

Long Beach College Promise
Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)
March 20, 2008

What Is the Long Beach College Promise?

The Long Beach College Promise is a joint commitment by the Long Beach Unified School District, Long Beach City College, and California State University, Long Beach to make higher education an attainable goal for every student. It includes many educational benefits and services. Most notably, it provides all incoming students at LBCC with a tuition-free first semester by 2011, and it offers CSULB admission to those who complete minimum college preparatory requirements or minimum community college transfer requirements. Furthermore, the three institutions pledge to assist students and families with these requirements by starting outreach services in 6th grade and continuing them through the college transition.

Why Have the Long Beach College Promise?

The Long Beach College Promise provides more opportunities for all students, makes a public commitment to the community, and enhances the longstanding Seamless Education partnership.

What Pathways to College Does the Promise Include?

The Long Beach College Promise supports the many different postsecondary plans that students may be interested in pursuing.

- It includes options for those who wish to go directly to a four-year university, for those who wish to transfer from a two-year college to a four-year university, and for those who wish to obtain vocational training, technical education, and professional certification.
- The direct involvement of a K-12 district, a community college, and a university creates numerous opportunities. This is different from other partnerships such as the Sweetwater Compact for Success and the San Francisco Promise, where only two educational institutions collaborate and the emphasis is solely on four-year college access.
- LBUSD, LBCC, and CSULB promote multiple pathways for students. The Long Beach College Promise emphasizes student readiness for both college *and* careers.

What Public Commitment Does the Promise Make?

The Long Beach College Promise affirms the local educational institutions' commitment to serving the community. LBUSD, LBCC, and CSULB have a responsibility to prepare young people for successful careers and productive lives. They believe that the future of Long Beach depends upon their effectiveness in developing a well-educated workforce to sustain and advance the regional economy, which is increasingly linked with the global economy.

How Does the Long Beach College Promise Advance the Priorities of Each Partner?

The Long Beach College Promise aligns the resources and efforts of LBUSD, LBCC, and CSULB more closely so that they can improve services to their students. But each institution also has specific reasons for engaging in the partnership.

- *LBUSD* sees the Long Beach College Promise as a critical part of its new Academic Success Initiative, which seeks to provide all students with as many postsecondary opportunities as possible. Unanimously adopted by the Board of Education in September 2007, this ambitious effort includes an emphasis on literacy, early algebra completion, expansion of rigorous Advanced Placement course offerings, more outreach to parents, completion of college entrance requirements, and enhanced counseling services, among others. It also calls for greater collaboration with LBCC and CSULB to strengthen these services.
- *LBCC* sees the Long Beach College Promise as a strong commitment to students and their families to support their success in college and careers. For many families, the cost of a

college education is a serious barrier to pursuing the education and career training necessary to succeed in today's global economy. In response to those concerns, LBCC has launched its Gateway to Greatness campaign to double the amount of scholarships at the college to one million dollars annually, ensuring that Long Beach students who graduate in 2011 will receive the financial support they need to begin their educational journey at LBCC.

- *CSULB* sees the Long Beach College Promise as a valuable way to improve the preparation of students for college. Students who understand the value of a college education from an early age are more likely to invest the effort necessary to master the college preparatory curriculum and more likely to successfully prepare. Better prepared students will succeed in college with less remedial need and will go on to higher academic achievements. As those students graduate, they will drive the local and regional economies, helping Long Beach to thrive. Eventually, they will return as alumni supporters of the University.

What Makes the Family Outreach in the Long Beach College Promise Different from Existing Outreach Efforts?

The Long Beach College Promise seeks to align existing communications and outreach efforts in a way that better serves students and families. First, it commits to providing information about college, careers, and financial aid starting in sixth grade, which gives students and families more time to plan. Second, by publicly communicating the minimum requirements for *CSULB* admission, it establishes clear expectations for student success and ensures that a consistent message is being sent about college and career readiness. Third, by describing specific active assistance that the three institutions promise to offer, it institutionalizes many longstanding outreach efforts and practices.

How Can the Long Beach College Promise Be Made during the Current State Fiscal Crisis?

The Long Beach College Promise is a ten-year commitment whose activities are spread over an extended period of time. Consequently, it is designed to withstand short-term challenges that may arise, including some budgetary issues.

- Most of the activities already exist and will more than likely continue in some form, despite cutbacks. The Long Beach College Promise will reaffirm their importance and serve as a vehicle for better coordinating them between *LBUSD*, *LBCC*, and *CSULB*, which in turn will help the three institutions operate more efficiently.
- In many ways, it is even more critical to sign the Long Beach College Promise during such extenuating circumstances. Since it encapsulates the values that the three institutions hold dear, it helps determine what the real priorities are.

Is the Long Beach College Promise Simply about “Numbers”—i.e., Increasing Enrollments at LBCC and CSULB?

The Long Beach College Promise does emphasize expanding access to higher education because the city, the region and the state need more students to successfully attain college in order to remain competitive in the global economy. At the same time, the Promise is about more than just access to college. The Promise is about succeeding in college and completing college academic programs on time with a highly valued degree, credential or certification.

What Will Happen after the Long Beach College Promise Is Signed?

Implementation will begin in Fall 2008 with the incoming sixth grade class. Meanwhile, *LBUSD*, *LBCC*, and *CSULB* will jointly analyze student data and set concrete targets that advance the goals of the Long Beach College Promise. They will then assess all of the existing services, align them more closely, and develop additional programs as necessary to assist students and parents. Finally, they will determine a timetable for formally revisiting and evaluating the effectiveness of the Long Beach College Promise so that it can continuously improve.