



# SACRAMENTO CITY COLLEGE INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY REPORT

Office of Planning, Research, and Institutional Effectiveness  
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## INTRODUCTION

In 2019, Sacramento City College joined the Achieving the Dream (ATD) National Network, becoming one of sixteen colleges in the ATD 2019 cohort. The college is in the process of implementing a number of change efforts, including Guided Pathways, AB 705, Student Equity and Achievement (SEA), and Strong Workforce, to name a few. The strategic approach to our ATD work is to weave this patchwork of efforts into one cohesive student success agenda that reflects the college's mission, vision, and values.

A team of eight people from SCC attended the ATD Summer Kickoff Institute in June of 2019. The team met our two coaches, began organizing the college's student success work for the year, and was introduced to ATD's approach, which involves focusing on seven institutional capacities that are organized within a framework of a student-focused culture. This framework is shown in Figure 1.

FIGURE 1: Achieving the Dream's Institutional Capacity Framework



Our two ATD coaches visited our college for the first time in Fall 2019. This gave them the opportunity to observe our work in action, gain a clearer understanding of our campus culture, and connect with a wide range of individuals at the college. The coaches also helped us prepare for the administration of the Institutional Capacity Assessment Tool (ICAT), an instrument designed by ATD to help colleges identify strengths and areas of improvement across the seven institutional capacities.

## ICAT AND CAPACITY CAFÉ: MAJOR THEMES

Within each capacity area, the college has strengths and challenges. Below is a summary of the major themes that emerged from the ICAT, the Capacity Café, and the ATD coaches Site Visit Reflection Letter. Figure 3 and Figure 4 depict the college's specific strengths and challenges within each theme.

### **Theme 1: The college has a strong executive leadership team, with a need for leadership development in other areas.**

One of the strongest themes that emerged from the ICAT and the Capacity Café was the strength of the college executive leadership team. As an illustration, sixty-one percent (61%) of ICAT respondents gave an “exemplary” rating to the following statement: “Does the president actively support efforts to improve student success?” During the Capacity Café, many participants commented on the focused and transparent leadership style of the college President and his executive team. Lastly, in their site visit reflection letter, our ATD coaches commented, “I was very impressed by the strong spirit and care for students, each other, and the work.” At the same time, many people voiced during the Capacity Café their frustration that “it’s always the same people doing the work.” Those comments point to a need for leadership development activities at all levels.

### **Theme 2: The college has built a strong foundation for equity work, with more capacity-building needed.**

The Equity section of the ICAT contained more high scoring responses than any other capacity area. Many people at the college are engaged in equity conversations and are working to achieve equity in student outcomes. Comments made at the Capacity Café rounded out these findings, indicating that while the spirit of equity has a strong presence at the college, there are still inequitable policies and practices in place that contribute to equity gaps. Additionally, the ATD coaches noted that the college lacks a clear equity statement that’s widely communicated and helps ground decision-making.

**Theme 3: Data is abundant and available, but not widely or routinely used in planning and decision-making.**

Some of the college's data strengths, according to ICAT results, include the routine disaggregation of student success data, the availability of data, and the common use of key indicators across the college, including enrollment, headcount, success rates, retention/drop rates, and persistence. However, ICAT results also suggest that data isn't always communicated in ways that are understandable, data literacy across the college is spotty, and decision-making doesn't routinely involve an evidence-based approach. Capacity Café participants identified the need for more qualitative and student voice research. They also shared the need for increased support for technology and software implementation processes. ATD coaches commented that the college makes data available and is building a stronger culture of evidence, and that a coherent data framework and action plan would amplify our capacity in this area.

**Theme 4: While the college offers many professional development opportunities focused on teaching and learning, the impact of those efforts aren't clear.**

One of the most consistent themes from the Capacity Café was the value faculty place on professional development opportunities focused on teaching and learning. The college offers several cohort-based faculty professional development opportunities, including T4E, NFA, RIDA, and various professional learning communities. However, according to ICAT results, it's unclear how these professional development opportunities translate into improvements in the teaching and learning process (and ultimately into improvements in student success). The ATD coaches acknowledged that the college is in the process of creating a professional development strategy that supports equity and student success efforts.

**Theme 5: The college has a clear student success vision, yet planning and resource allocation processes are perceived to be cumbersome and not aligned clearly with this vision.**

The majority of ICAT respondents believe that the college has a clear student success vision, that the core work of the institution aligns with our student success vision and goals, and that leaders at the college are willing to change structures and processes to achieve these goals. There was a high percentage of "don't know" responses on items pertaining to planning and resource allocation, and that was reinforced by comments made at the Capacity Café. Specific concerns raised were that the college has too many plans, planning isn't seamlessly aligned, and the planning and resource allocation process doesn't always seem meaningful.

**Theme 6: While communication from the executive level has improved, the college's student success work isn't clearly visible to everyone.**

ICAT responses indicated that college-wide communication is strong, especially the messaging from the executive team focusing on student success and equity goals. Capacity Café comments suggest that communication breakdowns still occur, and people cited various examples. After

visiting the college and reviewing our ICAT results, our ATD coaches that we prioritize creating a graphic that helps us brand and communicate our student success work. This would, to use their words, “connect the dots and make the work look like whole cloth as opposed to a set of patchwork initiatives.” The ATD coaches also recommended that we develop a comprehensive communication plan that utilizes multiple methods of sharing the progress of implementation.

FIGURE 2: Strengths identified by ICAT and Capacity Café results



FIGURE 3: Challenges identified by ICAT and Capacity Café results



## RECOMMENDATIONS

After reviewing the results from the ICAT, the Capacity Café, and the ATD coaches Site Visit Reflection Letter, the ATD data team, in conjunction with the Office of Planning, Research, and Institutional Effectiveness, identified six recommendations for the college to consider when developing our ATD action plan. These recommendations are outlined in Figure 4.

FIGURE 4: ATD Action Plan recommendations

<b><u>RECOMMENDATION 1</u></b>
Identify and implement strategies that encourage development of leadership at all levels of the institution.
<b><u>RECOMMENDATION 2</u></b>
Conduct a college-wide equity audit, identifying structural barriers to student success.
<b><u>RECOMMENDATION 3</u></b>
Design a data framework and plan that includes key metrics and indicators, strategies for sharing data in a clear and relevant way, and linkages to planning and decision-making.
<b><u>RECOMMENDATION 4</u></b>
Create a faculty professional development plan focused on improving teaching and learning across the college.
<b><u>RECOMMENDATION 5</u></b>
Review planning and resource allocation processes through a holistic student success and equity lens.
<b><u>RECOMMENDATION 6</u></b>
Develop a communication plan that raises visibility of the college's student success efforts.



## FUTURE DIRECTIONS

The next step in our ATD work is to develop an Action Plan to help organize and guide our efforts moving forward. This report is intended to help the ATD Core Team and Data Team to narrow our focus and provide some direction in our plan development. As we develop our action plan, the ATD teams will be engaging with the constituency groups using our participatory governance process. The goal is to reach collective agreement about what the goals of our ATD work will be, and submit our action plan to ATD by June 30, 2020.

Our ATD coaches closed their Site Visit Reflection Letter with the following comments:

“You are perfectly positioned to take the college and what it offers students to the next level. We have every confidence that you and your leadership team can achieve what you have set out to do.”

## REFERENCES

ATD coaches Site Visit Reflection Letter (link or attachment)

ICAT results summary (link or attachment)

Capacity Café summary (link or attachment)



