Bruin Scholars and Summer Bridge make everyone interacting with them feel valued and part of something greater than themselves.

- **Strong communication:** The Bruin Scholars and Summer Bridge programs demonstrate exceptional communication, both within the organization and in their outreach efforts.
- **Strong curriculum and programming:** The Bruin Scholars and Summer Bridge programs boast outstanding curricula and robust programming, characterized by the enthusiasm and dedication of the staff (full, part-time, and student leaders alike) keen on implementing these initiatives. Similarly, the students display a remarkable eagerness to engage and participate in the programs, underscoring the effectiveness and appeal of the offerings.
- **Strong connection to resources and partnerships across campus:** The Bruin Scholars and Summer Bridge program exemplifies a powerful and dynamic connection to diverse resources, significantly contributing to its success. This program is not just an isolated entity within the educational ecosystem; it thrives on robust partnerships spread throughout the campus. These collaborations are not superficial; they are deeply ingrained connections that enhance the program's ability to serve its participants effectively. Through these strategic alliances, the program leverages the strengths of various departments and resources and fosters a sense of community and belonging among its participants. This, in turn, amplifies the overall impact and reach of the program, making it an invaluable asset to the campus and its student body.
- **Strong cultural competence:** The Bruin Scholars and Summer Bridge programs exemplify cultural competence, a testament to their profound understanding and respect for the diverse backgrounds from which their students hail. This profound cultural competence is reflected in the meticulously designed programming offered to students, which considers a broad spectrum of students' lived experiences, including language and cultural nuances. A prime illustration of this commitment to inclusivity and support is the Summer Bridge program's proactive adaptation to the evolving needs of its student body by establishing an ESL (English as a Second Language) cohort. This initiative specifically caters to the needs of emerging English speakers, ensuring they receive the tailored support necessary to thrive academically and socially, reinforcing the programs' dedication to fostering an environment of comprehensive support and understanding.

#### Overarching Recommendations:

- **Expand Bruin Scholars Program:** The Bridge to Bruin Scholars pipeline has proven to be a critical pathway for students seeking to enhance their educational journey. However, the limited availability of tuition waivers, capped at 13 each semester, fails to meet the growing student demand. To make this program more accessible and appealing, exploring

alternative incentives beyond the coveted tuition waiver is recommended. Offering book stipends or providing a free math course could significantly motivate student participation. By diversifying the incentives, the program can accommodate more students, expanding its impact and effectiveness in supporting academic success.

- **Increase Funding for Staff and Programming:** Our review highlights a crucial need for increased funding to support programming and staffing, including moving full-time and part-time positions to base E&G funds. Enhanced funding is essential for maintaining and expanding the quality and reach of the program's offerings. By securing additional financial resources, the program can ensure that it has the necessary infrastructure to support its goals, from enriching educational content to providing adequate staff to meet student needs.
- **Enhance Data Practices:** Developing a more robust data collection, analysis, and dissemination culture is paramount for informed decision-making and program improvement. By prioritizing these practices, the program can identify trends, measure outcomes more effectively, and adapt strategies to serve its population better. Moreover, sharing these insights can foster a culture of transparency and continuous improvement, benefiting staff and students.
- **Address Multiple Campuses Needs:** Catering to the needs of multiple campuses for Bruin Scholars requires a multifaceted approach, including offering flexible hours, increasing staff numbers, and ensuring all departments are adequately represented and accessible. This holistic strategy will ensure that the program's services are inclusive and responsive to the diverse needs of its participants, regardless of their geographical location or scheduling constraints.
- **Revitalize the Summer Bridge ESL Program:** The Summer Bridge ESL program needs some attention to increase its effectiveness and appeal to students. This could involve revising the curriculum through a non-deficit or infantilizing lens to make it more engaging, providing additional training for instructors, or integrating cultural and practical language usage opportunities. By investing in the program's revitalization, the institution can better support emerging adult English speakers in their pursuit of academic and personal success.
- **Improve Departmental Communication:** Strengthening inter and intra-departmental communication is critical for fostering a cohesive and collaborative environment. Encouraging regular meetings, sharing best practices, and facilitating joint initiatives can enhance understanding and cooperation across departments, leading to more coordinated and effective student service delivery. This includes rethinking the pipeline between Summer Bridge and Bruin Scholars so that the overall student experience between these two programs is smooth and seamless.
- **Engage with Local Businesses:** Partnering with local businesses opens opportunities for Bruin Scholars and Summer Bridge and their students. These partnerships can provide practical work experiences, sponsorships, and networking opportunities that enrich the students' academic journey and future career prospects. Establishing strong ties with the local business community can also bring additional resources and support to the program.

- **Celebrate Achievements:** Recognizing and celebrating the program's successes and milestones is crucial for building morale, motivation, and visibility. Whether through events, publications, or social media, highlighting the achievements of students and staff can foster a positive and supportive community while also attracting potential students and supporters to the program. Celebrating success is about acknowledging past accomplishments and inspiring future endeavors.
- **Foster SME Collaboration:** Improving the relationship with the School of Science, Mathematics and Engineering (SME) is essential for enriching the Summer Bridge Program content and delivery, particularly with the Mathematics Department. A deliberate strategy to partner with the department and actively involve new faculty members, who might not be the default choice for collaboration, can lead to fresh perspectives and innovative approaches in the curriculum, particularly in Math. Encouraging the participation of these new faculty members not only diversifies the expertise available to students but also strengthens the academic community by fostering interdisciplinary cooperation. Initiatives could include co-developing courses, research projects, or workshops aligning with the program's objectives and the SME's expertise. This approach enhances the program's offerings and builds a more inclusive and collaborative faculty culture, ultimately benefiting the student experience. Further, we recommend that Summer Bridge and SME form a steering committee that can help guide well-informed discussions concerning the future of the STEM Bridge and math course offerings in Summer Bridge.

