



THE INSTITUTE OF APPLIED CREATIVITY & COMMUNITY TRANSFORMATION (ACCT) at MODESTO JUNIOR COLLEGE

BACKGROUND: A PLACE TO GROW IDEAS IN CALIFORNIA'S CENTRAL VALLEY

As residents of California's great [Central Valley](#)—a mountain-walled plain some 400 miles long and 75 miles wide, covering almost 15 million acres—we all understand that our communities, our families and our daily lives owe much to the fact that we inhabit “the richest farming region in the history of the world” [1]. Brown loam with a subsoil of clay and substratum of indurated duripan, our fertile soil is famous for supporting a vast array of bountiful crops and some of the most important agro-industrial activities on the planet. Moreover, the cultural heritage of our region, a “rigorously heterogeneous society,” is made possible by a continual stream of “refugees, immigrants, migrant farm laborers, (and) low income workers from all over the world,” who come to work the land and seek the American Dream [2,3]. In our valley, Anglo, Hispanic, Italian and Portuguese families co-exist with Chinese, Basque, Sikh, Swede, Assyrian, Armenians, Russians, Liberians, Hmong, Laotian and Wintun, Maidu, Miwok and Yokuts indigenous groups, among others, who live here and rely upon our rich soil to grow crops, families and businesses.

But where do we go in the Central Valley to grow ideas?

This is the purpose of [The Institute of Applied Creativity and Community Transformation \(ACCT\) at Modesto Junior College](#). The project calls for a unique academic institute dedicated to interdisciplinary inquiry and meaningful, [affective learning](#) so as to provide collaborative, experiential learning opportunities for our students and to foster innovative solutions to local issues identified after community-based scholastic research..

The ACCT Institute will coordinate and support cooperative, problem-based teaching and learning that will, in turn, strengthen the disciplinary schools at our college. Various schools and programs at our college will work together, across traditional academic knowledge systems, to structure genuine interdisciplinary, project-based courses which ask students to apply [critical thinking](#) skills to identify, research and propose solutions to important issues in California's Central Valley.

The ACCT Institute takes particular concern to seek innovative, collaborative solutions that can be addressed through collaboration amongst various natural, applied and social sciences programs, engineering and technology programs, and entrepreneurial and liberal arts fields.

This [interdisciplinary](#), community-based Institute focuses on the potentials of community transformation through creative innovation. As such, the ACCT Institute will provide students a rich, [experiential](#) undergraduate education and will help to grow ideas from the early stages of community investigation and inquiry through a variety of requisite academic skills and ultimately to proposing, designing and patenting and marketing innovative solutions to issues which have the potential to [transform](#) the Central Valley.

The Institute's experiential, applied and [relational](#) learning focus together with its dedication to interdisciplinary teaching and learning will also provide the opportunity for college faculty to cooperate with a wide-variety of actors in our community, particularly those who work with our world famous [San Joaquin Valley Soil](#) and those who have recently migrated to the Central Valley.

Thus, there is a strong equity component to the ACCT Institute as it fosters community-based, experiential opportunities that incorporate diverse groups that have been typically omitted from academic studies and representations of local cultural identity--including immigrants, ethnic minorities and families new to higher education. These populations will be especially encouraged components of the work in the ACCT Institute at MJC because it is precisely these "newer" populations that gravitate towards entrepreneurship and innovation. According to studies by [Forbes](#), the [Harvard Business Review](#) and others, recent migrants to the United States are twice as likely as native-born residents to start their own businesses and participate in some of the more innovative sectors of our economy (see: [Immigrants Twice as Likely To Start New Business](#); [Immigrants More Entrepreneurial](#); [Immigrants Natural Entrepreneurs](#) and [Venture Capital and Entrepreneurship](#)).

Thus, the Institute of Applied Creativity and Community Transformation at Modesto Junior College is an [integrative place](#) for students to hone academic skills in an experiential framework, and an opportunity for students, faculty and college and community leaders to seek innovation, grow new ideas and cultivate more effective approaches to teaching and learning. The ACCT Institute, therefore, hopes to become an interactive, cooperative organization that is as rich as our soil and as dynamic and diverse as our Central Valley communities.

POTENTIAL STRUCTURE

The ACCT model combines three critical elements of teaching and learning:

- **Contextualized, interdisciplinary, project-based programs**
- **Professional development, focused on the scholarship of teaching and learning**
- **Community engagement, including entrepreneurship, service learning, and social justice**

Each of the three central elements are outlined in the table below, including ideas for a support structure.

On-Campus Programs	Professional Development	Community Presence
<p>Interdisciplinary, project-based programs that incorporate contextualized GE, community engagement, and service learning</p> <p>Maker space for invention education and solution development</p> <p>Program labs for focused, applied learning</p>	<p>Focus on instructional design that explores new pedagogies and collaborative learning</p> <p>Small group communities of practice who explore interdisciplinary program redesign – (may include release time for faculty for intensive collaboration)</p> <p>Development of service learning courses/modules for program students</p>	<p>Community Center evening discussions with local start-up leaders and students, including TechStars Start-Up Weekend (mentoring for idea-to-proposal intensive workshop)</p> <p>Community meetings to develop service learning opportunities</p> <p>College courses offered and access to online advising</p>

INTELLECTUAL RATIONALE: WHY MODESTO JUNIOR COLLEGE NEEDS A COLLABORATIVE 'ONE-ROOM,' INTERDISCIPLINARY APPROACH

The Institute of Applied Creativity and Community Transformation at Modesto Junior College relies upon an idea about education as old as the United States itself. In the nascent days of the American Republic, a pressing concern for the founders was the establishment of a public school system. Thomas Jefferson—driven by a fear that even the best forms of government “in time, and by slow operations” become “perverted” into “tyranny”—pressed for a free, public education system in order to assure a knowledgeable citizenry. In his all-important [Bill for the More General Diffusion of Knowledge](#) (1779), Jefferson writes of the twofold intent of public education: (1) the development within every citizen a historical awareness of the continual struggle against tyranny and thus an ever-vigilant attitude vis-à-vis political power, and (2) the training of future leaders with a liberal arts education so that all free people can receive and guard the “sacred deposit” of “rights and liberties.”

