SAN MATEO COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT
BOARD OF TRUSTEES
ANNUAL BOARD RETREAT AGENDA
February 9, 2008, 9:00 a.m.
College Vista Clubhouse
3405 CSM Drive, San Mateo, CA

_____

9:00 a.m.   **ROLL CALL**

      Pledge of Allegiance

DISCUSSION OF THE ORDER OF THE AGENDA

STATEMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS

NEW BUSINESS

    08-2-1B   Appointment of Representatives to Foundation Board

INFORMATION REPORTS

    08-2-1C   Student Feedback

    08-2-2C   Study Session Agendas – 2008 Calendar

    08-2-3C   Discussion of State Budget

    08-2-4C   Compressed Academic Calendar – 15/5/15/5/5

    08-2-5C   Distance Education

    08-2-6C   Board Goals – 2008
                  (also attached is the progress report on 2007 goals)

ADJOURNMENT

APPOINTMENT OF REPRESENTATIVES TO FOUNDATION BOARD

There is no printed report for this agenda item.

STUDENT FEEDBACK

1. Skyline – Fresh Look Focus Group Study, Executive Summary, Fall 2005

2. Skyline – Student Campus Climate Survey, Executive Summary, Spring 2006

3. Skyline – Media Preferences Survey, Fall 2006

4. Skyline – Report on First Year Experience Student Survey

5. Skyline – Topical Survey-Fall 2007 Marketing and Outreach Communication, Executive Summary

6. Skyline – First Year Experience Student Survey and Faculty and Staff Survey Results, Fall 2007

7. CSM – Students Speak-Focus Group Initiative: Report on Findings, September 2007

8. CSM – CSM Enrollment Management Cycle

9. Cañada – Student Survey Report

Fresh Look Focus Group Study
Executive Summary
Fall 2005

Prepared by:
Skyline College
Office of Planning, Research and Institutional Effectiveness

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Highlight of the Findings

1. Students who participated in the focus group study value the interactions and differing perspectives of a diverse learning community.

2. Student participants expect to gain knowledge, skills and abilities that will prepare them for life and help them to make informed decisions.

3. Student participants expect their college experience to facilitate the attainment of their personal, educational and career goals.

4. Student participants respond well to a high touch environment and approach to learning including: friendliness of staff, helpfulness of instructors and a wide range of support services.

5. Student participants want more communications about events and activities on campus, as well as more information on the various services available.

6. Student participants appreciate the support they receive through services and the interest and concern in their success they receive from faculty and staff. These expressions of support motivate them.

7. Student participants believe that college provides the opportunity for self-discovery and self-actualization. Consequently, they expect to have access to a variety of classes, programs and services that will facilitate this process.

8. Student participants expect their college experience to provide: 1) Quality of Instructional Component, 2) Availability of Resources, and 3) Environment Conducive to Learning.

9. When asked why they picked Skyline, most said that it was close to home and that they had heard Skyline College was small and not as crowded as other campuses in the area. Very few students had any strong impressions of Skyline prior to coming to the college.

10. When asked why they were attending college, the overwhelming response was to improve their opportunities for a good job. The other two primary reasons were to gain confidence, and because education was a family value.

11. Most of the focus group participants had heard about or experienced City College of San Francisco, College of San Mateo, Cañada College, Foothill College and De Anza College, and had definite opinions and perceptions about each college.

12. Students responded most positively to college schedules that were comparatively thick and to those schedules with images that depicted variety and options.

13. Students who participated in the focus group study responded well to images that showed a wide range of possibilities which translated into their desire for self-actualization and self-discovery.

14. Images that showed students interacting with staff and faculty in modern facilities (i.e., up-to-date labs and equipment) were appealing to most student participants because of their strong desire and expectation to receive this type of support and individualized attention in a serious and well-equipped academic setting.

15. Student participants responded positively to images of diverse students, but indicated that they did not like those images of people posing because it looked too contrived. Additionally, they preferred the images of diversity that reflected diversity of ethnicity

OVERVIEW

The purpose of this focus group study is to provide information for the development of the marketing plan for the Fresh Look Project. This focus group study was used to assess the value propositions and perceptions of students at Skyline College. The information from the focus group study will be used to inform marketing and communications efforts as well as to inform program and services decisions.

