Sierra College Promise – Frequently Asked Questions

What is the Sierra College Promise?
Think of Sierra Promise as a passport that provides access to success for students who never thought college was possible. Sierra Promise targets students who might not be planning to attend college and works with them to develop a plan. Promise helps make students college-ready before they graduate from high school, and helps them start college with an education/career plan and access to financial support.

How does Sierra Promise Work?
Sierra Promise is a partnership between the College, K-12s, and the community.

- Sierra Promise begins in high school, where students can take dual enrollment classes and/or meet with a Sierra College Enrollment Specialist or Transitions Counselor at their high school.
- Enrollment specialists are in 15 high schools in our area on a weekly basis.
  *They provide financial aid and scholarship application support, career exploration, and connect students to college services.

Students who commit to Sierra College through Sierra Promise get additional services. This includes:

- Priority registration, an education & career plan, assistance with financial aid/scholarships, and (if appropriate) they will be placed in one of Sierra’s many support programs (i.e. RISE, Guardian Scholars, Puente, etc.) where they will receive additional services. Prior to beginning any classes, they will participate in Summer Jam.

What is Summer Jam?
Summer Jam is a fun and educational series of workshops and events held in August before the semester begins. Students will learn about Sierra College, take remediation classes if needed, and learn about financial literacy and career planning. Overall, Summer Jam will help Sierra Promise students get a strong start to their college career.

Whom does Sierra College Promise affect?
Sierra Promise targets students who may think college isn’t possible. They may not have a strong support system or anyone in their family who went to college – or perhaps they assume they can’t afford it.

Sierra Promise will also affect students who benefit from the guidance they receive from Sierra staff while they are still in high school. Not all of these students will choose to attend Sierra College, but they will benefit from dual enrollment classes and any assistance they receive related to financial aid and career planning.
How are Sierra Promise students selected?
All students who attend one of 15 partner high schools are initially eligible. High school counselors and Enrollment Specialists will identify prospective Sierra Promise students. They will target those who may not be thinking about college, or those who may not have a strong support system. They will encourage them and help them explore career options. They will explain how students can achieve their goals and will offer assistance throughout the application process. All students who complete the process (financial aid application and college assessment/application) will be invited to make a Promise to Sierra College.

What responsibilities do Sierra Promise students have?
To take full advantage of Sierra Promise - students also make a Promise to Sierra College. To participate, they must complete a FAFSA (federal student aid application), enroll in 15 units per semester (or the necessary units to fast track to their certificate or transfer goal), begin the semester after high school graduation, and attend Summer Jam before their first semester.

What high schools are currently participating?
- Antelope High School
- Bear River High
- Center High School
- Colfax High School
- Del Oro High School
- Foresthill High
- Granite Bay High
- Lincoln High School
- Nevada Union High
- Oakmont High
- Placer High School
- Rocklin High School
- Roseville High School
- Whitney High School
- Woodcreek High

How does Sierra Promise benefit the community?
Because Sierra Promise is targeting students who were not planning to attend college, this opportunity translates to a better-educated local workforce that is paying taxes and contributing to the economy. An estimated 66% of California job openings will require an A.A. by 2020, so students who rely on a high school diploma will have a difficult time and are more likely to need government aid. Sierra Promise students who complete their certificate or earn a degree can earn higher wages compared to those who do not pursue higher education.

Does Sierra Promise only serve at-risk students?
No. Sierra Promise seeks to create a college-going culture in our region. Through Sierra Promise, more high school students will see college as an option for their future and will gain the tools and support they need to get there.

It is true that efforts are made to target at-risk students through Sierra Promise. However, there are students of all means who are taking dual enrollment courses, participating in college prep workshops, and meeting with the Enrollment Specialists and Transitions Counselors provided by Sierra Promise.