In order to accomplish this dual purpose, Jefferson advocated for a local one-room school house in each neighborhood or community bolstered by a regional, public college system. Thus, he foresaw a nation peppered with free, community-based centers which transcend both age and experience (the system was multiple grade-level and open access) as well as discrete academic disciplines in favor of a general, holistic approach meant to sustain each community with a continual supply of educated and thoughtful citizens.

What has happened since those nascent days of republic? In short, our education system has continually moved towards a segmental approach which has reinforced social inequalities and relied upon increasing specialization “by means of acquisition of the organized bodies of information and prepared forms of skill which comprehend the material of instruction,” as John Dewey argued in [Experience and Education](#) (1938). We have moved from a common space for a diversity of ages and experiences to pursue shared knowledge to discrete knowledge systems which differentiate by birth date, academic disciplines and, often, socio-economic status [4].

What are the consequences of our shift away from Jefferson’s original intent for the public educational system? Often contemporary public education students are left underprepared for adulthood, [inexperienced in working with others](#) of different ages and backgrounds and isolated in discrete academic silos, having never considered the larger goals of interdisciplinary inquiry, community engagement and without ever considering both the rights and responsibilities of citizenship. One long-term consequence of our myopic drift from our founding vision is that public organizations, colleges and universities have continued to deepen the divide, creating more and more specialized silos of learning and less cross-disciplinary teaching and learning, and less emphasis on collaborative innovation and “[real world](#)” problem solving.

In fact, some have squarely placed blame on the organization of learning into certain knowledge communities itself. In 1959 C.P. Snow gave a polemical Rede Lecture at Cambridge University, claiming that academia had evolved into “two cultures”—the sciences on one hand and the humanities on the other—and that these two isolated academic pursuits are physically separated on campuses and rhetorically and methodologically even further apart. Snow went on to suggest that this “divide” between science and the humanities was a major hindrance to thinking about solutions to the world’s problems.

The Institute for Applied Creativity and Community Transformation posits that Jefferson, Dewey and Snow were all right to suggest that multi-generational, community based and interdisciplinary learning communities are the ideal and that learning environments which do not address teaching more holistically, do not seek [educational inclusivity](#) and are not serving students as they should. American students do not perform well on international [scientific](#) and [cultural](#) literacy. We seem to have lost the initial purpose of the public Institute system--to grow new ideas, then act upon them and better ourselves and our communities.

The ACCT Institute at MJC will not only seek new ideas and innovation by seeking the collaboration of a wide-variety of disciplines on issues of community importance, but also seeks to help shape future disciplines, certificates and areas of study at MJC. [Professor Menand of CUNY](#) reminds us in “The Marketplace of Ideas” that:

“In trying to imagine the future of disciplinarity, it is worth remembering that the disciplines are not actually very old themselves. Most of them came into being between 1880 and 1910, when larger, more holistic organizations, such as the American Social Science Association and the American Association for the Advancement of Science, broke up into smaller and more specialized professional associations, such as the Modern Language Association, the American Historical Association, and so forth. It was during this period, around the turn of the century, that the department first established itself as the basic unit of academic organization. When we talk about “the disciplines,” then, we are talking about a bureaucratic arrangement whose history is not very long.”

Thus, if the organization of our academic disciplines is a continual process of adaptation to intellectual as well as social, economic and political forces, [Billy Frye](#), Chancellor of Emory University, reminded us (1999) that what should ideally be driving our conversations about academic organization on college and university campuses is: “the need to communicate, recognizing that we all have something important to say to and to learn from our colleagues; the need to focus on the big issues and to avoid entrapment in intellectual fashions, disciplinary turf wars, and cults of personality; and the need to meet the needs of our students and of society at large more effectively.”

After all, the problems of the future we are preparing our students for are complex and transcend specific academic knowledge communities. Students of today will face a myriad of new challenges—ocean acidification, rising temperatures and seas, permafrost and coral reef decline and the extinction of an unprecedented number of species all come with other worries about a new automated, A.I.-driven economy and the massive loss of working class jobs, the rise of China and India and the paralysis of our own political system into inaction and reactivity. If students are simply prepared to look at learning as a mastery of discrete information in an academic silo (pursuing the memorization of data and facts that can be readily accessed by all online) and only pursue [specialization](#), what are the [skills](#) they are missing in their education to help prepare them for complex problems?

Finally, the ACCT Institute hopes to overcome a common malady of today’s classroom, which often scream, “don’t use what’s around you to learn and solve problems, just take what I give you and learned in graduate school and then memorize it.” Instead, the Institute will foment the idea of moving away from being content experts, to becoming learning facilitators who are always modeling life-long learning. Dewey argues against this approach by suggesting that with such an approach “experience may be so disconnected from one another that, while each is agreeable or even exciting in itself, they are not linked cumulatively to one another. Energy is then dissipated and a person becomes scatter-brained” and their “disconnectedness may artificially generate dispersive, disintegrated, centrifugal habits.”

The “principle of continuity of experience means that every experience both takes up something from those which have gone before and modifies in some way the quality of those which come after.” In short, our educational institutions often are plagued by the fact that in many cases we seem to have forgotten [how to learn from one another](#) in any transformative, meaningful way.

HOW DOES THE ACCT INSTITUTE FIT IN WITH OUR COLLEGE PRIORITIES AND ADMINISTRATIVE APPARATUS AND WHAT ARE ITS PRINCIPLE ATTRIBUTES?

The *State Chancellor’s Office Goals for 2022* include reducing equity gaps “among traditionally underrepresented student groups, with the goal of cutting achievement gaps by 40 percent within 5 years and fully closing those achievement gaps within 10 years.” There is both research (see attachments) and a previous project at MJC (*NEH Common Ground Cohort*) which supports the idea that community-based and experiential learning can reduce equity gap drastically. Simply put, those activities which encourage “active doing” instead of the “passive and temporary acquisition of information” are more accessible to all learners as they play to a student’s strengths instead of accentuating academic deficiencies.