Students were recruited on campus during peak class hours and asked to complete an application if they were interested in participating in the focus group study. In order to achieve some randomization, over 200 applications were collected. Participants were selected according to certain demographic characteristics (i.e., day and evening class takers, education goal, age and ethnicity) so that they would reflect the characteristics of the college as a whole. However, because the sample was largely a convenience sample and not a true random sample with statistically significant levels of confidence, the opinions and perceptions may or may not be representative of the opinions of the entire primary and secondary market segment. Nevertheless, the focus group study has helped to determine patterns which can be validated through previous as well as follow up research (i.e., Faces of the Future Survey 2003). Participants were divided into seve focus group sessions, and each participant received a co-payment of $50 plus a meal or snack. The focus group sessions ran on October 4th and 5th from 4-6 p.m. and 6-8 p.m. and on October 11th at 12-2 p.m. and 4-6 p.m. and 6-8 p.m. at the Ecker and Associates research facility in South San Francisco. The Office of Planning, Research and Institutional Effectiveness compiled the results and shared them with college constituencies at the end of October, then with the marketing consultants (Mission Minded) to inform their marketing planning efforts.

PARTICIPANT PROFILE

Who are the focus group student participants?

The focus groups consisted of sixty-two students from across the college recruited during peak hours for morning, afternoon and evening classes, in the quad, in front of the Learning Center and at the coffee bar in front of the theater. Over two-hundred applications of interest were collected and, of those, eighty-four students were selected to fill the seven focus group sessions. The student participants varied in age, ethnicity, education goal, enrollment status and interests. Half of the students were part-time, and about one-third of them were day-time only students while 34% were both day and evening, and 35% were evening only students. Seventy-six
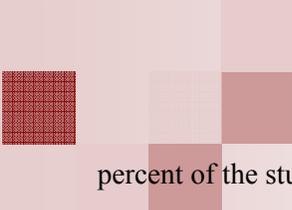
percent of the student participants were between the ages of 17-28, while 7% were 29-39, and the remaining 7% were forty or older. Approximately 15% of the student participants have been at Skyline for less than one year, while 63% have been at Skyline for two to four semesters, and the remaining 22% for five semesters or more. The majority of the student participants were award- seeking with or without transfer (79%), while the other student participants were taking classes to upgrade their current job skills, for personal enjoyment or were undecided. The student participants are pursuing a wide variety of majors and areas of interest including: engineering, nursing, bio tech, business, anthropology, criminal justice, physical education, biology, psychology, computer science, communications and art . While the majority of student participants have attended only Skyline College, about 44% of the student participants have attended or are concurrently attending another college or university including:

- City College of San Francisco
- College of San Mateo
- Foothill College
- Cañada College
- Santa Monica College
- Contra Costa College
- Chabot College
- Laney College
- Sacramento City College
- University of the Philippines
- Cal State University Northridge
- Sonoma State University
- UC Berkeley
- San Francisco State University

Why did they decide to go to college?

When asked why they decided to go to college, students revealed a number of common themes.

<u>Pathway to Success</u>. The overwhelming response to this question was to improve their opportunities for a good job. The student participants believed that education is a path to success in life. They believed it is the means to a better job and a brighter future. Student participants agreed that a college degree would help them achieve their goal of a more comfortable lifestyle. A number of student participants shared that they had been working
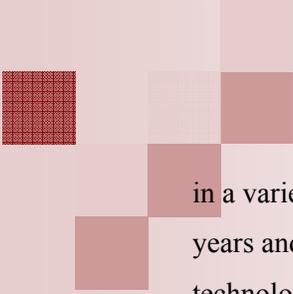
in a variety of industries (i.e., airline, technology and civil engineering) for a number of years and had gotten laid off one or more times as a result of the downturn in the technology industry and the impact of the 9/11 terrorist attacks. They returned to college because they believed that going back to school for retraining and/or to find a new career path was their best strategy for staying employed in their field of interest.

Esteem. Student participants commented on the confidence and esteem they have gained from their college experience. Several student participants who were reentry students told about their uncertainty of returning to college after raising a family or being out of school for a number years. They claimed that their motivation for returning to college was largely due to their decision to improve their self-esteem and be a role-model for their family.

Family Values. Many of the student participants also said that education is a family value and that their families encouraged and even expected them to go to college. A number of student participants indicated they were first generation college students. These student participants expressed a strong sense of family obligation but noted that their commitment to getting a good education was as much a commitment to family as it was to personally fulfilling a dream of theirs.

Student Participant Quotes:

 "My family is very educated and professional from the Philippines. When we migrated here it was difficult to see my mom struggle with two jobs. I decided that I needed to go back to school to get a good job and reach my potential. My boss was very encouraging. I joined a club and started really loving Skyline."

"I thought for a long time it was too late for me to go to college. For me it's like fulfilling a dream."

ACCESS

How do you usually learn about courses, programs and services at Skyline?

