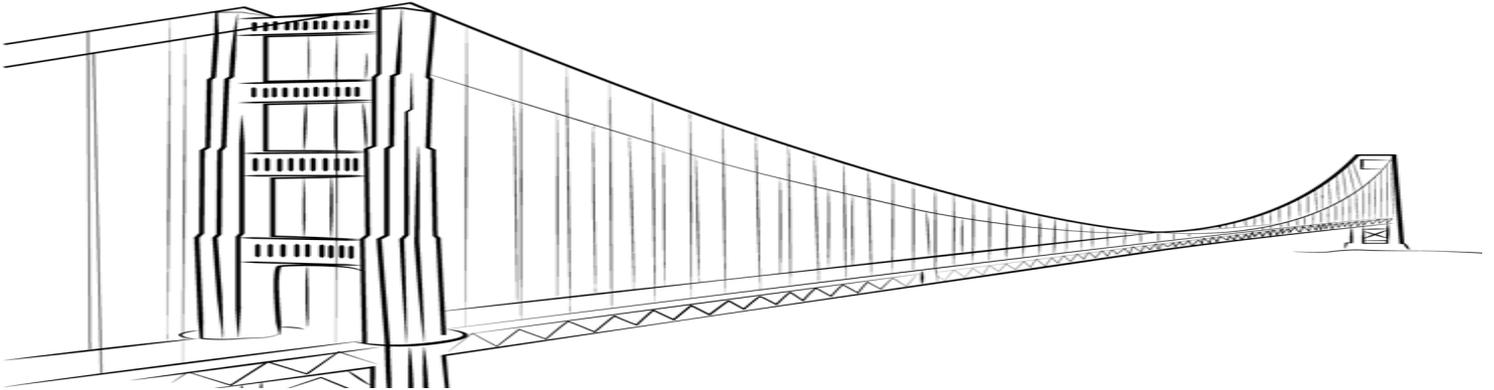


# Adelante Summer Bridge Program: Summer 2017



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**Introduction:**

The Adelante Summer Bridge Program (ASBP) is a four-week program designed for incoming Merritt College freshmen students. In the summer of 2017, the program took place from June 26 through July 20. The ASBP includes two learning communities (LCs), each of which includes three linked courses: a 4.0 unit basic skills English course (English 252A/B: Integrated Reading and Writing), a 0.5 unit counseling course (Counseling 200A: College Orientation), and a 1.0 unit counseling course (Counseling 207A: Career Exploration). One of the LCs was held at the main campus at Merritt College and the second was held at an extension of Merritt College, the Fruitvale Center.

From 2011 to 2015, ASBP was offered only at the Fruitvale Center. Through the vision of former Merritt College President Dr. Norma Ambriz-Galaviz, the program was able to double in size Summer 2016. To accommodate the fact that most of the high school students targeted by the project graduate in mid-June, Adelante courses are intentionally scheduled as a late-start accelerated program; our classes start two weeks after that time to give the program coordinator/counselor enough time to arrange for students to take the Math and English assessments, attend a special version of the Merritt College orientation, and to enroll in the program courses. In summer 2017, Adelante served a total of 55 students. The list of students combined was; 50 Hispanic, 2 Arabics and 3 Asians.

**Our Mission**

The mission of the Adelante Summer Bridge program is to help incoming students begin their successfully transition into Merritt College by providing a supportive and caring learning environment. The Adelante Summer Bridge Program uses a student- centered and holistic approach to guide students through the transition process; it provides a lot of handholding support at the beginning, eventually allowing students to practice more autonomously as they gain their footing in the college environment. Furthermore, the mission of the Adelante Summer Bridge program is to recruit students from Oakland feeder high schools, the majority of whom are from underserved populations. The counseling and English curricula are intentionally culturally sensitive. The mission is aligned with Merritt College's vision and goals, core values and vision. The objectives of the program are to:

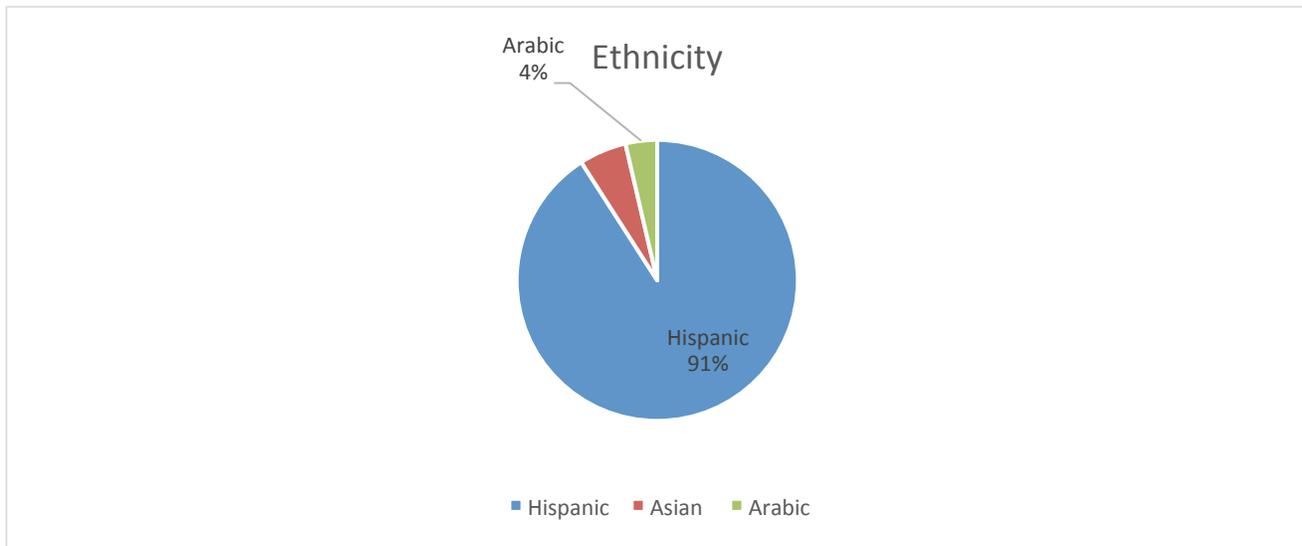
- Help students align with the 3SP (SB 1456, The Student Success Act of 2012) requirements by taking the math and English assessment, touring the college, completing the Counseling 200A: College Orientation course, and meeting with the Adelante Summer Bridge counselor to create a one-term Student Educational Plan (SEP). The relationship with the ASBP Counselor is ongoing as students' transition to the IMPACT/FYE Program in the fall.
- Have students complete an accelerated English 252A/B remedial course to help them advance in their English requirements at least one level to English 252B, English 201A, Engl 264A or English 1A.
- Help incoming freshmen students get acclimated to the college environment.
- Assist students in obtaining a college ID.
- Help students begin their career exploration process by taking Counseling 207A: Career Exploration, a 1.0 unit mini course.
- Familiarize students with the different available resources available to them through Merritt College.
- Teach students to begin developing a voice for themselves through group activities.
- Help students begin to practice autonomy.
- Help students transition to college smoothly.
- Teach students how to read the college catalog and college schedule.
- Teach students how to use their student center to access information, enroll in Fall 2017 courses, and complete their financial aid applications.

### **Student Demographics**

The majority of the ASBP student population for summer 2017 was Hispanic. ASBP students at the Fruitvale Center comprised 23 Hispanics (1 from Nicaragua, 3 from Mexico, 4 from Guatemala & 3 from El Salvador, 12 Chicanos) and 3 Asians (1 from Myanmar and 1 from Thailand & 1 from the Philippines). The Adelante Summer Bridge at Merritt student population for Summer 2017 was comprised of 27 Hispanics (3 From Mexico, 11 from Guatemala, 1 from El Salvador, 1 from Colombia and 11 Chicanos) and 2 Arabics ( both from Yemen). The student gender, 34 females, 19 males and 2 unknown. The students' age was: 10 students were 17 years

old, 28 students were 18 years old, 4 students were 20 years old, 1 student was 21 years old, 1 was 22 years old and one was 27 years old.