In fact, MJC's recent *Common Ground Cohort (NEH)* grant was able to reduce the equity gap from 40.8% to 7.7% over two years in pilot classes in the liberal arts as a result of its curricular innovations in community-based, experiential learning modules. This mini-grant hopes to extend these results across divisions and inculcate new, systemic approaches to encourage experiential and community-based learning models.

The project also aligns with our Educational Master Plan (EMP) at MJC in several ways. For one, the first priority of our EMP is “**academic excellence in teaching and learning**” and a commitment to “**intentional, well-communicated pedagogy, curriculum.**” This project will explore a wide-variety of best practices proven to increase student success and retention (Workshops #1-3).

The fourth priority of our EMP is the institutionalization of “**evidence-based assessment, refinement, and sustainable practices.**” One of the unique wrinkles of this project is bringing together faculty leaders from across the shared governance structure to build new consensus and desire for action related to the improvement of teaching and learning and the use of data and scholarship to better “know” our students (Workshop #4) and encourage student success.

This interdisciplinary Institute is a learning community that helps assure that the schools in MJC's new **Pathways Model** work together in an interdisciplinary fashion on curricular, community and teaching and learning projects. Interdisciplinary faculty come into the ACCT Institute for a specific period of time for focused professional development and to redesign programs that include contextualized general education courses. These faculty then return to their original schools with newly developed community and project-based learning curriculum as a new cohort of interdisciplinary faculty come in for a new cycle of developmental innovation. In one sense, the Institute becomes an important community research and development arm of the College. The Institute is intended to assure that student learning is integrated, active, affective, collaborative and creative.

The Institute will leverage extant technologies to encourage collaboration. Virtual and asynchronous opportunities for exchange will be employed in addition to face-to-face learning encounters and community-based service and project-based learning experiences are offered. The Institute will also archive materials from events for future use by faculty, staff, administrator and student.

Curricular projects which involve multiple **Pathways Schools** in the creation of new, integrated lesson plans, curricular models or class alignments will be especially encouraged. The Institute hopes to not only encourage cross-disciplinary curricular and programmatic cooperation among the other Pathways schools but also to bring in a variety of experts, scholars and scientists to foster further engagement. Finally, the Institute takes the community orientation of its interdisciplinary curricular and co-curricular projects seriously.

As faculty learn to further encourage problem solving, active learning and project-based learning in the classroom, the Institute will leverage community support to assure that students and faculty are also utilizing the community as a teaching and learning resource.

INTERDISCIPLINARY PEDAGOGIC TRANSFORMATION: RESEARCH, CONTEXTUALIZED EDUCATION and PROJECT-BASED COLLABORATION

There is a growing body of scholarship suggesting that instructors who encourage “active-doing” instead of passive (and usually temporary) acquisition of information are more effective and the learning is more profound. While discussion-based learning reaches back to the ancient Greek academy, recent neuroscientific research also seems to confirm what we’ve known for a long time, to develop the higher-learning skills — analysis, synthesis, evaluation and creation — students need more time for conversation and other forms of experiential learning in order to master a skill, knowledge system or performance indicator. The benefits of experiential learning are especially important to the success of disproportionately impacted student populations, therefore, this series focuses on theories and praxis which have been proven, in some way, to increase student success and promote equitable classroom learning.

The ACCT Institute will organize and coordinate, annually, a cohort of 5-10 faculty from a variety of schools across the college. Each cohort will center around a chosen anchor program (a program major, Agriculture is used as an example subsequently) and contextualized general education programs. Potential funding streams include Title V, Strong Workforce, Student Equity and other sources. The cohort will create an:

Interdisciplinary faculty development with community focus and student engagement

3 or 4 interdisciplinary courses bound in 9- or 12-unit bundles (e.g., Ag Mechanics, English, & Sociology; Entrepreneurship, History, Statistics, Speech) GE courses are contextualized for schools/program majors.

Faculty teams develop 3 bundled offerings:

I: Cornerstone: Exploratory Program Curriculum which includes research into community-based issues and college skills which may include fundamental content in First Time in College (FTIC) course.

II: Problem Identification and Collaborative, Interdisciplinary Problem Solving which allows the faculty-student cohort to consider the identified community issue(s) from multiple academic disciplines and epistemological approaches and begin to consider potential solutions that includes creative collaboration among the natural and applied sciences, liberal arts and career and technical education fields.

III: Capstone: Program Solution and Entrepreneurial Curriculum which fosters solution development, the building and patenting of prototypes, community engagement and dissemination. With program-focused faculty as team leads, the 5-10 interdisciplinary faculty team helps students to develop contextualized and creative solutions to complex problems in our community.

All curriculum is delivered as integrated curriculum, graded and assessed as separate courses by discipline appropriate faculty. Students potentially earn 27 – 36 units in 3 semesters, including 9+ program units and 18+ General Education (GE). Characteristics of the course bundles--including an interdisciplinary cornerstone course to identify the community problem (social justice), midway sequence of courses to provide discrete STEAM and related knowledge in the context of problem solving and a capstone dissemination course grouping--include:

- Community-focused service learning and team-based, creative solution development
- An exploration of industry, non-profit and transfer organizations in the community with potential global partnerships
 - Identification and understanding of community needs and beneficiaries which includes development of a community “problem bank”
 - Partnerships with K-12 teachers (community college/high school partnerships, feeder schools) with MJC students as mentors; dual credit/Early College potentials with local school districts
 - Service-learning opportunities and internships in the community
- Policy, research and related applications in political science, patent research, etc. as well as readily identifiable skill sets (soft and technical) for student career development. Team-based, creative solution development
- Group ideation; “invent teams;” problem identification with ethnographic practices; Student team roles in projects may include: Administration, Finance, Technical, Communications, Sustainability
- Beneficiary interviews (social sciences), creative thinking, communication skills and applied creativity to projects in which students are continually reminded of their “why?” while discrete skill sets are infused through project-based learning model; contextualized learning model