#### I. SLCC's Mission, Vision, and Goals

The mission of SLCC is to model inclusive and transformative education, strengthening the communities it serves through the success of its students. Further, SLCC engages and supports students in educational pathways leading to successful transfer and meaningful employment through its seven core values: collaboration, community, inclusivity, learning, innovation, integrity, and trust.

- **Commendations:** SLCC's Bruin Scholars and Summer Bridge programs embody the institution's mission, vision, and core values. These programs model inclusive and transformative education, strengthening communities and promoting equitable access to education. By fostering collaboration, community, inclusivity, learning, innovation, integrity, and trust, these programs provide a supportive network that encourages academic achievement and personal growth. The ESL cohort within the Summer Bridge program and the programs' commitment to adapting to evolving student needs are examples of their dedication to innovation and integrity. The Bruin Scholars and Summer Bridge programs exemplify SLCC's commitment to creating a safe and nurturing environment that encourages students to engage fully in their educational journey.
- **Recommendations:** It is of utmost importance to acknowledge these programs' exceptional student outcomes and unwavering commitment to providing distinctive experiences to all participants. By continuing to set high standards across the educational

landscape, these programs strengthen their position as the leading initiatives within the institution and equip all students with the necessary tools for success and meaningful personal growth. Therefore, it is highly recommended that these programs continue to be invested in to ensure their continued success and positive impact on the students and the institution.

## II. Programs and Services

### *Summer Bridge Program*

#### Track 1 – General Bridge

- **Commendations:** The Summer Bridge Program has demonstrated remarkable efficacy at SLCC, emerging as an invaluable program that has stood the test of time. Initially implemented in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the program has since grown into a signature initiative of the institution, drawing widespread admiration and recognition. The feedback from student participants, peer mentors, and partnering staff has been exceptional, highlighting the program's transformative impact on all stakeholders involved. Its resounding success and unwavering popularity testify to the program's steadfast commitment to academic excellence and holistic student development.
- **Recommendations:**
  - *Increase Funding and Staffing:* The program requires additional funding and increased staffing levels. This is essential for sustaining the current operations and exploring the potential to scale the program to accommodate more students. Additional resources would enable the program to enrich its offerings and support structures, ensuring students receive the best preparation for their academic journey.
  - *Strengthen Relations with Academic Departments:* A concerted effort should be made to improve the collaboration and interaction between the Summer Bridge Program and the various academic departments within the college. This mutual strengthening of relations would ensure the program is closely aligned with educational standards and expectations, enhancing its relevance and effectiveness. It could also facilitate a smoother transition for students from the program into their chosen fields of study, supported by a more integrated network of resources and guidance.

#### Track 2 – ESL Bridge

- **Commendations:** The Salt Lake Community College's Summer Bridge Program - ESL Section deserves commendation for its innovation and adaptability. The program was created to meet the identified needs of students who are English language learners, showing a proactive approach to inclusivity and support for diverse backgrounds. The program's exceptional adaptability to student needs is also commendable. Using tools such as WhatsApp for effective communication reflects a thoughtful consideration of students' comfort and accessibility, fostering a more connected and supportive learning environment. The program's responsiveness and willingness to adopt

innovative practices confirm its dedication to excellence and continuous improvement. These commendable efforts provide a solid foundation for English language learners, equipping them with the skills and confidence needed to excel in their academic and future professional endeavors. A special shoutout to the Bridge ESL Peer Mentors for providing outstanding support to ESL Bridge students; interview participants expressed gratitude for their attention and care.

- **Recommendations:** To boost the impact of the Summer Bridge Program - ESL Section, we recommend tightening the bonds with the ESL department, ensuring curriculum alignment, resource sharing, and filling in support voids for a smoother student journey. Students expressed frustration with some of their classes not being fully operational from day one of classes, which delayed their learning and colored their experience. Furthermore, elevating the readiness of instructors with targeted training programs for English language learners will markedly improve the educational experience. Setting up a robust feedback system to gather and act on student feedback is vital, creating a more adaptive and student-focused program. Initiating new avenues for community-building among students and instructors will also strengthen their sense of belonging and support. Lastly, pledging to perpetual advancement and embracing cutting-edge educational tech and approaches are crucial to meeting the varied needs of English language learners. With these steps, the program can amplify its foundational strengths and continue to benefit students' academic and career paths profoundly.

#### Track 3 – STEM Bridge

- **Commendations:** The STEM Bridge Program is yet another testament to the SLCC Summer Bridge Program's dynamic adaptation to student needs. STEM Bridge participants voiced substantial appreciation for the program's multifaceted support, spanning both academic and socioemotional aspects and needs. Notably, students identifying as women in STEM highlighted the program's pivotal role in enhancing their sense of belonging within SLCC, specifically within the School of Science, Engineering, and Mathematics. This feedback underscores the program's effectiveness in fostering an inclusive and supportive environment, thereby contributing significantly to the engagement and retention of women in STEM fields.
- **Recommendations:** A significant opportunity for enhancement has been identified in the form of deepening collaboration with the Mathematics Department. This strategic partnership is essential for ensuring that the curriculum is responsive and evolves to meet students' diverse learning requirements effectively. Staff who are integral to these curriculum development and adaptation efforts must be recognized and compensated fairly for their invaluable contributions. Adopting this comprehensive approach will augment the quality of the educational experience and cultivate a more inclusive and nurturing environment. This, in turn, will significantly advance the program's core mission of boosting engagement among all students, with a particular emphasis on supporting and retaining women in the STEM disciplines. Here is also an opportunity to form a steering committee that can help guide STEM-related discussions.