**Table 1: Students' Ethnic Background**



Because of the multicultural orientation of the programs, students were able to bond with each other and create a sense of community.

Through the ASBP, the majority of students not only prepared for the fall term; they also gained the confidence they need to give college a chance. Much of this confidence comes from participating in a larger supportive community including fellow students, faculty, support professionals, and administration; at the ASBP graduation, both Dr. Elaine Burns Merritt College President and Dean Lilia Chavez shared their own experiences as students of color and welcomed our graduates to this community of learners. Perhaps the most valuable part of this community is the bond students forged with each other. As Vincent Tinto wrote in his 1998 study "Learning Communities and the Reconstruction of Remedial Education in Higher Education," "The shared learning experience of learning communities did more than simply cement new friendships; it

served to bridge the academic-social divide that typically plagues student life. Often, social and academic concerns compete; causing students to feel torn between the two worlds so that students have to choose one over the other. Learning communities helped students draw these two worlds together” (42). It was inspirational to see how supportive of each other the students became. For example, one of the final projects required students to give a formal presentation as a way of helping them practice their public speaking skills and start developing a voice. There were a couple of occasions when students did not want to stand up in front of the class, but their classmates in the audience continually encouraged them to do so and normalized the situation. The counselors used a student-centered approach and encouraged students to present; however, counselors also provided an alternative assignment for any student who really did not want to present. This approach gave students options and control of the situation, and in many cases the students agreed to present (and thus, overcame a major obstacle for many beginning students).

The majority of the students who participated in ASBP at the Fruitvale Center lived nearby, so our location made it easy for them to transition to college while living at home or in the neighborhood. By the end of the summer 2017 semester, students were familiar with the college’s enrollment processes and ready to attend classes on the main campus. The majority of the 2017 Adelante Summer Bridge students were low-income and fresh out of high school, and most had tested into basic skills level courses. 46 students (84%) were first generation college students, 9 were undocumented (16%), 20 were U.S. residents (36%) and 26 students were U.S. citizens (47%). 9 students applied for the Dream Act and 42 applied for financial aid and 4 didn’t qualify so didn’t submit financial aid application; which is representative of the population of the Oakland Unified School District (OUSD).

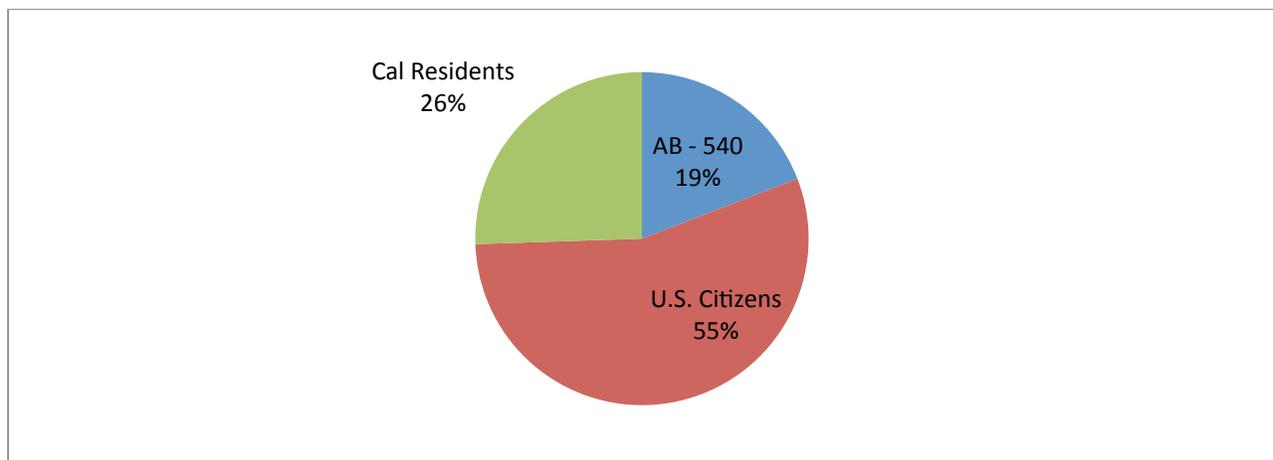
### **Immigration Status**

Regarding immigration status, 16% of the students from the summer 17 Adelante Summer Bridge Program were undocumented. Given that students’ legal status is a very sensitive topic, it was crucial for the counselors to gain students’ trust early in their work together in order to provide proper interventions. The Adelante counselors helped students file their Dream Act applications to enable them to get assistance in paying for their tuition; the counselors also helped them apply for