- Cooperative learning (integrative studies) which address a student’s habitat, leisure and work in the Central Valley (cure it, eat it, move it, use it); rapid prototyping (cardboard and tape, low cost); midway showcase to community and beneficiaries for feedback and support (communications)
- Community outreach – funding (entrepreneurship); legislators and local political figures involved in support and dissemination; local industry as funding support and community leaders as judges
- Focus on higher level thinking skills such as application, evaluation, synthesis and creativity
- Preliminary patent application and/or grant proposal(s) (technical and professional writing) with USPO (U.S. Patent Office) support; advertising, marketing, commercialization, license and related product development potentials; encourages faculty to ask “how we support inventiveness and transformative change”

ACADEMIC INQUIRY IN OUR COMMUNITY: AGRICULTURE AS AN EXAMPLE OF INTERDISCIPLINARY, PROJECT-BASED TEACHING, LEARNING AND LOCAL ACTION

The ACCT Institute at MJC is an example of **contextualized, inquiry-based education** that is based on **inventing solutions to address an identified problem in the community**. One of the obvious areas of focus of the Institute is agriculture, a crucial part of the Golden State and our local communities we serve at the college. In fact, the *annual* value of agricultural production in California “exceeds the total value of all the gold mined in the Golden State since 1848.”[4] The Institute will ask students, professors, community leaders and local businesses and residents to come together to identify complex issues in agriculture that have potential solutions that involve innovation, entrepreneurship and the natural and applied sciences as well as the arts, design and the rich cultural heritage that our fertile valley cultivate. There are a variety of crucial, transdisciplinary issues related to agriculture to be explored, such as:

- i) the integration of robotic machinery, drones, Artificial Intelligence (AI) and other technological advances to agriculture in the Central Valley and its social, cultural and economic implications;
- ii) climate changes and crop production challenges in the 21st century as well as the effects of the climate crisis on agricultural, economic and social identities and activities in the Central Valley;
- iii) the globalization of agriculture and how the Central Valley can best be positioned as a chief supplier for the growing yet somewhat unstable global market for agricultural commodities, focus on developing economies, regional and block trade agreements and the implications of climate and world population growth;

iv) the interface of the public sector with small and industrial-scale agricultural activity, including new government mandates, regulations and policies as well as the impact of various trade policies and pacts on the supply and demand for local agricultural commodities in a global marketplace;

v) the impact of biological technology advances on the agriculture sector, including the production of biofuels, the practice of gene editing crops and the economic, social and cultural implications of biotech crops;

vi) changes in technology, agricultural practice and how these changes affect those working in the agricultural sector. Exploration of the larger cultural matrix affected by technological advances in agro-industry as well as the links between agricultural activity, food, cultural identity and a sense of purpose in life.

Additional sources for considering the many interdisciplinary, complex-system issues facing agriculture in the near future include: [Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations Rome, 2017](#); [Reaping What We Sow How the Practices of Industrial Agriculture Put Our Health and Environment at Risk](#); [Agriculture and Food News](#); [USDA World Agriculture Production](#)

THE TEACHING AND LEARNING CENTER

An important aspect of the ACCT Institute's emphasis on contextualized, inquiry-based education is identifying and addressing problems in our community, and for this reason the ACCT Institute must make greater efforts to be visible in the community itself. This should be the purpose of a proposed teaching and learning center that may take many forms (i.e., multi-purpose, a shared public-private community center, classroom and exhibition space, an invention lab etc.). There is also some potential to share a space with other higher education partners in the region, including UC Merced and CSU Stanislaus and/or other community partners and local businesses.



BACKGROUND ON INSTITUTIONAL FIRST STEPS

- *SPRING 2015 – SPRING 2017 NEH COMMON GROUND GRANT;*
 - *FALL 2018 - SPRING 2019 EQUITY WORKSHOP SERIES;*
- *FALL 2019 TEACHING AND LEARNING WORKSHOP SERIES;*
 - *SPRING 2020 GREAT TEACHERS FACULTY RETREAT*

SPRING 2015 – SPRING 2017

The Modesto Junior College, National Endowment for the Humanities funded, *Common Ground Project* has two overriding goals:

- 1) To discover more about the rich cultural and ethnic heritages of California’s Central Valley communities by analyzing extant academic scholarship as well as primary works of literature, art, film, music and other humanistic modes of expression that give a more complete understanding of the vibrant, complex cultural histories and identities of our often ignored and even maligned region.
- 2) To share interdisciplinary insights and curricular innovation in this locally-ground approach to the humanities through regionally themed lectures, discussions, field experiences, cross-disciplinary teaching opportunities, a summative conference and an end-of-grant website so as to improve teaching and foment student retention.

The **technical approach** to obtain these goals includes six fundamental elements:

- a. **To facilitate seven seminars—each consisting of a lecture led by eminent scholars and a subsequent discussion of relevant readings, cultural artifacts and resources—aimed at fostering discussion across the humanities and institutions.**

Each of the seven seminars (lecture and discussion) were completed in 2015 and 2016 as proposed in the grant application (*sample publicity for a topic is being submitted as supplementary materials in this report*) and within the proposed budget:

- **Topic 1: Know Your Place: Concepts of Home and Identity in the Central Valley** (February 2015) with Jim Tuedio, Professor of Philosophy and Dean, College of the Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences at California State University, Stanislaus and Nigel Hatton, Professor of Philosophy at the University of California at Merced.
- **Topic 2: Multiculturalism: Examining the Politics of Recognition and Political Philosophy** (March-April 2015) with Andrew Fiala, Professor of Philosophy and Director of Ethics Center at Fresno State University.
- **Topic 3: Visions of Central Valley Culture: How Local Arts & Films Portray Valley Life** (September 2015) with Jessica Gomula-Kruzic, Professor of Video and Time-based Media at California State University, Stanislaus and Jack Souza, Artistic Director of the Prospect Theater Project in Modesto.
- **Topic 4: Eating in the Central Valley: How Food Shapes Culture** (October 2015) with Mario Sifuentez, Assistant Professor of History, University of California at Merced and Laura-Anne Minkoff-Zern, Assistant Professor of Food Studies, Syracuse University.
- **Topic 5: Cultural Clashes: Hispanic Immigration & Assimilation** (January-February 2016) with Alex Saragoza, Professor of History, Department of Comparative Ethnic Studies at the University of California, Berkeley and Susan Shillinglaw, Executive Director of the National Steinbeck Center in Salinas, California and Professor of English at San Jose State University.
- **Topic 6: Working Class Culture in the Central Valley** (March 2016) with Jan Goggans, Associate Professor in the School of Social Sciences, Humanities and Arts at the University of California at Merced as well as recipient of a Kevin Starr California Studies Postdoctoral Fellowship and Ma Vang, University of California President's Postdoctoral Fellow and Assistant Professor at University of California at Merced.
- **Topic 7: Exploring Central Valley Memories: Visual Anthropology** (March-April 2016) with Steve Arounsack, Assistant Professor of Cultural Anthropology at California State University, Stanislaus.

b. Develop 25 *Common Ground* curricular modules and a Humanities Special Topics course.