## *Student Success/The Bruin Scholars Program*

### *General*

- **Commendations:** The Bruin Scholars Program at SLCC is highly commendable for its comprehensive programming, attention to student needs, and effective learning outcomes that yield higher student grades and retention than most other programs, making it a standout offering within the institution. Its robust nature and the variety of engagement opportunities available to students, both in-person and remotely, have earned it high praise and gratitude from its participants. The program's dedication to fostering an inclusive and supportive environment that caters to a diverse student body is particularly noteworthy. This focus on student-centric approaches and the tangible impact on participants' educational journeys underscore the program's significant contributions to the SLCC community.
- **Recommendations:** To further enhance the Bruin Scholars Program and extend its reach, it is recommended that additional resources in terms of funding and staff be allocated. This would enable the program to expand its offerings and further tailor its approach to meet the unique needs of a broader student population. Additionally, exploring innovative engagement opportunities and methods could attract a wider audience and enrich the program's impact. Increasing the program's visibility, both within the SLCC community and externally, could attract more participants and foster greater support. Implementing a structured feedback mechanism to gather insights from students continuously would ensure the program remains responsive and adaptable, further enhancing its effectiveness and the value it delivers to students. Additional attention must be given to the interconnection between Bruin Scholars and Summer Bridge.

### *Bruin Supporters, Family/Parent Programming*

- **Commendations:** The Bruin Scholars team highlighted the importance of family and other supporters in students' lives, which is why the Bruin Supporters program was created. In addition to the Summer Social, they have created events such as family-friendly movie nights to engage and celebrate these important support networks. It was also clear that this team recognizes that for some students, including parents and family is not aligned with what the student wants, so have approached this in a flexible manner to support all students needs with family involvement.
- **Recommendations:** The Program Review provided to the reviewers noted that expertise with parent and family programming is limited as this is a newer component. A recommendation would be to provide support for educational opportunities for staff to learn more about other community colleges' approaches to this type of programming and how these programs are funded would be beneficial to set achievable goals. Another challenge identified that impacts the ability to engage parents and family was the extremely limited funds available for programming efforts. An example given was that the program could only pay for student attendees and



family members to attend an off-campus Bruin Supporters event. With the financial hardship many families face as well as the variable size of families it presents a very real challenge for cost estimation within an inclusive framework that recognizes family as a variable term. A recommendation is to seek outside funding, such as grants and donations, to enhance the Bruin Supporters. As the Bruin Scholars program grows, the ability for staff to lead out on this work is also threatened. The initiative might be better suited in another area of the department or College.

#### Transfer Series:

- **Commendations:** In alignment with the SLCC mission, the Bruin Scholars Transfer Series prepares students for a successful transfer to higher education institutions. By organizing visits to some USHE universities such as the University of Utah, Weber State University, and Utah Valley University, the program provides invaluable insights into campus life and academic opportunities. These experiences equip students with the knowledge and confidence necessary for making informed decisions about their educational futures. The comprehensive support offered by the series, from academic preparation to social integration advice, ensures that scholars are well-prepared for the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead.
- **Recommendations:** The Bruin Scholars Transfer Series is a commendable program that offers invaluable exposure to various campuses for students considering transferring. To further enhance its impact, it's essential to secure additional funding. This would enable the provision of transportation and meals during campus visits, making the program more accessible. Moreover, there's a keen interest among students to explore other USHE higher education institutions, like Utah State University and Southern Utah University, which current budget constraints do not permit. Further, there is an opportunity to partner with an out-of-state institution to provide Bruin Scholars with a signature transfer tour experience. Increasing the program's funding would not only accommodate this interest but also broaden students' perspectives by exposing them to a wider array of educational environments.

#### Skillshops and Study Skills Website

- **Commendations:** The Bruin Scholars program recognizes the importance of flexible opportunities for students to develop their study skills through in-person and online workshops. They have demonstrated innovative methods and created opportunities to focus on specific skills. It is commendable that online resources can be utilized at any time, particularly when a student identifies a need.
- **Recommendations:** In meetings with staff, it is clear that advisors are encouraging students to utilize these flexible options to enhance their skills. Data should be utilized to understand which skills are most needed by students, and which programs are most utilized. More advanced statistical modeling looking at the impact of these programs with GPA might further yield insight to enhance these programs that demonstrate

more value. Coupling these programs with specific courses could also provide a more seamless navigation experience for students who may benefit from suggestions from the types of skills they need to strengthen their learning outcomes in specific courses.