When asked to recall how they usually heard or learned about course and program offerings and services at Skyline, the answers were mixed. There was no consistency to their responses which may indicate a lack of awareness of the array of programs and services available. About one-third of the student participants said they received information from their counselors. However, when
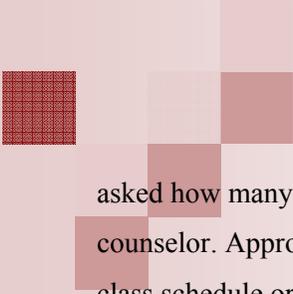
asked how many sought out counselors, only about half responded that they had met with a counselor. Approximately one-quarter of the students said they got their information from the class schedule or the student handbook. A number of students mentioned reading about information on posted fliers but that it was difficult to find current and relevant information on these postings. While students commented on the benefit and usefulness of Websmart, they did not make much mention of other aspects of the Skyline website. Other students agreed that word of mouth (e.g. family, friends and other students/classmates) was their best source of information. Most of the student participants agreed that they would like to see more communications on events and activities on campus, as well as information on the various services available.

What are some of the support services you have used or know about on campus and describe your experience in using these services.

Student participants were asked to talk about the student support services that they have used and knew about at Skyline College. The majority of student participants mentioned TLC-The Learning Center. They all agreed that their experience in the tutoring center had been very positive because it was easy to use, the tutors were knowledgeable, they had access to tutors on a variety of subjects, and computers were readily available. Many of the student participants also talked about their knowledge of and experience with the MESA program. Most agreed that the program was very useful and that the staff and tutors were very helpful. About half of the student participants talked about the counseling services and their mixed positive and negative experiences with counselors. Some agreed that the counselors were very helpful and knowledgeable, while others said they were not.

 Other services and program-type services mentioned, although inconsistently, were as follows:
- Library
- Health Center
- Career Center
- Transfer Center
- Financial Aid
- EOPS
- Women In Transition Program
- Honors Transfer Program
- Puente

Some comments were made about the lack of advertising for these services. There was agreement in one session that the offices where these services were housed were not clearly marked and therefore difficult to find. Students in each group were interested in hearing about the various services on campus and particularly about those they had not accessed. Overall, student participants expressed great appreciation for these services and were pleased with the variety of resources and the level of support and friendliness they received from the staff.

Student Participant Quotes:
"The EOPS program helps students in financial need. The counselors are a great help. The services helped me as a re-entry student."

"The librarian is a lifesaver. They find the book and help you research the information."

"I didn't know how to use the free money I got from financial aid. They explained how to fill out the application and withdraw funds."

What do you usually do with your class schedule once you have decided on classes?
Student participants were asked about their use of the class schedule. The majority of student participants said that they kept their schedule throughout the semester as a reference or source of information. A few students said that they kept their schedules beyond the coordinating semester so that they could continue to track their education plan, while others said that they discarded their schedules altogether and knew that they could pick up another schedule on campus if they needed another one.

URBAN MYTHS
What do they think of the competition?
Student participants were asked about colleges in the area they have heard about and how they perceived these colleges. Most student participants had heard about or experienced City College of San Francisco, College of San Mateo, Cañada College, Foothill College and De Anza College. Their perceptions of these colleges are as follows:

> City College of San Francisco: Crowded campus with a lot of rowdy students who are largely young, immature and don't take their academic studies seriously. The campus is not safe and has a high crime rate. Parking is extremely difficult and inaccessible. The

services are unreliable and the lines for registration are very long. The instructors in general are "harder" than Skyline instructors, but not nearly as helpful nor accessible. The student-teacher ratio is very high which makes it hard to find teachers who care about the students. There is a wide selection of classes, and their football, science, film and culinary arts programs are excellent. They also have a wonderful library.

<u>College of San Mateo</u>: Less diverse than Skyline with a lot of young students who like to smoke. This is a hang out for "slackers." The weather is nice and the campus is large and pretty. It is a livelier campus than Skyline with more social activities and events. Parking is inconvenient because you have to walk a long distance to get from the parking lot to class. The student-teacher ratio is very high. There is a broader range of classes and programs and their astronomy, music, communications and nursing programs are excellent.

<u>Cañada College</u>: Small, quiet campus on a hill with modern facilities. Summers are hot with no air conditioned buildings. Good programs in team sports and engineering.

<u>Foothill College</u>: A good school that serves a high socio-economic group of students. They have a high transfer rate and students receive a lot of assistance with all of their education goals. Students are serious and academically oriented and possibly better prepared when they go to college. Instructors are good and well qualified. The school is built on hills, which makes it very difficult to navigate and the parking is very inconvenient.

<u>De Anza College</u>: A lot of transfer students because they have a very good transfer program. They are on the quarter system with shorter-length classes.

Why did they choose Skyline?

About half of the student participants said that Skyline College was their first choice when deciding on a college. The other half said that Skyline was an alternate choice after considering their options of going to a CSU or UC first, or after attending another college or university. When asked why they picked Skyline, most said that it was close to home and that they had heard Skyline was small and not as crowded as other campuses in the area. Very few students had any strong impressions of Skyline prior to coming to the college except that many thought it might have a similar atmosphere to high school (e.g. immature students and instructors who are not passionate about teaching or care about the students). In addition, they knew that college was a

cheap option for higher education and that it offered a stepping stone to transfer or to a new career path.