Twenty seven (27) modules have been developed based on the seven seminar topics (*Curricular samples are being submitted as supplementary materials in this report*). These final 27 curricular units are available for faculty and community use at our finalized website (<http://commonground.blogs.yosemite.edu/>). The videos of all lectures are also available on the YouTube Channel of the Common Ground grant at (https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCVW4Hg3DNs4AkyYPOUa_0vA).

Finally, many of the curricular units have also been transitioned to Canvas (an online LMS) so that all faculty in the Yosemite Community College district, and most California community college instructors, can simply “plug” the completed unit into their existing online, hybrid and augmented courses.

Moreover, curriculum outlines (*also submitted as supplementary materials in this report*) for three special topics courses entitled “Humanities Special Topics 196: Social Justice,” “Humanities Special Topics 197: Nature and Civilization,” and “Humanities Special Topics 198: Place and Identity” have been created and approved by the Modesto Junior College Curriculum Committee. All three of these Humanities Special Topics courses are published in the 2016-2017 MJC Course Catalog in order to be offered to students. Each of the courses are 3 units with 54 lecture hours and the approved proposals include course outlines, requisite skills, typical assignments and typical texts.

c. Host a regional symposium with a keynote speaker, multi-cultural curriculum workshops, and dissemination of the Common Ground interdisciplinary model.

The end-of-grant cumulative conference occurred on October 21, 2016 in Modesto, California and was attended by 57 professors and administrators from Modesto Junior College, Bakersfield College, Mission College, Delta College, California State University Fresno, California State University Stanislaus, University of the Pacific, University of California Merced, University of California Berkeley, The National Steinbeck Center and El Teatro Campesino as well as regional community leaders, artists. (*The final report includes the one-day conference program and overview as evidence in the supplemental materials section.*)

d. Develop a digital repository for resources and content that community college, university and even high school faculty can access.

The final 27 curricular units are available for faculty and community use at our finalized website (<http://commonground.blogs.yosemite.edu/>). The videos of all lectures are also available on the YouTube Channel of the Common Ground grant at (https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCVW4Hg3DNs4AkyYPOUa_0vA). Finally, many of the curricular units have also been transitioned to Canvas (an online LMS) so that all faculty in the Yosemite Community College district, and most California community college instructors, can simply “plug” the completed unit into their existing online, hybrid and augmented courses.

All resources, including readings, discussion notes, photographs, lecture recordings, curricular modules, and other artifacts are electronically stored in a shared electronic system (DropBox) as a permanent, back-up digital archive.

e. Develop a General Education Pathway/Minor Agreement with California State University, Stanislaus.

Faculty from the California State University, Stanislaus in Turlock and Modesto Junior College have met several times and outlined topics for this pathway. The curricular work for Modesto Junior College’s portion of the pathway is complete and the community college is now waiting for California State University, Stanislaus faculty and its leadership to complete their articulation and programmatic agreements. We have also been discussing a GE Pathway with an AA in the Humanities to transfer into a B.A at UC Merced and then a new M.A. Ethnic/Regional Studies degree to be offered at UC Merced. Hopefully we can find a way to link the A.A. and B.A. and eventual M.A. (2+2+1) across institutions as part of the grant--seeking the proper support and release time to craft the academic, scholastic, programmatic and curricular components of this exciting project. Here are a few characteristics of the five-year A.A.-B.A.-M.A. pathway program we are beginning to discuss:

- 1) The curricular development will feature scholarship and research related to the Central Valley.
- 2) The program will include a service learning/internship component so students receive career development within the program. This will likely be a semester internship with one of our program partners.
- 3) Possible partnerships with UC Merced and MJC include other CSUs and UCs, and CCCs along with Yosemite Field and Baker Station; Yosemite and other community leadership programs: Parks and Forest services: Agro-industry and farming cooperatives; museums; non-profits; public service, utility and water agencies; cooperative extensions and the 4H.

4) The scholarship and research will be housed at the UC Merced Library and will include a push to digitization with GIS; Sparks Research Center, the Cooperative Extension Archive; CalSphere and DPLA.

f. Deliver ten cross-disciplinary lectures in college classrooms based on project seminar themes.

Faculty who have participated in *Common Ground* seminars have presented lectures and worked collaboratively with students from humanities, philosophy and history courses as guest lecturers in the Fall 2016 semester.

What was accomplished under these goals?

For this reporting period describe: 1) major activities; 2) specific objectives; 3) significant results or key outcomes, including major findings, developments, or conclusions (both positive and negative); and/or 4) other achievements. Include a discussion of stated goals not met. As the project progresses to completion, the emphasis in reporting in this section should shift from reporting activities to reporting accomplishments.

Major Activities and Significant Results:

- Over one-hundred faculty members from Modesto Junior College, Bakersfield College, Mission College, Delta College, California State University Fresno, California State University Stanislaus, University of the Pacific, University of California Merced, University of California Berkeley have attended one or more of the seminar lectures or discussions and/or the end-of-grant conference on October, 21, 2016.
- Faculty from California State University, Stanislaus, the University of California at Merced and Modesto Junior College met on many occasions to share ideas and plan a Humanities General Education pathway between institutions. Moreover, community college cohort members met for a “Social Justice in the Central Valley Conference” held at California State University, Stanislaus as part of the General Education pathway conceptualization and development.
- The Common Ground Cohort, consisting of four faculty and one administrator who work together to implement the activities of the grant, traveled through the northern part of the Central Valley from August 27–29, 2015 visiting the National Steinbeck Center in Salinas, viewing farmlands and orchards throughout the Valley, meeting with community college faculty in Fresno, and viewing the underground gardens in Fresno as part of a research project.