#### Peer Mentoring Program

- **Commendations:** The Bruin Scholars Peer Mentoring Program stands as the pinnacle of excellence within OSS and SLCC. Both the Bruin Scholars and Bridge Peer Mentors undergo rigorous, comprehensive training that equips them with unparalleled skills and insights, transforming them into outstanding leaders who exemplify the very best of the department and institution. Their readiness to navigate their roles with such adeptness sets a gold standard for student leadership on campus. The support these peer mentors provide to Bruin Scholars is not just a highlight, but a transformative element of the student experience, significantly enriching their academic journey and personal growth. This program is not just commendable; it is a beacon of excellence and a testament to the commitment of SLCC to foster a nurturing, empowering community. Outstanding work indeed.
- **Recommendations:** To increase the capacity for Peer Mentors to support students effectively, it's crucial to also focus on strengthening the infrastructure and resources within the department. This means investing in additional training materials, expanding the mentorship program to include more mentors, and enhancing the technology used for mentor-mentee communication. By doing so, the department can ensure that the quality of support provided to students remains high, even as the program scales up. This approach not only benefits the current student population but also sets a positive precedent for future growth and development within the mentoring program.

### III. Resources

#### *Organizational Chart – Summer Bridge*

- **Commendations:** The organizational chart for the bridge program illustrates SLCC's commitment to providing the staffing necessary to facilitate a successful program. The staffing, which includes part-time and full-time employees, includes degree-seeking SLCC students as peer mentors. Additionally, the staffing is culturally diverse and mirrors the demographic that it serves.
- **Recommendations:** Although the current staffing levels seem sufficient, additional base funding will be necessary to hire more full-time staff as the program expands. Furthermore, it is evident that the collaboration between Summer Bridge and Academic Affairs needs more cohesion. This may be achieved by establishing a steering committee that includes representatives from Summer Bridge and Academic Affairs. The steering committee should meet regularly to conduct a SWOT analysis of the program and discuss programmatic changes.

#### *Organizational Chart – Student Success/Bruin Scholars*

- **Commendations:** The Student Success/Bruin Scholars program also appears to have the staffing necessary to facilitate its program. The bridging between the summer program and Bruin Scholars affords a smooth transition into SLCC. The high level of student support from Bruin Scholars staff and peer mentors creates a welcoming and affirming environment that engenders a deep sense of belonging and connection.
- **Recommendations:** To expand operations to all sites, however, the program will need increased funding to hire more staff.

#### *Fiscal Resources – Summer Bridge*

- **Commendations:** The Summer Bridge staff has been adept at using its resources.
- **Recommendations:** If the Summer Bridge staff desire program expansion, the OSS administrators will need to make some difficult decisions to sustain the program, unless additional funding sources (e.g., grants, private donors, business community partnerships, etc.) are secured. One is to reduce the number of students admitted into the program. Another is to reduce the number of peer mentors. Furthermore, if, for instance, 48 students from the last cohort with GPAs lower than 2.0 cost the program \$56K, the program should consider eliminating or reducing the weekly stipends. A program which has proven its efficacy, however, should be able to secure state and federal grant funding. The college should also pursue private sector donations and partnerships with the business community. There may be a business, for example, willing to supply laptops or underwrite the weekly luncheons.

#### *Fiscal Resources – Student Success/Bruin Scholars*

- **Commendations:** As a more established program, the Student Success/Bruin Scholars program has done an excellent job of employing fiscally sound practices to use available resources responsibly.
- **Recommendations:** Additional funding is required to maintain the level of excellence and to expand operations. To ease the Summer Bridge students into Bruin Scholars, the program should consider offering more tuition waivers to bolster financial support and increase student engagement.

### *IV. Metrics and Data*

#### *Summer Bridge*

- **Commendations:** The program has established a culture of assessment, and per the program data, Summer Bridge has demonstrated remarkable success in providing access and support to underserved, underrepresented students. Of note is the attention given to non-traditional, returning students who can take advantage of a program that provides a debt-free introductory college experience. Also, it is laudable that the program has added a track focused on ESL students' needs. The data indicate that students who enter SLCC through its summer bridge program have higher rates of success, retention, and progression than those who do not participate in the program. Student surveys show that the Bridge participants appreciate the programming, the courses, the activities, and the opportunities to interact with their peers and the Summer Bridge faculty and staff.

- **Recommendations:** The program should establish a consistent, standard measure of assessment. Currently, individual programs within Summer Bridge collect their own data, and sometimes the information is not congruent and not readily shared with stakeholders. Therefore, the program should work more closely with its Data Science department on a comprehensive plan to collect and analyze key performance indicators (KPIs) such as pass rates, summer-fall retention, fall-to-spring retention, fall-to-fall retention, first-year GPAs, second-year GPAs, and graduation rates to establish OKRs (objectives and key results). Having such data will put the program in a better position to solicit private donations and to apply for state and federal grants and awards.

#### *Student Success (Bruin Scholars)*

- **Commendations:** See section *Student Success/The Bruin Scholars Program*
- **Recommendations:** See section *Student Success/The Bruin Scholars Program*

