

D. Key Planning Assumptions and Strategic Priorities

1. Planning Assumptions

The following are the key assumptions to guide future planning activities.

1. National and state goals and policy for postsecondary education will increasingly emphasize:
 - a. degree and certificate completion;
 - b. transfer to four-year universities;
 - c. reduction of achievement gaps among various subgroups of students; and
 - d. institutional cost containment.

To promote more effective community colleges some have argued that the institutions should be redesigned.¹ The College may want to explore those arguments and consider some of the policies and practices that the Aspen Institute has identified among the colleges to which it has awarded its \$1 million dollar prize for excellence.²

2. Whether it continues to be ACCJC or some other entity becomes the accrediting body for the College, an accreditor will likely continue to insist upon adequate capacity to provide educational services and demonstrable commitment to continuous quality improvement. In regard to effectiveness an accreditor will place emphasis on both student achievement and learning outcomes results.
3. The funding needs for capital projects throughout the California community college system are greater than what the State presently provides. Currently, key public policy makers are reluctant to ask the public to consider additional general bond obligation debt for those purposes. However, were State capital construction bond funds made available, preference in allocation most likely would be given to colleges demonstrating good use of their facilities well and are growing in face-to-face instructional contact. Therefore, the College must strive to more efficient use of existing facilities.
4. A significant change in public policy regarding the CSU transfer process has been implemented with the SB 1440/440 legislation. The UC has started a similar transfer pathway framework. The College has responded to those public policy changes by adopting five Associate Degrees for Transfer (AD-Ts). The ongoing challenge will be to connect students to those pathways and cautiously perhaps expand the number of AD-Ts when they can be sustained and are a good fit to the local needs.

¹ Bailey, Thomas, et. al. *Redesigning America's Community Colleges: A Clearer Path to Student Success*. Harvard University Press, 2015. American Association of Community Colleges. *Reclaiming the American Dream: Community Colleges and the Nation's Future*. 2012.

² Wyner, Joshua. *What Excellent Community Colleges Do: Preparing All Students for Success*. Harvard Education Press, 2014

5. The recommendations made by the Board of Governor's Task Force on Workforce, Job Creation, and a Strong Economy may translate into a series of new policy, program, and funding initiatives for career and technical education.³
6. The current and future planning environment is very fluid (e.g., resources and legislative mandates). The state of California, and by extension the community college system, has a set of revenue generation laws, policies and practices, which result in volatile levels of revenue. During the Great Recession the revenue reductions were unprecedented in both the steepness of the decline and in the number of consecutive years in which they were sustained. Elements of performance-based funding are working their way into categorical program and workforce development program funding. The College will need to be nimble and collaborative (interdepartmental dialogue on the campus). The College will need to continue to be fiscally prudent and to use revenues efficiently.
7. Technology can be a disruptive factor both in the broader society and in higher education. It represents an evolving challenge to faculty members who need to teach some students how to use it while offering instruction to some students who may be very skilled in using the technology.⁴ A variety of technological applications for the classroom and instruction are promising, but faculty must learn to use them and the effectiveness of the technology needs to be empirically evaluated. The current State-sponsored Online Education Initiative holds great promise for the improvement of the online instruction experience for learners and faculty members. Technology is also a force with which to be reckoned in the delivery of administrative and instructional support services.⁵
8. Transferable, core abilities, commonly expressed in the learning outcomes associated with general education, will likely never go out of fashion and are highly valued by employers.⁶ However, weaving a coherent curriculum that effectively fosters those talents is an ongoing challenge for any higher education institution.
9. Change in late adolescent and adult demographics (racial composition, ethnic identities, age cohorts) is the future of the effective service area. The primary college age cohort (18 to 24) will become proportionately a little larger in Blythe; but the group's size will average only 1,600 potential students. Needles, in contrast, will see this age cohort decrease a little and will only average 400 potential students. The College will always have to "sell itself" to the community of prospective students.

³ California Community College Chancellor's Office. *Board of Governors Task Force on Workforce, Job Creation, and a Strong Economy: Report and Recommendations*. November 2015

⁴ Carl Straumsheim. "Digital Distractions," *Inside Higher Education*. January 26, 2016

⁵ Ryland, Jane N. (President Emerita, CAUSE). *Technology and the Future of the Community College*. Retrieved from www.aacc.nche.edu/Resources/aaccprograms/past projects on January 15, 2016.

⁶ Hart Research Associates. *Falling Short? College Learning and Career Success*. January 2015 (survey conducted on behalf of the Association of American Colleges and Universities)