- Each of the five members of the *Common Ground Cohort* attended regional and national conferences focused on topics in the project seminars. Eva Mo attended the “Bridging the Past, Cultivating the Future: Exploring Sustainable Foodscapes Conference” at Chatham University. Bill Anelli attended the “Rocky Mountain Division of the American Society for Aesthetics Conference” in Santa Fe, New Mexico. Three members, Chad Redwing, Flora Carter, and Jenni Abbott, presented an outline of the project and its preliminary activities and findings at the “37th Annual Association for Interdisciplinary Studies Conference” at Merrimack College in North Andover, Massachusetts (*the conference presentation at Merrimack College is being submitted as supplementary materials in this report*). Additional presentations by cohort members in 2016 include the National Steinbeck Center Annual Steinbeck Festival workshop, “Place and Identity in the College Classroom” (Salinas, CA May 6-8, 2016) and the annual Community College Humanities Association (CCHA) conference, in Portland, focused on the digital humanities. Finally, three cohort members and MJC’s dean of the Arts, Humanities and Communications division presented our grant results at the Fourteenth International Conference on New Directions in the Humanities, “Common Ground and Epistemologies of Place” (Chicago, IL June 8-10, 2016).
- Four faculty members of the *Common Ground Cohort* attended the documentary film: “Cesar’s Last Fast” and lecture by Paul Chavez on April 1, 2015 at California State University, Stanislaus as part of our collaboration on activities to create a future General Education Pathway for community college students with California State University, Stanislaus.
- On April 16th, 2015 a student competition in the Humanities, “The Celebration of the Humanities,” was held to elicit reflections on cultural production in California’s Central Valley. Students wrote and submitted essays considering the theme of “Know Your Place” and then the essays were judged and the best ones recognized at a public ceremony.
- Cohort members have preserved and distributed artifacts, publications and lectures from former activities and research efforts at Modesto Junior College (taking place in the last decade or so) that relate to the theme of the cultural heritage of the Central Valley.
- Photography faculty and students from Modesto Junior College have contributed more than three dozen photographs of people and landscapes in the Central Valley to the Common Ground project and these images will be used in the creation of the end-of-grant website (<http://commonground.blogs.yosemite.edu/>).

FALL 2018-SPRING 2019

The *2018-2019 Equity Workshop Series* aims to foster a work place of genuine cooperation — one that encourages innovation as well as inclusive opportunities for growth — while improving our creative ability to confront shared issues related to student success and equity. This series focuses on experiential pedagogies and interdisciplinary learning activities and skills which have been proven, in some way, to increase student success and promote equitable learning in the classroom.

The emphasis of the workshops is not content knowledge, rather instructional skills, learning models and innovative pedagogies which inform our teaching with thoughtful practices that narrow equity gaps, help overcome educational barriers and even motivate students to succeed.

Fall 2018

- **Monday August 20th - Tuesday, August 21st**

8:30 am - 5:30 pm

Instructional Skills Workshop at [Foothill Horizons Outdoor School](#) with Columbia College, UC Merced and MJC.

- **Friday, September 28th**

10 am - 4 pm

MJC Performance ([Jam'N'Jive](#)), Lunch Workshop with Professor [Kim Davis](#) (Dance, MJC)

- **Thursday, October 25th**

6:15 pm - 10:30 pm

MJC Performance ([Peter and the Star-Catcher](#)) & Reception with Actors and Professor [Lynette Borrelli-Glidewell](#)

- **Wednesday, November 14th**

Columbia College

Special Event: Midterm Dessert Cook-Off with Professor [Marcus Whisenant](#) & Culinary Arts students)

- **Friday, March 1st**

7:30-10:30pm

Gallo Center for the Arts Performance (*Les Freres Meduses*) and Reception with Professor Alejandro Sabre, Musicians and Students

- **Thursday, April 4th**

6 pm – 9 pm

Celebration of the Humanities Mealtime Conversation with Professor Aishah Saleh (Humanities) as well as Community Learning Resources and Guides from the Common Ground Cohort (NEH)

FALL 2019

“Experiential Learning and Undergraduate Education: What Faculty Leaders Can Do to Foster Effective Undergraduate Teaching ” Workshop Series is an opportunity for Modesto Junior College (MJC) faculty to explore innovative teaching practices in a collaborative setting, set “action plans” to encourage **application, analysis, evaluation and creation** skills in the classroom and, finally, participate in the process of seeking new ways to institutionalize support for interdisciplinary, experiential learning at MJC.

This professional, peer-to-peer opportunity supports work across disciplinary boundaries by offering four themed workshops and various “*out-of-the-box*” teaching and learning follow-up activities which explore **community-based** and **experiential and invention learning** practices in the college classroom. The series is based on an ever-growing body of scholarship which suggests that instructors who encourage “active-doing” (instead of the passive, temporary acquisition of information) help students learn in an atmosphere that is more emotive and profound. Moreover, teaching through dialectic discussion, project learning, community service and applied creativity activities promotes an equitable classroom and emphasizes inclusivity as such approaches play to a student’s strengths instead of accentuating their pre-existing academic deficiencies. These active forms of learning reach back to the ancient Greek academy and its dialectic (Socratic and Platonic) and experimental, observational (Aristotelian) approaches, but recent neuroscientific research reconfirms that in order for students to best develop higher-learning skills — **application, analysis, evaluation and creation** — *students need more time for conversation, project assignments, innovation education and other forms of applied*

creativity in order to master a skill, knowledge system or performance indicator. The emphasis of the workshops is, therefore, on learning by doing, collaboration and the examination of primary works through scholastic inquiry. The materials, special guests and content of the workshops are all geared towards ideas, approaches and content that **you can immediately employ in the classroom, irrespective of academic discipline.** Instructional skills, learning models and innovative pedagogies which narrow equity gaps, help overcome educational barriers and motivate students to succeed through self-agency will be emphasized.