### V. Relationship with Other Functional Units in SLCC

#### *Student Success (Bruin Scholars) and Summer Bridge – PACE Programs*

- **Commendations:** The PACE Scholars Program commends the Bruin Scholars Program at SLCC for their exceptional dedication to student success. Bruin Scholars sets a high bar through its intentional mentoring, innovative programming, and rigorous assessment, ensuring students not only meet but surpass their academic and personal goals. The personalized guidance and support provided by the Bruin Scholars Program empower students to navigate challenges confidently, while their tailored activities promote holistic development, preparing scholars for both academic excellence and professional readiness. Their commitment to continually evaluating and enhancing their strategies exemplifies a genuine investment in the growth and success of their students. The Bruin Scholars Program is a beacon of excellence in student support, serving as an inspirational model for others to follow.
- **Recommendations:** We strongly recommend that the Bruin Scholars Program be sufficiently resourced and empowered to take over the PACE Scholars Program at the college level, with the intention of leveraging the Bruin Scholars Program's established framework and record of success to broaden its reach and impact. This proposal encompasses a detailed plan for a seamless integration of the two programs, which includes securing additional funding, developing specialized training for staff and mentors, and upgrading technological systems for enhanced communication and program management. The aim is to expand mentorship and support services available to students, ensuring they receive a distinctive and transformative experience during their time at SLCC. The consolidation of these programs under the auspices of the Bruin Scholars Program will not only streamline support services but also create a more robust framework for student success. This integration is designed to offer a more personalized and impactful educational journey for students, highlighted by comprehensive academic support, career development opportunities, and enriched community engagement activities. By implementing this proposal, we aim to improve the quality and breadth of support provided to students, thereby enriching their academic experience and better equipping them for their future careers. This approach signifies a progressive step in

program development and student services, setting a strong precedent for future growth and innovation within SLCC's mentoring and support initiatives.

#### *Student Success (Bruin Scholars) and Summer Bridge – Orientation*

- **Commendations:** The collaboration between the Bruin Scholars, Bridge, and Orientation programs demonstrates an exemplary level of synergy that sets a high standard for departmental cooperation. These programs work in unison, not only to facilitate a seamless integration of services but also to foster a nurturing, supportive environment that benefits all stakeholders involved. Through their concerted efforts, they effectively enhance the student journey from orientation through to completion, while also providing robust support to staff members, ensuring they are well-equipped to meet the diverse needs of the student body. This harmonious operation is a testament to the strong leadership and the commitment to excellence shared among these subdivisions.
- **Recommendations:** To further strengthen the interconnectedness and efficacy of the Bruin Scholars, Summer Bridge, and Orientation programs, it is advisable to refine the process for sharing programmatic updates. This can be achieved by establishing a more structured communication protocol that ensures all pertinent information is conveyed in a timely and accessible manner during orientation sessions. Additionally, the introduction of a specialized orientation session, designed specifically for Bruin Scholars and Summer Bridge partners, as well as being open to the entire campus staff, is recommended. This targeted session should aim to not only inform but also engage participants by highlighting the innovative ways in which SLCC promotes these valuable programs to students and the wider community. The goal of this initiative would be to foster a deeper understanding and appreciation of these programs, encouraging broader support and participation across the campus, thereby enhancing the overall impact of these initiatives on student success and community engagement.

#### *Student Success (Bruin Scholars) and Summer Bridge – Career Services*

- **Commendations:** The Career Services team expressed their highest praise for the Bruin Scholars and Summer Bridge Programs, highlighting their steadfast commitment to fostering student success and their significant contributions to the campus community. With the advent of Erin Stirling stepping into the role of Interim Director for Career Services, the bond between Career Services and these initiatives has not only grown stronger but has evolved into a deeply integrated partnership. CIP funds have been effectively used by both programs to increase staffing by employing students to augment the reach of professional staff.
- **Recommendations:** Career services has expressed a keen interest in enhancing communication with Bruin Scholars and Summer Bridge. With the financial barriers many students face to attend SLCC, increasing awareness of job opportunities for students would be beneficial, particularly if it were done in a collaborative manner with Bruin Scholar and Summer Bridge Staff to help students think inclusively about financial needs and demands of school. It is also recommended that parameters around CIP funds be

explored to see if pay increases could be addressed for exceptional student staff as an incentive.

#### *Student Success (Bruin Scholars) and Summer Bridge – Financial Aid*

- **Commendations:** The Bruin Scholars and Summer Bridge program work closely together to identify financial support for students, including tuition waivers for a limited number of students. The importance of sustainable funding and maintaining required GPA are understood by both areas and both are committed to the success of students. The Bruin Scholars and Summer Bridge Program and Financial Aid demonstrated a clear focus on student success and continuing to improve communication between both areas.
- **Recommendations:** Students in both programs are learning not only subject matter but the mechanics of funding their education. A challenge identified was that students who are not able to maintain their GPA are not able to maintain their tuition waiver and, in some cases, must then pay tuition, which is an unexpected financial hardship. Early and frequent communication with students about the importance of maintaining their GPA or in cases of hardship, taking appropriate measures to withdraw from the semester would provide better outcomes for these students. Increasing communication between Bruin Scholars, Summer Bridge and Financial Aid is critical and with the well-established connection between these areas, this communication can be strengthened. An approach such as walking through case studies where students have lost their tuition waivers might be a useful strategy for both areas to identify how to further improve communication between units as well as with students.

#### *Student Success (Bruin Scholars) and Summer Bridge – STEM Learning Center*

- **Commendations:** The collaboration between the Bruin Scholars Program and the STEM Learning Center has transformed the academic journey for Bruin Scholars, guaranteeing them not only access to unparalleled tutoring services but also to an enriching supplemental learning experience. While the STEM Learning Center graciously extends its resources to all SLCC students, the symbiotic partnership with the Bruin Scholars Program ensures an enhanced layer of support and dedicated follow-through for students poised to excel in the challenging realms of STEM subjects. This partnership is not merely functional but pivotal, as underscored by the STEM Learning Center's acknowledgment of its immense value. In a testament to the program's success, it's noteworthy that among the STEM Learning Center's most exceptional tutors is a distinguished product of the Bruin Scholars Program, further amplifying the commendation of this partnership's significant impact on fostering academic excellence and nurturing future STEM innovators.
- **Recommendations:** Improving the communication between the Bruin Scholars Program and the STEM Learning Center has been identified as a crucial area for growth. Stakeholders have expressed concerns that the current pace of interaction between the two programs is sometimes slow. They would appreciate a more proactive approach to collaboration, suggesting that better communication could enhance the effectiveness and impact of both programs.

