

Imperial Valley College: Improving Student Success through Integrated Planning

How the Aspen Prize winner leveraged the Nuventive Improvement Platform to transform outcomes and support their success in earning national recognition.



A National Model for Student Success

In 2023, Imperial Valley College (IVC) was named a co-winner of the \$1 million Aspen Prize for Community College Excellence, widely regarded as the nation's highest recognition. Often described as "the Oscars for great community colleges," the prize celebrates institutions that deliver exceptional results in student access, completion, transfer, workforce preparation, and equitable outcomes for low-income students and students of color.

IVC stood out for its unwavering commitment to student success and its innovative "Culture of Care." This approach focuses on meeting students where they are, building strong partnerships with K-12 schools to better prepare students for college, and creating flexible programs designed for working learners. These initiatives not only improved access but also helped students persist and achieve their educational goals.

The results speak for themselves: between 2015 and 2019, IVC's three-year graduation and transfer rates increased by 12 percentage points, double the national average, with equally impressive gains for underserved populations. The Aspen Prize validated a decade of focused, student-centered transformation and positioned IVC as a national model for how data-informed decision making can foster meaningful change.

The Journey: Building a Strong Foundation

IVC's success didn't happen overnight; it began with a clear-eyed view of the college's challenges and a determination to turn them into opportunities. In 2013, the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC) identified a need for stronger integrated planning, leading to a temporary warning status. Rather than viewing this as a setback, IVC used it as a catalyst for transformation.

The college first established new planning processes, which restored full accreditation in 2015. However, leadership quickly realized lasting change would require more than compliance, it would require a cultural shift grounded in data and transparency. Following a thorough evaluation of available solutions, IVC chose the Nuventive Improvement Platform as its foundation for integrated planning and assessment.

With Nuventive, IVC connected course, program, and service-level outcomes with budgeting, institutional learning outcomes, and strategic initiatives, all in one centralized system.

"The ability to generate a complete program review report was a game changer," said José G. Carrillo, Ed.D., Associate Dean of Institutional Effectiveness at Imperial Valley

Customer Profile

Imperial Valley College is a public community college located in Imperial, California. Serving approximately 7,000–8,100 students, the college offers associate degrees, certificates, and transfer programs with a strong focus on equitable student success and community impact.

Opportunity

Imperial Valley College aimed to transform disconnected planning and assessment into a fully integrated, data-informed process. The Nuventive Improvement Platform provided the foundation for aligning goals, outcomes, and resources, with Professional Services ensuring sustainable success.

Improvement

Imperial Valley College has unified planning, assessment, and resource allocation through the Nuventive Improvement Platform. With actionable data and expert support, the college is sustaining measurable success and advancing its student-centered mission.



College. “In the past, we had so many moving pieces but no way to compile them. Now, departments can analyze programs at a deeper level without manually combining documents. That feature was well received and is used regularly.”

Built-in dashboards and reports provided an at-a-glance view of progress, enabling faculty, staff, and administrators to make informed decisions that aligned resources with the college’s highest priorities. This framework created a powerful foundation for sustainable, evidence-based improvement across every area of the institution.

Beyond Technology: A True Partnership

For IVC, Nuventive was not just a technology vendor, it became a trusted partner in transformation. The college worked closely with a dedicated Nuventive Professional Services Consultant and extended team who provided personalized support, responded quickly to questions, and helped configure the platform to meet the college’s evolving needs.

“I thoroughly appreciate how the dedicated Professional Services Consultant’s background in academia gives her a rare, dual expertise,” said Melani Guinn, Ph.D., Rhetoric Professor, Academic Senate Vice President, Outcomes Assessment Coordinator at Imperial Valley College. “She navigates both the platform and faculty needs with guidance that’s truly invaluable!”

This level of support helped IVC achieve more, improve faster, and adapt confidently, while ensuring its processes reflected effective practices. As new initiatives were introduced, Nuventive’s flexibility enabled the college to customize reports, track progress, and continuously refine its strategies.

The result was a platform that became deeply embedded in IVC’s daily operations, providing not only the technology, but also the expertise and guidance needed to sustain progress. By combining Nuventive’s tools with a partnership approach, IVC created a data-informed culture where decisions are grounded in evidence, and everyone, from faculty to senior leadership, has a clear view of what drives student success.

Welcoming the Future

Today, the Nuventive Improvement Platform remains the backbone of IVC’s continuous improvement efforts. The college has expanded its use of the platform to integrate strategic planning, annual program review, and outcomes assessment, ensuring every initiative is tied to measurable results.

“One of the key aspects where Nuventive has been instrumental is helping us tie assessment to planning and budget allocation,” Carrillo said. “Before, we had two distinct systems. Nuventive allows us to streamline and make connections we were never able to make before.”

With streamlined data entry, actionable dashboards, and robust reporting, IVC’s faculty and staff have the time and tools they need to focus on delivering quality education.

Key Benefits

- + Streamlined integrated planning and assessment in one platform
- + Improved data accessibility through dashboards and built-in reporting
- + Dedicated Professional Services support for rapid customization and adoption
- + Measurable gains in graduation and transfer rates, doubling the national average
- + Stronger alignment of resources with institutional goals and outcomes

“Recently, while working on accreditation reports, I needed some changes implemented in Nuventive with a short turnaround time. The support I received from the Nuventive team was outstanding—they were very helpful, communicated clearly, and made the whole experience feel genuinely human.”

—Melani Guinn, Ph.D.

“Nuventive allowed us to maintain our existing processes rather than forcing us to conform to a preset system. Unlike other platforms that required us to adjust to their terminology and structure, Nuventive adapted to our workflow and mirrored our processes in a clear and intuitive way.”

—José G. Carrillo, Ed.D.

