

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Victor Valley College’s Caring Campus Experience Drives Transformation and Growth**

**LONG BEACH, CA** – Victor Valley College (VVC) has experienced a transformation by weaving Caring Campus principles and strategies across its campus, impacting the college’s culture, enrollment, and community engagement, and making VVC a model for other institutions of higher education.

The Institute for Evidence-Based Change developed Caring Campus to provide colleges and universities with the tools and resources needed to establish a welcoming culture on campus, thereby improving student retention, persistence, and success.

“Caring Campus has helped to redefine what it means to be a part of Victor Valley College,” President Dr. Dan Walden said. “Our culture has really come alive and can be seen everywhere. Our campus is extremely vibrant, and faculty, staff, students, and community members can feel that difference.”

The results of VVC’s cultural shift are especially evident in the college’s enrollment growth. Despite a 20% drop in enrollment during the COVID-19 pandemic, VVC has rebounded with a 50% increase over the past two years. Dr. Walden cites Caring Campus as a contributing factor to this increase.

“The culture of our college has shifted to one where people go out of their way for others,” Dr. Walden said. “We don’t want students chasing us down for help; we want to meet them at the door and ask how we can help. We’ve done hundreds of things to show this is a caring campus and that we truly care for every student.”

One strategy VVC has implemented is its Connect2Success call center, which provides students, employees, and community members with a direct line to find an answer to their questions. In the 2022-23 school year, student service specialists handled more than 60,000 phone calls, achieving a 90% first-call resolution rate, with the remaining 10% resolved through follow-up calls.

VVC’s efforts have extended into the community, with counselors placed in 35 high schools to guide and support students as they plan their futures. In 2022-23, 70% of graduating seniors in California’s high desert filled out FAFSA and applied to VVC, resulting in 40% of them enrolling at the college.

VVC is also proud of its on-campus Engagement Centers, which offer events, guest speakers, and support for students.

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“We had a student come into our STEM Engagement Center who was initially enrolled in just one math class and was quite nervous about his performance,” VVC Vice President of Instruction Todd Scott said. “After a conversation with our supportive staff, he felt encouraged to take on a full course load and he ended up becoming a 4.0 engineering student. That staff member’s encouragement and belief in him made all the difference in his success.”

This spirit of care and support extends beyond academic achievements. VVC’s culture is encapsulated by a story in which the campus community, including maintenance staff, other employees, and students, came together to free a goose entangled in fishing line. Such acts of kindness demonstrate the collective commitment to helping one another, ensuring that no one—whether a student or a creature in need—is left without support.

“Victor Valley College’s success with Caring Campus is a testament to what can be achieved when an institution truly commits to a culture of care,” IEBC CEO Dr. Brad Phillips said. “We are proud to see VVC institutionalize Caring Campus into its campus culture and become a model for other colleges nationwide.”

#### **PHOTO CAPTIONS:**

**IEBC\_VVC1:** Victor Valley College has experienced a transformation by weaving Caring Campus principles and strategies across its campus, impacting the college’s culture, enrollment, and community engagement.

**IEBC\_VVC2:** Despite a 20% drop in enrollment during the COVID-19 pandemic, Victor Valley College has rebounded with a 50% increase over the past two years.

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