### *Summer Bridge – English Department*

- **Commendations:** The English department works closely with the Summer Bridge staff to align curriculum within the parameters of bridge programming. The department is invested in the program and assigns full-time faculty or veteran adjunct faculty to the summer courses. The faculty whom we interviewed gave the program high praise for its support of students and faculty. They also expressed appreciation for the assistance of the peer mentors who have played very active roles in engaging and supporting students.
- **Recommendations:** The Bridge Program has demonstrated exceptional success in equipping students with the necessary skills to excel in their academic endeavors, as evidenced by the impressive statistics of 84.11% of participants passing English 1010 with a grade of C or above, and an even more remarkable 96.3% achieving the same level of success in English 2010. These figures not only underline the effectiveness of the program in fostering academic excellence but also highlight its critical role in preparing students for more advanced studies. Given these outcomes, it is strongly recommended that the program not only be sustained but also receive continued support and resources to ensure that these high levels of student achievement are maintained over time. The Bridge Program's proven track record of enhancing student performance is indispensable for the academic institution's ongoing success and its students' future prospects.

### *Summer Bridge – Science, Mathematics, and Engineering (SME) Department*

- **Commendations:** The collaboration between Summer Bridge and SME staff is notably proactive and strategic, involving the development of schedules and programs before the summer session begins. The demonstrated impact of the Summer Bridge program on student learning and success is significant, enhancing student engagement during their first college year, akin to other high-impact cohort models. Effective relationships between the program and various departments are maintained through regular planning and coordination meetings, ensuring that the curriculum and activities are well-aligned with students' needs.
- **Recommendations:** There is a consensus that there are opportunities to improve by expanding the collaboration model to include a broader range of faculty, moving beyond those initially involved in the program's inception. This expansion could address potential barriers and contribute to a more diversified and enriched curriculum. There is some uncertainty about the program's funding strategy, but there is a clear call for innovation in the course offerings. Specifically, there is a suggestion to explore the feasibility of offering 3-credit hour courses, like Math 1030, during the summer to enable students to fulfill their Quantitative Literacy (QL) requirements more efficiently. This suggestion emerges from recognizing the challenges associated with delivering the standard 4-credit math courses over an 8-week summer session. Another clear finding is that SME institutional agents can benefit from more cultural competence training.



#### *Summer Bridge – ESL Department*

- **Commendations:** The ESL staff are passionate about providing opportunities for the support and advancement of ESL students at SLCC. The students are fortunate to have such stalwart advocates who petitioned for the inclusion of ESL students in Summer Bridge. It is commendable for the Summer Bridge program to respond to the needs of English language learners by offering a special track for them. During the campus interviews, the ESL students praised the program for its inclusivity.
- **Recommendations:** Of all the programs offered within Summer Bridge, the ESL track is the one that needs the most attention. There should be better lines of communication between the ESL program and Summer Bridge department regarding curriculum requirements (e.g., textbooks, other required class materials, etc.). Additionally, when possible, the ESL program should consider assigning full-time faculty or veteran adjunct faculty to teach in the summer. The faculty could benefit from trainings or orientations to familiarize themselves with the goals and mission of Summer Bridge. Moreover, the ESL program should maintain tracking data on the performance of the students in Summer Bridge and beyond. Although the ESL advisor expressed an interest in providing more spaces in the ESL track of Summer Bridge, until the current issues with curriculum and communication are resolved, the current ESL levels are sufficient.

#### *Summer Bridge – Office of the Registrar and Academic Records (ORAR)*

- **Commendations:** The collaboration between the Summer Bridge program and the Office of the Registrar and Academic Records is strong, with both areas demonstrating effective communication. There is an awareness of deadlines and planning constraints, which allows both programs to understand that sometimes timing can affect one area. Both areas discussed how they can make this work and demonstrated their commitment to students.
- **Recommendations:** The only recommendation is to continue with early and frequent communication.

#### *Summer Bridge – Admissions Office*

- **Commendations:** The Admissions Office and Summer Bridge Program are committed to working together to serve students' needs. Their communication is effective and demonstrates their shared commitment to students.
- **Recommendations:** Because both areas are constrained by deadlines, continuing to enhance communication to support both areas is important. It is clear that effective communication has already been established. Continuing to enhance this will benefit both areas in serving students.

#### *Student Success (Bruin Scholars) – Trio*

- **Commendations:** The collaboration between the Bruin Scholars and Trio Programs has significantly enhanced the support system for students, demonstrating a remarkable partnership that deserves commendation. The strategic co-location of their departments



at the Taylorsville Redwood Campus has been a game-changer, fostering an environment where referrals have notably increased, proving the strength and effectiveness of their joint efforts. This proximity has not only facilitated seamless collaboration but has also played a crucial role in events such as the Division of Student Affairs Graduation, showcasing their unified commitment to student success. Moreover, this move has empowered students, giving them a greater sense of ownership over their space, which is instrumental in creating a supportive and welcoming campus atmosphere. The synergy between the Bruin Scholars and Trio Programs sets a sterling example of how collaboration can significantly impact student engagement and achievement.