10. Substantial numbers of residents are limited in their ability to participate in the local economy due to shortcomings in their academic capital (English language learners and low educational attainment) and poverty. The decision and resources required to outreach and to recruit these adults and/or their college-age children will be an ongoing opportunity for the College as well as a challenge to “make room” for them and to help them succeed.
11. The implementation of the common core curriculum in K-12 districts may favorably impact the extent to which future students are “college-ready” upon graduation from high school. Currently, substantial portions of those high school graduates who complete the placement assessment exams are recommended to basic skills courses. Is it the students, the assessment process, poor instruction or a little of all that bring about these results?⁷ The College may want to revisit the issue of “college ready,” consider strategies to improve the academic talent of prospective students, and explore additional approaches to the process of course placement assessment.
12. Aligning instructional programs to the occupations with the greatest job opportunities, some of which will require a Bachelor’s Degree while others will not, will be an important public service and an ongoing challenge for the College. Designing terminal Associate Degrees and Certificates of Achievement that culminate in an industry recognized certification or prepare students for the examinations to earn those licenses and certifications will require considerable commitment and a willingness to change with the times.
 - a. Eighty-six percent of all projected nonfarm job growth opportunities (2012-2022) in Riverside and San Bernardino County is concentrated in five industry sectors:
 - i. The private educational services, health care and social assistance industry is the fastest growing sector (18% of all new jobs);
 - ii. The professional and business services sector represent 15% of all new jobs;
 - iii. Trade, Transportation, Utilities as an industry will provide 24% of all new jobs;
 - iv. Leisure and hospitality will contribute 14% of all new jobs; and
 - v. Construction will supply 15% of the new jobs.
13. The ability to measure and track data is necessary to identify trends in student outcomes achievement. Robust data sets provide faculty, administrators, and staff with timely feedback and information about student outcomes. Exploration of robust data sets allows them to alter or enhance instructional programs and support services. Some have called this process a “culture of evidence.” It can be a challenge to know how to use this information well. That is to say, it is not enough to collect data, but the College must know how to analyze and use the

⁷ Hanover Research. *Planning for the Future in Community Colleges*. December 2013

data to make “informed decisions in the classroom, student services, and in human resources.”⁸

2. Strategic Priorities of the College

The College Strategic Plan for 2013-16 sets out six goals as follows.

Goal 1: Deliver and continuously improve upon quality educational programs, emphasizing student learning leading to certification, conferral of associate degrees, transfer to four-year institutions, and personal growth and career enhancement.

Goal 2: Provide quality student support services to a diverse student population, providing opportunities for student success.

Goal 3: Create and sustain an institutional environment of transparent collegiality in which College personnel have an understanding of the functions, roles and responsibilities of their colleagues and College organizations and committees, which support the Mission of the institution.

Goal 4: Ensure that state-of-the-art information technology and media are available and used by a highly skilled college community.

Goal 5: Enhance district fiscal and physical resources with strategic and transparent stewardship.

Goal 6: Use the analysis of quantitative and qualitative data in an on-going and systematic cycle of evaluation, integrated planning, and re-evaluation for accountability and continuous quality improvement of the College Mission, programs and services.

In October 2014 the Board of Trustees adopted this set of ten institutional goals for 2014-2016.

GOAL 1: Through conscientious collegiality and transparency, ensure that the College District’s budget effectively addresses the current fiscal operations, provides fiscal stability to maintain instructional, student support, and operational integrity, and provides planning for long-term financial stability.

GOAL 2: Ensure full restoration of Accreditation status and continue to use Accreditation Standards to guide integrated strategic planning, program review, SLO assessment, and college operations.

GOAL 3: Ensure the acquisition of sufficient FTES to meet targeted goals.

⁸ Lorenzo, George (editor-in-chief of the SOURCE on Community College Issues, Trends, and Strategies). *Eight Important Questions for Eleven Community College Leaders: An Exploration of Community College Issues, Trends, and Strategies*. May 2011

GOAL 4: Explore options for the optimization of facilities at the campus in Blythe and at the Needles Center, including but not limited to, classroom and college facilities, college properties, land development, and advancements in utilizing the Fine and Performing Arts Center.

GOAL 5: Taking into consideration continued fiscal challenges, develop a plan to identify the PVCCD focused educational Mission for the Blythe and Needles' sites which meet the needs of the citizenry served while maintaining enrollment stability.

GOAL 6: Optimize resources through continued and conscientious energy and product conservation efforts.

GOAL 7: Consider options for the generation of new sources of revenue for and through programs, partnerships, and grants.

GOAL 8: Continue development of integrated data systems that provide information for measurable and data-driven decision-making.

GOAL 9: To support instructional, student support, and operational effectiveness, ensure a state-of-the-art teaching, learning, and work environment, including but not limited to technological advancements.

GOAL 10: Ensure the effective and efficient provision of instructional, student support, and operational programs and services by qualified faculty, staff, and managers, through a deliberate model of human resource management.

Some of the Board institutional goals overlap with the Strategic Plan Goals of the College. Those overlaps are noted below.

Table __: College and Board Goals

Abbreviated Version, Board Goals 2014-16	College Strategic Goals 2013-16					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Ensure that the budget addresses the current fiscal crisis and provides fiscal stability.					X	
2. Restore accreditation status & use the standards.						X
3. Ensure sufficient FTES to meet targeted goals.	X					
4. Optimize facilities use.	X					
5. Develop a plan for the Blythe & Needles' sites that meets the needs of citizens while maintaining enrollment stability.	X					
6. Optimize resources through energy and product conservation.					X	
7. Consider options for new sources of revenue.					X	
8. Continue development of integrated data systems to support decision making.						X
9. Support operational effectiveness and a state-of-the-art teaching, learning, and work environment.		X	X			
10. Ensure effective and efficient provision of services through human resources management.		X	X			

Source: Palo Verde College Integrated Strategic Plan 2013-2016