Student Participant Quotes:

 "I thought it would be a good place to spend time figuring out what to study."

"I thought I wouldn't find serious mature students at Skyline but I have."

VALUES & EXPECTATIONS

What is most important in their educational experience?

The student participants were asked to talk about the most important aspects of their educational experience at Skyline College. A number of student participants commented on the importance of a college education as a way in which to excel in life and to achieve their long and short-term goals (i.e., educational and job-related goals). For many, the college experience was a means to an end. Subsequently, they expected their college experience at Skyline to facilitate their achievement and sense of accomplishment but not without challenges.

A second important aspect of their educational experience at Skyline was the knowledge they gained. They believed that "knowledge is power" and through their educational experience they expect to gain a great depth and breadth of knowledge that would help them make informed decisions in life. Moreover, they expected that their educational experience would prepare them for the world and expected that what they learn would be applicable to real life situations. They believed that with the increased knowledge they expected to gain from their educational experience, they would gain more respect from their peers and society at large.

A third important aspect of their educational experience had to do with becoming well-rounded individuals. Many student participants commented on the importance of having access to a variety of subjects outside of their majors and areas of interest and the freedom to choose their course or program of study. They believed that it was important and highly desirable to be exposed to new topics, concepts and activities that they may never have considered before attending college. They also believed that it was important to experience interactions with a diverse college community (i.e., other students, faculty and staff).
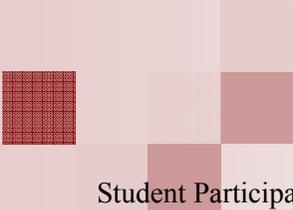
Student Participant Quotes:

"I want to be involved in personally enriching experiences and be a better person overall. Learn things that I can take with me."

"I don't just want to study things for my major. I want to be there and take anything that interests me and will help me grow and learn."

"School allows you to be on top of your game. I see friends who aren't going to college are not getting anywhere and have no goals. College allows you to make conscious decisions about your own life."

What qualities do they look for in a college?

Students were asked to describe their expectations of a college or school. They described a number of qualities that were based on their experiences at Skyline and at other colleges and universities. Their top three expectations fell into three categories: 1) Quality of Instructional Component, 2) Availability of Resources, and 3) Environment Conducive to Learning.

1. Quality of Instructional Component. The student participants consistently commented on the importance of working with their instructors and counselors to achieve their goals. They stated that they have learned to appreciate the importance of a supportive relationship with their instructors and realized the significance of working together. Student participants also commented that they expected to experience instructors who were passionate about what they taught, who were approachable, available to help them when needed and who cared about the students learning. They also expected a wide variety of course offerings that would help to expand their horizons, promote their self discovery and facilitate their career and other life choices. They also expected to be challenged intellectually and expected their instructors to take their academic success as seriously as they did.

2. Availability of Resources. The student participants commented on their expectation of resources in a number of areas. They expected and valued the use and availability of support services such as a comprehensive library, a tutoring center and computer labs. They expected and valued the use and availability of financial aid. They expected to find support services that were specific to their needs such as the MESA Program, the Honors Transfer Program and Puente. They expected that these services would help to establish a

common bond with other students and thereby facilitate friendships and connectedness to the learning community. The student participants valued the use of up-to-date equipment and technology and expected the college to provide these in preparation for other life experiences.

3. Environment Conducive to Learning. Student participants agreed that an atmosphere with few (social) distractions was most conducive to academic success. They preferred a small campus to a large campus and expected low student teacher ratios. They expected a campus that had sufficient and convenient parking and was easily accessible. They expected a safe environment and one that was casual with a laid back atmosphere. Student participants commented frequently on the lack of social events and activities at Skyline and although they preferred an atmosphere with few distractions and one with mature serious-minded students, most agreed that having the full college experience meant having access to a variety of cultural and social events and activities on campus. The single most common thread in all of the comments around environment pertained to diversity. The student participants valued a college that has students, faculty and staff who are ethnically and socially diverse. They appreciated the differences and believed that it made their college experience an infinitely richer experience. Finally, they expected to receive the help they need from a friendly and welcoming staff.

Student Participant Quotes:

"Skyline offers the opportunity to develop familial type relationships."

What expectations would they have of these different colleges based on the cover images of their schedules?