- **Recommendations:** The partnership between the Bruin Scholars and Trio Programs has demonstrated considerable success in enhancing student support and engagement, particularly at the Taylorsville Redwood Campus. This collaboration merits expansion to other centers like Jordan and West Valley, where similar benefits can be anticipated. However, the current spatial arrangement at Taylorsville, shared with PACE and divided by a physical wall, represents an unnecessary barrier to the full potential of this collaboration. Removing this wall and integrating the spaces can foster a more inclusive and accessible environment, crucial in the post-pandemic context where student engagement has become more challenging. Additionally, increasing the visibility of these programs across campuses can further elevate their impact, making the supportive services more accessible to a broader student population. This strategic enhancement of physical space and visibility will not only strengthen the existing partnership but also significantly contribute to a more supportive, engaging, and welcoming campus atmosphere for all students.

#### *Student Success (Bruin Scholars) – University Transfer*

- **Commendations:** Representatives from this department did not attend the Program Review interviews or respond to email requests for further information.
- **Recommendations:** From a reviewer's perspective, the apparent reluctance of University Transfer staff to engage in interviews or respond to email inquiries for feedback could signal underlying tensions between these two departments that necessitate immediate attention and resolution.

#### *Student Success (Bruin Scholars) – Academic Advising*

- **Commendations:** Academic Advising and the Bruin Scholars are committed to student success. They demonstrated a collaborative approach to supporting students and a willingness to continue to innovate how they work together to enhance student success. The strength of the cohort model that the Bruin Scholars provides was noted.
- **Recommendations:** By continuing to enhance communication between these areas, staff can support students in accomplishing their goals.

#### *Student Success (Bruin Scholars) – Student Writing & Reading Center (SWRC)*

- **Commendations:** The Bruin Scholars Program has fostered a vibrant learning community and culture of collaboration, particularly through its adept partnering with the South City Writing & Reading Center. Notably proficient at organizing events within this space to invite Bruin Scholars to feel welcome in the Writing & Reading Center, the program has successfully cultivated an environment conducive to learning and student success. Beyond just utilizing the Writing & Reading Center for study sessions, Bruin Scholars has proactively enriched its students' educational experiences by hosting various dynamic workshops. This initiative demonstrates their commitment not just to academic excellence but to the holistic development of their scholars. Moreover, Program peer mentors and staff reflect student demographics beautifully, further emphasizing their impact.
- **Recommendations:** We recommend expanding the partnership between the Bruin Scholars Program and the Writing & Reading Center across all campuses, building on the success seen on the South City campus. This collaboration has proven to significantly enhance the academic community, offering diverse learning opportunities and enriching students' educational experiences. By integrating these programs more deeply, we can destigmatize the Writing & Reading Centers, making them more inviting and accessible to a wider student body. Such a move not only supports academic excellence but also fosters a more inclusive, engaging, and supportive learning environment. Strengthening this partnership is a strategic step towards building a more connected and vibrant community of scholars.

#### *Student Success (Bruin Scholars) – Gender and Sexuality Student Resource Center (GSSRC)*

- **Commendations:** The Bruin Scholars Program's collaboration with the Gender and Sexuality Student Resource Center at South City Campus stands as a paragon of active engagement and inclusivity. Their partnership has led to the successful execution of multiple events, showcasing their commitment to fostering a vibrant campus community. Notably, the Bruin Scholars Program's adept use of social media has played a crucial role in educating and informing students about campus resources, significantly enhancing student life. Their office has become a sanctuary for students, thanks to their unwavering dedication to creating a welcoming environment for all. Moreover, the staff's exceptional networking skills and diligent follow-ups have maximized the benefits of these collaborations, enriching the academic and social experiences of students. This engagement has not only facilitated a stronger connection among students and staff but has also cemented the Bruin Scholars Program's reputation as a cornerstone of support and inclusivity within the campus community.
- **Recommendations:** Expanding their partnerships beyond South City Campus could leverage their impressive track record to benefit a wider student body. While their limited space at South City Campus has fostered innovative collaborations, it also underscores the necessity for larger accommodation to match the scale of their ambitions and the needs

of the students they aim to serve. Furthermore, diversifying event timings could cater to the varied schedules of students, ensuring more inclusive participation. Also, while the program has a strong social media presence, it is confusing having to navigate the multiple social media accounts for all the campuses.

#### *Student Success (Bruin Scholars) – Dream Center*

- **Commendations:** The collaboration between the Bruin Scholars Program and the Dream Center stands as an exemplary model of student support and engagement. Their concerted efforts in facilitating referrals for students interested in joining the program underscore a deep commitment to inclusivity and accessibility. By working closely together, they have created a robust system for providing comprehensive support, including crucial financial aid consultations, which are instrumental in navigating the complexities of funding education. This partnership has not only led to the successful execution of numerous events but has also established a platform for recognizing and awarding students, thereby fostering a nurturing and motivating environment. The close interaction between the programs and students highlights a personalized approach to student support, ensuring that individual needs are met with understanding and empathy. Despite these accomplishments, there is a recognized potential for even greater impact through increased collaboration, especially in event planning and execution. Expanding this partnership will undoubtedly serve to enhance the support network available to students, further enriching their academic and social experiences on campus.
- **Recommendations:** To further tailor their efforts to the diverse needs of undocumented immigrant students with and without Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA), particularly those at the West Valley Center, it is imperative to introduce more flexible hours and a broader variety of event times. This center's unique student population, which includes a significant number of post-traditional students, necessitates an adaptable approach to scheduling that accommodates those who frequent the campus later in the day. By expanding their collaboration to incorporate more flexible scheduling and a wider array of event timings, the Bruin Scholars Program and the Dream Center can significantly enhance their support network, ensuring that the services and opportunities they offer are accessible to every student, regardless of their schedule. Embracing this flexibility will not only reinforce their commitment to student success but also unlock the potential for even greater impact in the lives of those they aim to serve.

