Increasing student access and student success is an urgent systemwide need. Increasing the retention and success of underrepresented students, as well as improving the campus climate for all students are particular concerns which this proposal addresses.

During the last two years American River College has developed a very successful model for peer-assisted learning (PAL) outside of normal class time for selected math and science classes. This two-year proposal would expand the PAL program to other disciplines, to the two other colleges in our district, and to three feeder high schools in an interlevel consortium.

Successful students will be trained as learning assistants (LAs) in collaborative tutoring techniques. These learning assistants will work with small groups of students outside of class time in selected high attrition classes, most of which are necessary for transfer. These learning assistants will also work very closely with their supervising classroom instructor. Active learning techniques will be used which will develop conceptual understanding and develop skills in problem solving, critical thinking, and interpersonal communication.

The result of this proposal will be the extension of the model to a mixed urban/suburban district and to its feeder high schools which have a large population of underrepresented students. Outcomes of this proposal will include the building of a more cohesive climate for diverse students, improved retention and success of underrepresented students who will transfer to four-year schools, and the building of academic study groups at the high school level.