The series concludes with the formation of “action plans,” applying for grants and seeking partnerships to support future experiential education projects, and various collaborative teamwork opportunities aimed at sustaining efforts to institutionalize support active learning models at MJC. We hope you consider joining other faculty, community and college leaders and invited guests for great readings and mealtime discussions, short engagement activities and presentations. Pedagogic materials, learning modules and curricular resources **appropriate for all academic, professional and technical education fields.**

Friday, September 6th Workshop #1: “Experiential Learning Models

10:30am-12:30 pm in [Library Annex \(Bldg. 12\)](#) Room 55 Lunch from [Papachinos](#).

This faculty led workshop begins with an exploration of our own educational “credos” and emphasizes the need for **experiential learning in undergraduate education.** In order to do so effectively, we must find ways to create communities of authentic inquiry and action in our classrooms while finding ways to help students develop **application, analysis, evaluation and creation skills.** In addition to an overview of the demographics of the students we serve and a short discussion of its implications, we will look at recent studies concerning experiential learning and conclude by brainstorming ways of developing action-based learning models in our classes to promote student success. Experiential teaching and learning materials and various [Open Educational Resources \(OER\)](#) will be distributed as well as Tony Wagner’s book, [Creating Innovators](#).

Thursday, October 10th Workshop #2: “How We Learn Through Discussion”

10:30am-12:30 pm in [Library Annex \(Bldg. 12\)](#) Room 55 Lunch from [Scott's Subs](#).

The second workshop (on a Thursday) models **discussion and inquiry-based learning** and features the sharing of best-practices and a conversation related to your own **educational experiences** compared with those represented in the book [Educated: A Memoir](#) by Tara Westover. Discussion topics range from **using our experiences** in teaching to **primary source learning** and **dialectic teaching tips.**

Friday, Nov. 15th Workshop #3: "Promoting Inquiry With Compassion"

10:30am-12:30 pm in [Library Annex \(Bldg. 12\)](#) Room 55 Lunch from [Scott's Subs](#).

This workshop features Lori Wong, trained and certified through [Stanford University's Center for Compassion and Altruism, Research and Education](#), and is focused on how instructors can best be **compassionate as we interact** with others and how faculty can **set affective and intellectual intentions** in the classroom. Ms. Wong offers ideas and practices aimed at relying on empathy transformed to conscientious acts of compassion. Our fall workshop series ends with a brief report-out of the series' activities, including an overview of action plans to foster higher-learning skills in **undergraduate education**.

Thursday, Dec. 12th Workshop #4: "Common Ground in a Diverse Classroom"

6:30pm-8:30 pm off-campus dinner and conversation at [CAMP4](#).

This faculty and student led mealtime workshop is animated by the belief that students succeed at higher rates when they see their own **geographic, historical, religious and philosophical and cultural interests** explored in the classroom. Participation from the [Common Ground Cohort](#) at MJC will offer an overview of their two-year NEH funded collaboration with Bakersfield, Mission and Delta Colleges; CSU at Fresno and Stanislaus; the University of the Pacific; UC at Merced and Berkeley; the National Steinbeck Center and *El Teatro Campesino*. Community-based [Curricular Modules](#) and [Educational Videos](#) for repurpose and reuse in your own classroom will be made available to all. Modelling of a community mealtime discussion and an overview of how mealtime habits are related to academic success will also be explored.

SPRING 2020

Faculty Academic Retreat (*Asilomar*) from May 4-7th will all be infused with an emphasis on experiential learning, project and community-based teaching models and interdisciplinary collaboration. Other California Community College faculty experts in experiential pedagogies will help guide the retreat along with a wide variety of MJC faculty in peer-to-peer workshops during the retreat.

ANNEX: POTENTIAL PARTNERSHIPS

The following organizations are among the potential partnerships with MJC's ACCT Institute:

The Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) and the Lemelson Foundation

EurekaFest is a competitive program for high schools and colleges around the country framed in an invention education model. Teams of 5 – 10 students identify a community problem, design a solution, build a prototype, gather community funding to build the invention, and present the final product to multiple audiences (legislators, beneficiaries, community members, etc.). Along the way, they research existing patents and often apply for a preliminary patent for their invention. They also develop essential soft skills and professional experience that bolsters their career trajectories. The Lemelson Foundation and MIT want to expand this program to community colleges. The timing of the recently funded Strong Workforce Engineering program was very exciting to the MIT folks and they have invited us to send a team to their three-day teacher training at the end of July to learn about designing applied engineering programming, interdisciplinary inquiry and participate in developmental discussions. See: <https://www.lemelson.org/about-us> and <https://lemelson.mit.edu/events/eurekafest-2019> and <https://lemelson.mit.edu/events/invention-education-summer-workshop-massachusetts> and <https://lemelson.mit.edu/events/eurekafest-2019> and <https://lemelson.mit.edu/events/invention-education-summer-workshop-massachusetts>

Interdisciplinary Efforts

Modesto Junior College (MJC) used an NEH grant to integrate the local history and culture of California's Central Valley into its humanities curriculum, with a focus on the migrant, refugee, and low-income communities from which many of the college's students hail. Over the course of two years, faculty at MJC developed and tested 27 instructional modules that have been shared across the region and are now being used in classrooms. The new curriculum has drastically improved student outcomes and the teaching culture at MJC, as well as fostered new partnerships among the region's universities, colleges, and businesses.

For 70 years, the Great Books Foundation has helped people of all ages think critically, listen closely, and consider contrasting ideas with civility. We believe that an inquiry-based approach is essential, not only for learning but also for leadership. Our Shared Inquiry™ methodology empowers participants and fosters effective and responsive leadership that is inclusive of all stakeholder voices. With Inquiry In Action, we are taking this approach on the road with a mission to build stronger, more innovative working and thinking communities and to equip leaders with the skills to generate positive change.