#### *Student Success (Bruin Scholars) – Thayne Center*

- **Commendations:** The Bruins Scholars and the Thayne Center have worked together to support students not only through opportunities to give back to the community but also by collaborating on finding sources of funding for individual students. Both areas use a variety of methods to communicate with students and between areas.
- **Recommendations:** Increasing communication about funding opportunities and exploring ways both areas can collaborate in terms of fundraising would offer strategies to further strengthen the connection between both departments. Increasing awareness and

destigmatizing the use of resources such as the food pantry may also help Bruin Scholar students who are struggling with food insecurity address a very real need.

## Appendix A

- Agustin Bautista Silva – Asst. Director, Bridge, OSS
- Alex Gomez Hernandez – Bruin Scholar (South City)
- Alyssa Snyder – Bruin Scholars Coordinator, OSS
- Ann Fillmore – Associate Professor, English
- Anni Tedder – Director, Academic Advising
- Belen Castro Ruiz – West Valley Center Bruin Scholar Coordinator, OSS
- Blanca – Bruin Scholars Peer Mentor, OSS
- Bonnie Ogden, Program Manager, Engineering Student Success
- Brenda Santoyo – Manager, Dream Center
- Brenda Sieczkowski – Assistant Professor, English
- Brett Perozzi – VP, Student Affairs Division
- Carlos Salinas Tovar – Bridge Peer Mentor, OSS
- Carmelita Aguilar – Bridge (ENGR2900)
- Cathy Blake – Specialist, Admissions
- Cicero Smith – Bridge
- Clint Gardner – Director, Writing & Reading Center
- Constance Archuleta – Bridge Peer Mentor, OSS
- Daniel Flores – Orientation Leader
- Danira Castro – Bridge (ESL)
- Emily Johnson – Bridge Coordinator, OSS
- Erin Stirling – Asst. Director, Student Success, OSS
- Hannah Terry – Transition Coordinator, OSS
- Hernán Pinto Zambrano – Coordinator 3, STEM Learning Center
- Jason Roberts – Associate Professor, English
- Joan Lopez Figueroa – Advisor, PACE
- Jonathan Barnes – Associate Dean, Natural Sciences
- Jordy Malmaceda – Bridge Program Associate, OSS
- Jose Rodriguez – Manager, Student Support
- Joselyn Esquivel – Bruin Scholars Peer Mentor, OSS
- Josh Samson – Bridge Coordinator, OSS
- Juliana Caballero – Bridge Senior Peer Mentor, OSS
- Karen Shelley – Administrative Assistant, SLTC ESL
- Kat Gauthier – Bruin Scholar (South City)
- Kate Gildea – Director, Admission
- Kathie Campbell – Associate VP, Student Success
- Kelly Williamson – Asst. Director, Accessibility & Disability Center
- Kino Hurtado – Director, HSI Initiatives
- Laysha Paredes – Bridge Senior Peer Mentor, OSS
- Lee Galicia Azamar – Senior Peer Mentor, OSS
- Lesly Gonzalez Orduna – Peer Mentor, OSS
- Luz Gamarra – ESL Advisor, Academic Advising

- Mariam Mejia – Bruin Scholars Peer Mentor, OSS
- Maricela Hernandez – Asst. Director, TRIO
- Matt Wallace – Asst. Director, Career Services
- Matthew Wong – Bridge Coordinator, OSS
- Melissa Quinn – Associate Professor, Mathematics
- Monique Reynoso – Bridge Peer Mentor, OSS
- Nancy Giraldo – Bruin Scholar Coordinator, OSS
- Natalie Shepherd – Coordinator, Office of the Registrar and Academic Records
- Ologa Iopu – Registrar, Office of the Registrar and Academic Records
- Orion Gastelum – Bridge Peer Mentor, OSS
- Patricio Dominguez – Orientation Leader
- Penina Fitiao – Asst. Director, Orientation and Transition, OSS
- Peter Moosman – Manager, Gender & Sexuality Resource Center
- Rene Zepeda – Basic Needs Coordinator, Thayne Center
- Reuel Laver – Senior Peer Mentor, OSS
- Richard Diaz – Director, OSS
- Ronald McKay – Interim Dean of Mathematics
- Stacey Parson – Campus Internships Coordinator, Career Services
- Suzanne Mozdy – Interim Associate Provost
- Timothy Davis – Director, Thayne Center
- Titi Kathol – Orientation Coordinator, OSS
- Tracy Fraatz – Bruin Scholar (South City)
- Tùng Thanhtrong – Director, TRIO Programs
- Ulysses Tongaonevai – Director, Office of Diversity & Multicultural Affairs
- Verity Flurer – Asst. Director, Financial Aid
- Veronica Aguilera Sanchez – Coordinator, Institutional Marketing
- Zitlalli Herrera – Bruin Scholar Coordinator, OSS