The student participants were provided with a variety of schedules of California community colleges and asked to describe their impressions of each college based on the cover images. They were then asked whether or not those images appealed to them and why. The images on the cover of the schedules ranged from very academic with portrayals of technology, science and math and students studying in labs, to very non-academic with images of girls' volleyball teams, theater arts and groups of students having fun posing in front of a school building. Other images included abstract paintings and photographs of natural settings such as a beach and a forest. Overall, student participants did not respond well to single images such as the girls' sports team or the beach. Nor did they respond well to images that were non-academic or abstract.

The most positive responses were elicited by the thicker schedules and to those schedules with images that depicted variety and options.

Consistent with their values and expectations, student participants responded well to college images that showed a wide range of possibilities which translated into their desire for self-actualization and self-discovery. Images of a mix of academic and vocational programs, as well as support services and campus activities drew strong positive responses. In addition, images that showed students interacting with staff and faculty in modern facilities (i.e., up-to-date labs and equipment) were appealing to most student participants because of their strong desire and expectation to receive this type of support and individualized attention in a serious and well-equipped academic setting. Student participants also responded positively to images of diverse students, but indicated that they did not like those images of people posing because it looked too contrived. Additionally, they preferred the images of diversity that reflected diversity of ethnicity as well as diversity of age, lifestyle and interests. They also liked covers that included information about campus diversity and cultural events. Although students liked the images of students enjoying campus activities and socializing, for the most part they agreed that colleges that portrayed images of fun with little or no emphasis on academics were not appealing. This was consistent with their serious drive and commitment to education as a stepping stone to a better way of life. It also explained their strong positive reaction to images of students with graduation regalia signifying accomplishment and a means to an end.

Finally, student participants had mixed reaction to one image of trees. Although they agreed that it portrayed a campus that is quiet, tranquil and conducive to studying, they did not like the abstractness of the image. They could not get a sense from the image as to whether it was a college where serious-minded students might attend.

PERSPECTIVES

Which words do they think of when they think of Skyline College?

To further explore the student participants' image of Skyline College, they were asked to consider their impressions and experiences at Skyline College. They were then given several minutes to record words or phrases that came to mind as they thought about Skyline College. Afterwards, they were asked to share their impressions. Their comments fell into five logical categories:
1) Environment, 2) Faculty, 3) Staff and Services, 4) Students, and 5) Programs.

The first category, Environment, received the greatest number of comments and impressions. The top six words and phrases that student participants used related to this category were as follows:

Environment

1. Quiet, serious and easy to stay focused
2. Small, intimate and cozy
3. Foggy and cold
4. Friendly, warm and welcoming
5. Beautiful natural surroundings with great vistas and fresh air
6. Caring, supportive and pro-students

The next category, Faculty, received the second greatest number of comments and impressions. The top five words and phrases that student participants used related to this category were as follows:

Faculty

1. Motivating and encouraging
2. Helpful and available
3. Interested in students' success
4. Knowledgeable, well-qualified and professional
5. Approachable and personable

The third category, Staff and Services, received a relatively large number of comments and impressions. The top five words and phrases that student participants used related to this category were as follows:

1. A lot of great learning resources
2. Opportunities to join clubs
3. Special assistance for re-entry students
4. User-friendly services
5. Helpful, friendly, supportive staff

The fourth category, Students, received a moderate number of comments and impressions. The top five words and phrases that student participants used related to this category were as follows:

1. Diverse
2. Serious and mature
3. Successful
4. Willing to help, not competitive
5. Friendly

The fifth category, Programs, received the fewest number of comments and impressions. The top five words and phrases that student participants used related to this category were as follows:
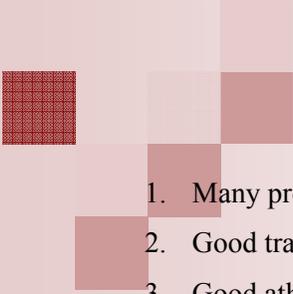
1. Many programs and courses to choose from
2. Good transfer program
3. Good athletics program
4. Challenging and fun
5. Trademark programs: Auto Tech, Bio Tech and Cosmetology

MEETING NEEDS AND EXPECTATIONS

Based on the images that student participants shared, they had an impression of Skyline that was consistent with many of their values and expectations. Student participants were serious about their academic endeavors and preferred an environment that is conducive to learning: One that offered few distractions so that they could stay focused, and one in which faculty, staff and services supported their learning so that they would have a good chance at being successful. Consequently, they believed that the weather, the landscape, the caring and supportive faculty and staff and the mature, serious-minded students met their needs and their expectations. They were delighted with the qualifications of the faculty and believed that Skyline offered a high quality of learning with several reputable programs. They were also pleased that the faculty were readily available and that communication with faculty was relatively easy. They had the impression that Skyline offered a wide variety of classes which helped them in determining a career/life path and achieving their educational goals. Student participants were also impressed by the variety of learning support services available (i.e., tutoring centers) and grateful for the attention they received for their particular needs (i.e., re-entry programs and financial aid services). Student participants viewed the college as a wonderfully diverse community of learners. They appreciated the varying perspectives of their peers and resonated with the cultural differences. They valued relationships and relationship building and because of this they were positively impressed by the friendly, non-competitive nature of their peers.