Cal Humanities is an independent nonprofit organization and a partner of the National Endowment for the Humanities. Since 1975, we have been promoting the humanities as relevant, meaningful ways to understand the human condition and connect us to each other in order to help strengthen California. We produce, fund, create, and support humanities-based projects and programs, eye-opening cultural experiences and meaningful conversations. For more than 40 years, California Humanities has awarded over \$30 million in grants across the state, reaching every Congressional district.

The National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) is an independent federal agency created in 1965. It is one of the largest funders of humanities programs in the United States. Because democracy demands wisdom, NEH serves and strengthens our republic by promoting excellence in the humanities and conveying the lessons of history to all Americans. The Endowment accomplishes this mission by awarding grants for top-rated proposals examined by panels of independent, external reviewers. NEH grants typically go to cultural institutions, such as museums, archives, libraries, colleges, universities, public television, and radio stations, and to individual scholars. The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation seeks to strengthen, promote, and defend the centrality of the humanities and the arts to human flourishing and to the “well-being” of diverse, fair, and democratic societies. To this end, their core programs support exemplary and inspiring institutions of higher education and culture.

See: <https://nehforall.org/projects/the-search-for-common-ground-culture-in-california-s-central-valley> and <https://www.greatbooks.org/inquiry-in-action/> and <https://calhum.org/> and <https://www.neh.gov/> and <https://mellon.org/>

The University of Dayton’s Applied Creativity for Transformation Program (IACT)

IACT is home to the nation’s first undergraduate certificate in Applied Creativity for Transformation. Open to undergraduate students of any major, the certificate is a first step in achieving the University of Dayton’s vision of innovation, applied creativity, entrepreneurship and community engagement for the common good. The certificate program is sponsored by the School of Engineering and housed in the Institute of Applied Creativity for Transformation (IACT). The curriculum introduces students to the creative competencies that today’s job market demands, — critical perspective, complex problem solving and collaboration with others — while applying those same skills to the students’ diverse disciplines of study. See: <https://www.udayton.edu/iact/academics/certificate.php> and <https://www.udayton.edu/iact/academics/index.php>

Nextflex

Formed in 2015 through a cooperative agreement between the US Department of Defense (DoD) and FlexTech Alliance, NextFlex is a consortium of companies, academic institutions, non-profits and state, local and federal governments with a shared goal of advancing U.S. Manufacturing of FHE. By adding electronics to new and unique materials that are part of our everyday lives in conjunction with the power of silicon ICs to create conformable and stretchable smart products, FHE is ushering in an era of “electronics on everything” and advancing the efficiency of our world.

See: <https://www.nextflex.us/news-events/news/spring-semester-2019-flexfactor-finals/> and <https://www.nextflex.us/news-events/events/innovation-day/>

Techstars

An entrepreneurial acceleration company, Techstars would offer a 3-day, intensive event (15-hour days for participants – maybe a small entrance fee). The invention education event would include students and community members. Our sponsorship cost would be \$25,000 to \$75,000 (we would need to partner with Opportunity Stanislaus and local businesses). On Day 1, people pitch new ideas (only those in the idea phase, not projects that are already developed). Participants form teams, based on the ideas and develop them into a pitch over the next 3 days; TechStars provides a facilitator and several mentors who help teams develop their ideas. On the last day, the projects are pitched to a panel of judges. See: <https://www.techstars.com/>

Additional potential partners include: Folsom Lake College: Zack Dowell, Innovation Center; Michelson Foundation (free intellectual property course online); Chattanooga Charter School (experiential learning); BYU (1 start up undergrad. Program in country) Entrepreneurship Program; Stanislaus County Office of Education; Bunker Hill Community College; Lesley University: Sue Cusack Leveraging Instructional and Assistive Technologies in Support of Student-Centered Learning; Johns Hopkins University “Problem Bank”; Deep Springs College in California; Richland 2i2 (student learning center to collaborate on advanced electives; institute of interdisciplinary innovation). **Co-constructive Academic Pipeline:** Gates Foundation P-TECH Middle school /high school model (Contact: Don Borges) with MJC 4-year colleges/universities (transfer pathways). **Extant MJC Resources and activities related to the ACCT Institute** include: Strong Workforce Development; Title V; Cradle 2 Career Initiative; Emerging engineer curricular development; Special topics/ courses repurposed to problem solving.

[1] Gerald Haslam. *The Other California: The Great Central Valley in Life and Letters*. Reno: U of Nevada P, 1994, 3.

[2] *Ibid*, 13. "Society here might be divided arbitrarily into five classes: the nonresident rich, corporate owners and executives; the resident rich, a group that includes family farmers, corporate managers, and successful professionals, along with those working in firms that serve agribusiness; a complicated and increasingly multiethnic middle class that includes many owners of small farms, many professionals, as well as those wearing both blue and white collars and providing services to the wealthy and impecunious alike; the upwardly mobile poor, some of them small farmers too, but most providing blue-collar work and frequently in the process of escaping the cycle of migrant labor; and finally, a considerable underclass composed in large measure of recent arrivals, along with those who have never managed to escape poverty's grip," *Ibid*. 214.

[3] Fujimoto, Isao. *Dynamic Mosaic: California Central Valley Partnership's Collaborative Multiethnic Approach to Organizing Immigrant Communities*. Cornell University Doctoral Dissertation, February 2010. Also see: Johnson, Stephen, Gerald Haslam and Robert Dawson. *The Great Central Valley: California's Heartland*. Berkeley: U of C Press, 1993, 11.

[4] There are periods of time in the 20th century in which this system has managed to be more inclusive, particularly in higher education. The halcyon days of early post-WWII America, for example, papered over the flaws of this differentiated, disciplinary approach with an influx of students and funding. Fueled by the G.I. Bill and Cold War public funding increases—the United States witnessed 500% growth in undergraduates and a 900% increase in graduate students. Professor Louis Menand (CUNY) in his article "The Marketplace of Ideas" (2001) has suggested that "between 1965 and 1972, new community college campuses were opening in the United States at the rate of one every week." But today in the post-secondary environment, we are faced with cyclical recession and a leveling off of the college-age population. We are also experiencing a radical diversification of the student population in terms of gender, ethnicity and socioeconomic status.