the Cal Grant and guided them to go back to their high schools to have their counselor enter their cumulative grade point average (G.P.A.) and sign the form. The Adelante counselor also introduced students to resources specifically designed for undocumented students such as Educators for Fair Consideration (E4FC), and they encouraged them to apply for Consideration of Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA).

Undocumented students are considered at risk because they are very vulnerable to deportation, either of themselves and/or of family members. For related reasons, they are also in danger of dropping out of school because they have limited resources available to them. Not all of the students who apply for the Dream Act actually receive it; students are not eligible for work-study on campus nor they are eligible for financial aid. These students really need the intervention of a culturally- sensitive bilingual counselor to help them transition to college and acclimate. A lot of the students also need the unconditional positive regard, support and validation of their experience with their unique set of obstacles.

**Table 2: Students' Legal Status**



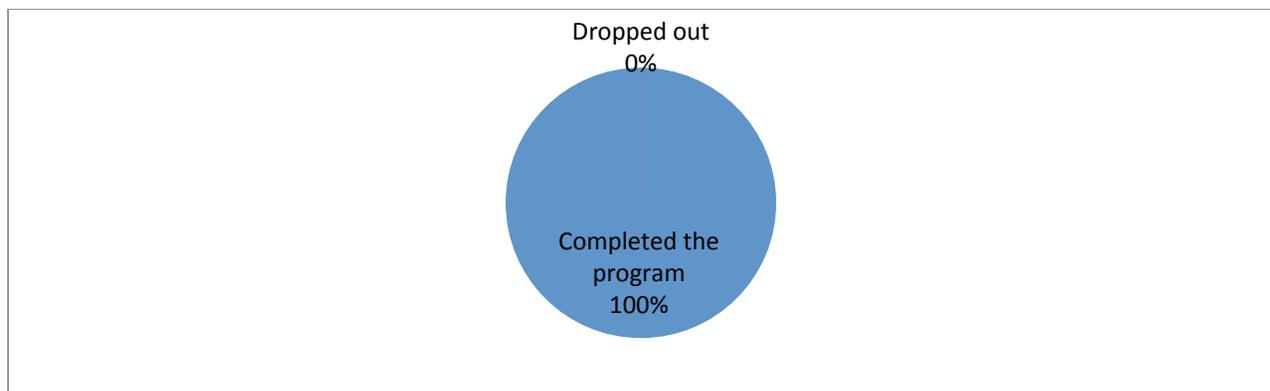
### **Program Outcomes**

The 2017 Adelante Summer Bridge Program had a high success rate; 100% of the students who participated in the program finished it, and the majority was funneled into learning communities such as the First Year Experience (FYE/IMPACT) program, SANKOFA and the Puente Project. To provide students with information about the options for financial support, counselors invited

financial aid specialist Silvia Alvarado to give students a workshop on the Board of Governments Fee Waiver (BOG), how to complete their FASFA application, how to complete requirements for the Dream Act, how to request parents' tax transcripts, and how to apply for work study. Counselors also encouraged students to submit EOPS applications as a means of receiving extra support and, as a result, 90% of the students in the program submitted EOPS applications. To familiarize students with campus resources, students toured the campus and obtained college IDs. Counselors also invited Ron Nelson, a DSPS counselor, to give a workshop on the available resources for students with learning differences.

The curriculum of English 252 A was greatly accelerated and the potential reduction of students' time spent in pre-transfer developmental classes was emphasized. It was very gratifying to see that the majority of the students who began in remedial English were able to advance to English 1A and 201A, saving many students the cost in time and money required to spend one to three additional semesters in basic skills courses.