While the majority of images and impressions were favorable, there were a number of comments about the inconvenience of the construction. About one-quarter of the student participants knew about the various construction projects and that a new student center was being built. The majority of students did not know what was being built. There impression was merely of the discomfort it was creating. In addition, many student participants commented on the lack of student activities and opportunities to socialize. Many of these students have had the opportunity to attend or visit another college where student activities in the quad were a regular part of the

educational experience. While they agreed that they preferred a quiet, studious environment, they would like to experience a more socially active campus environment.

Participant Quotes

"I've had great teachers who instill a sense of responsibility so you really can't slack off. That's helped me a lot."

"Students are mature and a good support system. I've made friends with people not my own age. It's been a good experience for me."

"I was ready to experience average and I've been pleasantly surprised. The teachers are great. A few burn out teachers but mostly good."

"Skyline is a place to restart your education. You get a feel for college life and independence."

"Skyline has exposed me to the real world. I learned how to prioritize. It's a very welcoming environment."

"Skyline has a lot of diversity. You get a chance to connect with different people from different cultures."

"I transferred to State and now I'm back. Skyline has more intimacy. You have the opportunity to bond with faculty and other students. It gives you a strong base to continue on and the confidence you need to progress."

CONCLUSIONS

Student participants expressed a number of values and expectations related to their post-secondary educational experience at Skyline and other institutions including:

1. Diversity Appreciation. Student participants value the interactions and differing perspectives of a diverse learning community.
2. Knowledge Gain. Student participants expect to gain knowledge, skills and abilities that will prepare them for life and help them to make informed decisions.

3. Goal Attainment. Student participants expect their college experience to facilitate the attainment of their personal, educational and career goals.

4. High Touch. Student participants respond well to a high touch environment and approach to learning including: friendliness of staff, helpfulness of instructors and a wide range of support services.

5. Connectedness. Student participants want more communications about events and activities on campus, as well as more information on the various services available.

6. Support. Student participants appreciate the support they receive through services and the interest and concern in their success they receive from faculty and staff. These expressions of support motivate them.

7. Access. Student participants believe that college provides the opportunity for self-discovery and self-actualization. Consequently, they expect to have access to a variety of classes, programs and services that will facilitate this process.

IMPLICATIONS AND THOUGHT POINTS

The college can increase its overall effectiveness by offering programs, courses, support services, communications and marketing that are closely aligned to students' values and expectations.

Branding

What image do we want to portray in the community?

Which programs, services and type of environment do we want to be known for?

What makes us unique and sets us apart from other colleges in the area?

Learning Environment

What approach to learning do we want to take (e.g. modes of delivery, learning communities and accelerated programs)?

Which cultural and social activities do we want to provide?

Which programs and courses do we want to offer?

Which support services do we want to promote?

What type of facilities do we want to provide (e.g. equipment, technology and learning centers)

Communications

How can we best communicate with our students about the various programs, services and activities?

How can we best communicate with the community?
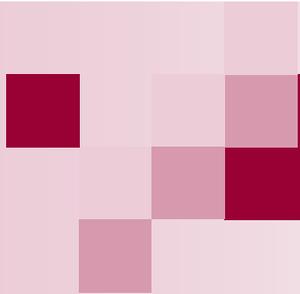
Student Campus Climate Survey Executive Summary

Spring 2006

Prepared by:

Office of Planning, Research & Institutional Effectiveness

Skyline College

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Highlight of the Findings

- Students reported that counseling services were the most important to them, while student support services in general were the least important. Moreover, students were most satisfied with the registration process and least satisfied with safety and security.

- Academic advisors' knowledge about transfer requirements ranked highest in both importance and satisfaction on the Academic Advising and Counseling scale. Consistent with the focus group study from fall 2005, students believed that counseling services are critical to their success and an important element to the college experience. Consequently, students commented they would like more counselors available and more convenient appointment times.

- The adequacy of library resources and services ranked highest on both importance and satisfaction on the Academic Services scale. Students commented that they are pleased to have access to computers and labs. However, the availability of up-to-date equipment in labs had the largest performance gap, indicating that the college fell short of students' expectations in this area.

- The knowledge of admissions staff ranked highest in both importance and satisfaction on the Admissions and Financial Aid scale. However, there was a relatively large performance gap under the adequacy of financial aid, which was one of the top three factors students selected that influenced their decision to enroll.

