

## **Compact for Success**

### **San Diego State University**

San Diego, California

*“Now that I have completed my first year at San Diego State University, I am proud to say that all my hard work is paying off. Thanks to the Compact for Success program, I was already on my way to college (in) the 7<sup>th</sup> grade.”* --Lizette Uribe, Compact for Success graduate

#### **Supporting Students and their Future**

Through the Compact for Success, San Diego State University has worked to improve college readiness on a broader scale than many traditional university-based outreach programs. Rather than try to help selected students from a handful of schools, the university is working to improve preparation across California's largest secondary-school district with a high enrollment of first generation Latino students.

The Compact for Success is a powerful partnership between San Diego State University (SDSU) and the Sweetwater Union High School District (Sweetwater) established in 1999 to address the low rate of college enrollment and completion by district area graduates. Sweetwater is the largest secondary district in California and 78% of students are Latino. SDSU is part of the California State University system and is the largest and oldest university in the San Diego region with an undergraduate Latino enrollment of 20%.

As partners, the university and the school district have worked to improve college readiness, access, and completion of their students. The university guarantees college admission to all Sweetwater students who:

- enter the district by the ninth-grade,
- complete college-preparatory course work,
- maintain a grade-point average of at least a 3.0, and,
- meet proficiency standards for university-level work.

Through the Compact for Success scholarships are provided to students with financial need.

The school district established a standards-based curriculum with rigorous requirements in mathematics and language arts, made the college-preparatory track the norm for more students, served as a pilot for the California State University's Early Assessment Program (EAP), and developed cornerstone courses in 12<sup>th</sup> grade to prepare students for college rigor. Outlining the steps, guaranteeing admission to the university and offering financial aid have been critical to delivering a convincing message that college can be a reality for any student who begins preparation early.

## The Results

The Compact for Success Program began in the fall of 2000 with the district's seventh-grade class (high school graduating class of 2006). Since 2000, the district has seen a 99% increase in the number of applications to SDSU from Sweetwater, a 96% increase in the number of students admitted to SDSU from Sweetwater, a 104% increase in the number of students from Sweetwater enrolled for the fall semester at SDSU, and a 192% increase in the number of Sweetwater students who enrolled without the need for remediation. The numbers are even higher for 2007. There is very high participation in the Early Assessment Program and the College: Making It Happen program, far exceeding statewide participation rates.

Sweetwater Unified School District (SUHSD) students	2000	2006	2007	% Change from 2000 - 2007
Applicants to SDSU	789	1,569	1,670	112%
Admitted to SDSU	639	1,250	1,286	101%
Enrolled at SDSU	307	628	*	105%

## Helping Students Fulfill a Dream and Helping a Community Thrive

SDSU and Sweetwater confronted a common problem—lack of clarity about what is expected for competence at the university—and worked together to increase the college readiness of students in a large school district with a large Latino majority. The services and support provided by the Compact for Success Program not only help students dream about going to college it gives them the tools necessary to realize that dream.

Both university and Sweetwater-district officials are hoping the Compact for Success will sharply raise the school system's college-going rate. More than two in five of its students qualify for the federal government's free or reduced-price meals. More than one-quarter speak English as a second language, and many would be the first in their families to attend college.

"It's the population that's going to inherit San Diego," San Diego State's president, Stephen L. Weber says of the ethnic mix found in Sweetwater schools. "And we want its leaders to be alumni of San Diego State."

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