**Table 3: Students' Retention**



Every element of the 2017 Adelante Summer Bridge Program was intentionally designed in accordance with the Peralta District's Strategic Goals and Institutional Objectives of 2017- 2018. We addressed Strategic Goal A.1 by adjusting the course curriculum and assignments to make the program more accessible to a broader range of students in our target population, instead of the exclusive Latino- focused program. This approach had the benefit of increasing access to the program for a broader population of underserved students and, at the same time, emphasized the

common elements in the experiences of all students of color. As a result, the program's participants doubled compared to previous years. In keeping with Strategic Goal A.2, participants who completed the Counseling 200A course met the previous 3SP college requirements and were able to complete an extended college orientation and a two-term Student Educational Plan (SEP). The Adelante Summer Bridge Program was also able to increase student success, retaining 100% of participating students in the learning community, thus meeting the A.3 goal. After completing the program, the participants continued to engage in programs and student activities such as the FYE/IMPACT student program and club, Summer Math Jam, the Puente program and club, SANKOFA and the Student Ambassadors' team, among others. The majority of the 2017 Adelante also met the Strategic Goal A.4 because the 100% of students who completed the summer program made progress towards bridging the student achievement gap by taking an accelerated basic skills English class and moving forward in the required English sequence by one or more levels. The Adelante Summer Bridge counselor worked closely with the Centro Latino counselors at Merritt College and collaborated with Oakland Unified District high school counselors (from Fremont high school, Oakland International, Life Academy, Arise, Aspire Lionel Wilson, Alternatives in Action, John F. Kennedy high school, Castlemont high school, LPS high school, Oakland Tech and El Camino high school), Merritt College Student Personal Services Specialist Outreach/Recruitment Specialist and the ASPIRA Program and Club to conduct effective outreach and to implement welcoming college orientations and math and English assessments as a way of recruiting students to join the Program and enroll in Merritt College. In so doing, the project also addressed the Peralta College District's B.2 Strategic Goals and Institutional Objectives 2017-18. Strategic Goals C.1 and C.2 were addressed by this very successful program, as evidenced by the 100% retention rate and the various kinds of instructional innovation used throughout the program. The English instructors, the English tutors, the student assistant and the counselors and program coordinator worked as a team to help the students succeed by adjusting readings and assignments to be accessible to students while maintaining student learning outcomes consistent with college requirements. They collaborated for a month before the program began and continued to touch bases daily throughout the program to maintain ongoing classroom responsiveness to emerging student needs and strengths. They often went the extra mile to help students stay in the program.

Students were asked to describe in their autobiography papers who do they want to be and this is what one of the students said, "Transitioning from being a high school student where

education is free to college where money is necessary was a difficult transition. I first began with a mindset of ‘I will attend a four year college’ and got accepted to many schools like San Francisco State, Cal State East Bay, UC-Davis and others.’ However, I was not able to put together all of the money. I had a second plan which was attending community college in this case Merritt College and I ended up here. I remember crying because I didn’t know what to do and my parents not being able to give me answers as to what to do because all of my life I wanted to go to college and worked so hard, but now it seemed I would end up not going. Whenever I thought about this, it made me feel disgraced and disappointed in myself because my big dream was slipping away from my hands. I can say Rosa S. Perez was my savior because of her I am here at this Summer Bridge Program and will be attending Merritt in the fall.” The ASBP provided students with an opportunity to go to college and break away from the family cycle of not having an education. The program also gave students hope to start a new chapter in their lives. The English instructors and counselors were a strong team and really showed students that they cared about their education. Each year of the program they have increased planning and collaboration on curriculum, assignments, and support strategies; this collaboration is a major factor in the program’s success.

## **Conclusion**

The Adelante Summer Bridge program was a safe haven for the majority of the students, a free space where students could come and articulate their personal struggles in a receptive atmosphere, learn how to be college students, advance in their educations, learn how to access resources on campus, learn to advocate for themselves and begin to work on developing their personal empowerment by sharing some of the invisible problems they carry with them when they come to school. All of the course assignments were intentionally planned to stimulate students’ learning and development. Although the program was challenging because of its fast pace and high expectations, both the students and the faculty believe that the effort was worthwhile because it really made a huge impact on students’ lives.