- The caring and helpfulness of staff and enjoyable college experience received high scores on satisfaction. Similar to the results from the focus group study of fall 2005, many students commented that they liked the campus because it was small, cozy and conducive to learning. On the other hand, students said that the current building construction was a distraction and an inconvenience and made for an unpleasant atmosphere.

- The adequacy of career services ranked first on importance and second on satisfaction on the Campus Support Services scale. The availability of child care facilities had the smallest performance gap in the survey, indicating that the college met students' expectations in this area.

- The question which asked about fair and unbiased treatment of the students by faculty ranked highest in both importance and satisfaction. However, students expressed and interest in having more opportunities available to voice their opinions and concerns.

- Students ranked the quality of instruction highest on both importance and satisfaction on the Instructional Effectiveness scale. Students commented that the faculty are generally very knowledgeable, friendly, helpful and approachable and that they are truly concerned about students' success.

- Early notification of poor performance in class had one of the largest performance gaps in the survey, suggesting that students would like to know about their progress early enough in the semester to improve their performance.

- The convenience of class times ranked highest on importance on the Registration Effectiveness scale, but received the second to lowest score on satisfaction, creating a

relatively large performance gap. Yet, students said that it was much easier to get into classes at Skyline than at other colleges in the area.

- The Safety and Security scale ranked high on importance. However, the adequacy of student parking and the lighting in parking lots had the two largest performance gaps in the survey. Comments revealed that students would like more security officers patrolling the campus and parking lots, particularly in the evenings.

- The adequacy of smoking restrictions on campus had one of the largest gaps on the survey and numerous comments indicated that students were dissatisfied with the amount of smoking on campus.

- Factors of greatest importance in the decision to enroll at Skyline College were cost, academic reputation, and financial aid. Factors of least importance or influence were the opportunity to play sports, campus appearance, and recommendations by family and friends.

- The college experience at Skyline exceeded the expectations of 42% of respondents, while 70% were satisfied with their experience at the college thus far, and 63% said that if they had to do it over, they would probably or definitely enroll again.

- Students believed that the college was responsive to the diverse needs of its students. Many comments noted that the college offered something for everyone and that the convenience of the class schedule and variety of classes made it possible for the students to explore options they might not have explored otherwise.
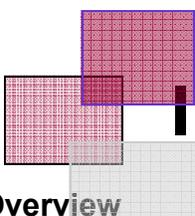
Introduction

Overview

Skyline College administered a student perception survey to a representative sample of students during the first part of the spring 2006 semester. The survey provided information for the accreditation self-study process (site visit scheduled for fall 2007), as well as other college-wide assessment and planning initiatives including the Education and Facilities Master Plan. The self-study process requires an assessment of institutional performance in terms of student learning outcomes, quality of services and programs and effectiveness of operations with supporting evidence in each of these areas. One source of evidence is a campus climate study in which students provide feedback on programs, services and the learning environment. This survey provided partial evidence needed for the self-study.

It should be noted that during the administration of the survey the college was undergoing major campus construction (e.g., new buildings and building renovations). The disruption of normal academic life created by these major construction projects at Skyline may have influenced the students' perceptions and opinions.

Purpose

The purpose of this survey study was to measure current student attitudes and perceptions toward Skyline College's programs, services and learning environment. The results from the survey will be used to inform responses to the accreditation standards and may be used for planning and improvement efforts. The survey will also be useful for establishing benchmarks for future studies and for evaluating the college's mission, goals and strategies.

Sample Design

In order to contain costs and to extract representative information that could be inferred back to the entire population of students, a stratified random sample was used to build the sampling framework. The sample size was based on a 95% confidence level at a $\pm$5% confidence interval (approximately 1,200 survey respondents). The sampling framework included randomly selected classes from a variety of disciplines stratified by day and evening class times. Over-sampling was employed in order to compensate for the expected 70% response rate. Of the 60 classes randomly chosen, 57 participated, and 1,106 surveys were completed. The final response rate was 92%.

Instrumentation

In order to benchmark performance against other colleges, the Noel-Levitz *Student Satisfaction Inventory* was used. This instrument used a dual perception scale, measuring both satisfaction and importance. The instrument contained the following eleven scales: Academic Advising and Counseling, Academic Services, Admissions and Financial Aid, Campus Climate, Campus Support Services, Concern for the Individual, Instructional Effectiveness, Registration Effectiveness, Safety and Security, Service Excellence, and Student Centeredness. Additionally, the survey measured overall student satisfaction, the college's responsiveness to the diversity of its students, factors that influenced student enrollment, ten customized items which the college created, and open-ended comments.

Methodology

In order to achieve representative and timely information on the entire population of students while containing costs, the data collection methodology selected for this survey study was a scannable (paper and pencil) survey that was distributed during one class period.

