State of California
Awards for Innovation in Higher Education
Bakersfield College, Kern Community College District

Introduction.
California's 2016-17 budget includes $25 million for the Awards for Innovation in Higher Education. The program will support innovation at California's colleges—potentially with other partners—that is expected to reduce the time it takes students to complete degrees and credentials, reduce the total cost of attendance for students, or do both. The legislation specifically highlights the state's interest in efforts to:
− Redesign curriculum and instruction, such as through implementation of three-year degrees.
− Allow students to make progress toward completion of degrees and credentials based on demonstration of knowledge and competencies, including skills acquired through military training, prior learning, and prior experiences.
− Address financial need, including by increasing the number of students who apply for financial aid or reducing the costs of books and supplies.

The legislation directs the committee to give preference to innovations that:
− Improve outcomes for students from groups that are historically underrepresented in higher education, such as low-income students, first-generation college students, students from underrepresented minority groups, students who are current or former foster youth, students with disabilities, and students who are veterans.
− Use technology in ways that are not common in higher education

Section B. Narrative Responses to Application Items. (Each question started on a new page)

1. From the perspective of students, what is the problem you are trying to solve? (Maximum of one page.)

 A strong response will provide evidence of a problem that (1) is significant because of the number of students impacted, the groups of students impacted, or the amount of resources affected and (2) is relevant to challenges in higher education in California more broadly.

2. What is the innovation? ("Innovation" should be interpreted broadly. It may not necessarily be a single activity. It could include both new efforts and the expansion of existing efforts. You should describe how the innovation specifically addresses the program's goal to reduce the time it takes for students to complete degrees and credentials, reduce the total cost of attendance for students, or do both.) (Maximum of two pages.)

A strong response will describe specific changes in policies, practices, systems, or cultures that constitute an "innovation" and articulate clearly the relationship between the problem described in the response to Item 1, the innovation, and the program's goal, with the description of the innovation specifically addressing ways in which it improves outcomes for ==students from groups historically underrepresented in higher education or uses technology in ways that are not common in higher education==.

3. How will you implement this innovation? (Maximum of two pages.)

A strong response will describe in a comprehensive way:
A. The organizations involved in implementation and those affected by implementation, as well as the actions that will be taken to encourage their support.
B. Any risks of implementation and the actions that would be taken to mitigate those risks, specifically addressing any risks related to impacts on students from groups historically underrepresented in higher education or any risks related to uses of technology in ways that are not common in higher education.
C. A timeline of actions.

4. How does this innovation align with other efforts you are undertaking, and how does it relate to other efforts in higher education in California? ("Other efforts" should be interpreted broadly. You should describe any efforts funded by other state programs.) (Maximum of one page.)

A strong response will describe the applicant's broader efforts to address goals that are consistent with, or otherwise support, the program's goal; present a clear argument, with supporting evidence, about how the innovation is aligned with those efforts; and present a clear argument about how the innovation builds on, and is distinctive from, other efforts in higher education in California.

5. How could this innovation be scaled up within the setting in which you work and replicated in other areas in California? (Maximum of one page.)

A strong response will present a clear argument, with supporting evidence, about the significance of the innovation as a "proof of concept," addressing both how the innovation would be scaled up within the applicant's own setting and could be replicated widely in California to have an impact on problems like the one described in the response to Item 1.

6. What evidence suggests that this innovation would be effective in addressing the problem identified in your response to Item 1 and implemented successfully? (Maximum of one page.)

A strong response will present the logic and evidence that suggests the innovation could be a credible way of addressing the program's goal and describe qualifications—such as experiences (and the lessons learned from those experiences) and expertise among the participants in the application—and other assets that suggest the applicant will be able to undertake the innovation.

7. What information will you use to assess the success of this innovation in addressing the program's goals, and how will that assessment be used to inform future efforts? ("Information" should be interpreted broadly. You should describe specific data that will be collected over the course of implementation of the innovation and explain how that data could be used in comparisons across settings. The success of the innovation could be assessed using measures that are related to the program's goals, such as persistence. This narrative should help the committee understand the experience of change within the setting in which you work.) (Maximum of one page.)

A strong response will identify specific information, including types of data and sources, that will be collected, explain why that information is relevant to assessing the success of the innovation in addressing the program's goals, and describe processes implemented by the applicant that encourage continued innovation in policies, practices, systems, or cultures.

8. What resources or commitments, or both, do you currently have to support this innovation, and how will implementation of this innovation be sustainable over the long-term? (You should describe the long-term plan for sustainability, the role of an award in that plan, and the ways in which you would use an award to leverage additional funds in the future from other sources.) (Maximum of one page.)

A strong response will identify specific resources or commitments, present a plan for long-term sustainability and explain how one-time funds would (1) be used effectively and efficiently and (2) generate other funds for the innovation.