Implementation

Communications: All of the shared governance groups, the college leadership, and management were informed and connected to the process through continuous communication as follows:

1. Review and selection of the instrument.
2. Electronic pre-notifications to students, staff and faculty.
3. Executive summary report of results and oral briefings.

Administration: The surveys were administered during the last week of February so that reports could be distributed during the first week of May. The Office of Planning, Research and Institutional Effectiveness (OPRIE) bundled and distributed the surveys along with instructions and return envelopes to the randomly selected instructors, who administered the survey during one class period. The instructor returned the completed surveys in a sealed envelope to the division, from whom OPRIE collected them for processing.

Respondent Profile

The survey respondents were fairly representative of Skyline College's student body. The majority of survey respondents were female (56%) and 19 to 24 years old (52%). The survey respondents were Asian/Pacific Islander (42%), Caucasian/White (20%), Hispanic (16%), Black (2%) and other (20%). Thirty-seven percent of respondents were first year students, and 33% were second year students. About half were transfer-seeking (49%), and a quarter of the respondents were pursuing an associate's degree (23%). Most of the respondents were employed either full-time (29%) or part-time (43%). The number of day classes (73%) and full-time students (56%) that were surveyed were slightly more than the college-wide average.

Interpreting the Results

The results from the survey yielded three different scores: 1) Importance, 2) Satisfaction, and 3) Performance gap (importance score minus satisfaction score). The importance score reflected student perception on the significance of an item, while the satisfaction score reflected student opinion about the quality of a given item. Using a seven-point Likert scale, a higher score on importance indicated greater significance to the student, and therefore a stronger expectation. Similarly, a higher score on satisfaction indicated a more favorable opinion on the particular item. The performance gap reflected how well the college met students' expectations. For example, a small performance gap indicated that the college met students' expectations. A large performance gap indicated that the college did not meet students' expectations. A negative performance gap indicated that the college exceeded students' expectations.

Importance and satisfaction scores were juxtaposed in order to pinpoint strengths and opportunities. Items containing high importance and high satisfaction ratings represented strengths that the college should highlight and continue to strengthen. Items containing high importance and low satisfaction ratings pinpointed areas in need of immediate

improvement. Items with low importance and high satisfaction ratings suggested areas where it would be beneficial to redirect resources. Items containing low importance and low satisfaction ratings suggested areas that need to be reexamined as areas of low priority for the college.

For the purpose of discussion and tracking trends, the following internal benchmarks were suggested for scale satisfaction and performance gap ratings:
- Scale Satisfaction: ≥ 5.03
- Scale Performance Gap: ≤ 1.01

In addition to the internal benchmarks found in the survey, comparisons and competitive benchmarking were performed between Skyline College's student responses and responses of students from other community colleges in California who have taken the Noel-Levitz Student Satisfaction Inventory within the previous five years (i.e., Antelope Valley College, Bakersfield College, Cerritos College, Cerro Coso Community College, College of the Siskiyous, Cuesta College, Cypress College, El Camino College, Feather River Community College District, Long Beach City College, Los Angeles Valley College, Los Rios Community College, Palo Verde College, Palomar College, Rio Hondo College, Saddleback College, San Bernardino Valley College, Southwestern College, Taft College, and Victor Valley College).

Students wrote nearly 1,600 individual comments in response to the two open-ended questions (see Appendix B-Sample of Verbatim Comments). In order to summarize the comments and provide additional information and explanation of the quantitative results from the survey, a content analysis was conducted. The content analysis employed the inter-coder reliability method. A systematic random sample of comments were first selected then coded by two readers in order to extract common themes as they related to the survey. Comments were then grouped by themes and summarized to capture the essence of the group of comments and to note salient points. These summaries can be found in the narrative report under each scale and were generally representative of the entire pool of comments.

How Well Are We Meeting Student Expectations?

The survey items were grouped into eleven scales. Importance scores for the scales ranged from 6.17 (Academic Advising and Counseling) to 5.46 (Campus Support Services). Satisfaction scores for the scales ranged from 5.31 (Registration Effectiveness) to 4.58 (Safety and Security). Performance gaps for the scales ranged from 1.48 (Safety and Security) to .70 (Campus Support Services).

Academic Advising and Counseling ranked highest on importance (6.17), but ranked sixth in overall satisfaction (5.02). Tied for second highest in overall importance with an average score of 6.13 were Instructional Effectiveness, which ranked third on satisfaction (5.12), and Registration Effectiveness, which ranked highest on satisfaction (5.21). Campus Support Services ranked lowest on importance (5.46) and second to lowest on satisfaction (4.76).

Academic Services ranked second highest in overall satisfaction (5.21) and tied for fourth on importance (6.06). Safety and Security ranked lowest in overall satisfaction (4.58), but tied for fourth on importance (6.06).

Survey Scales

Legend: ☐ Average Importance ■ Average Satisfaction
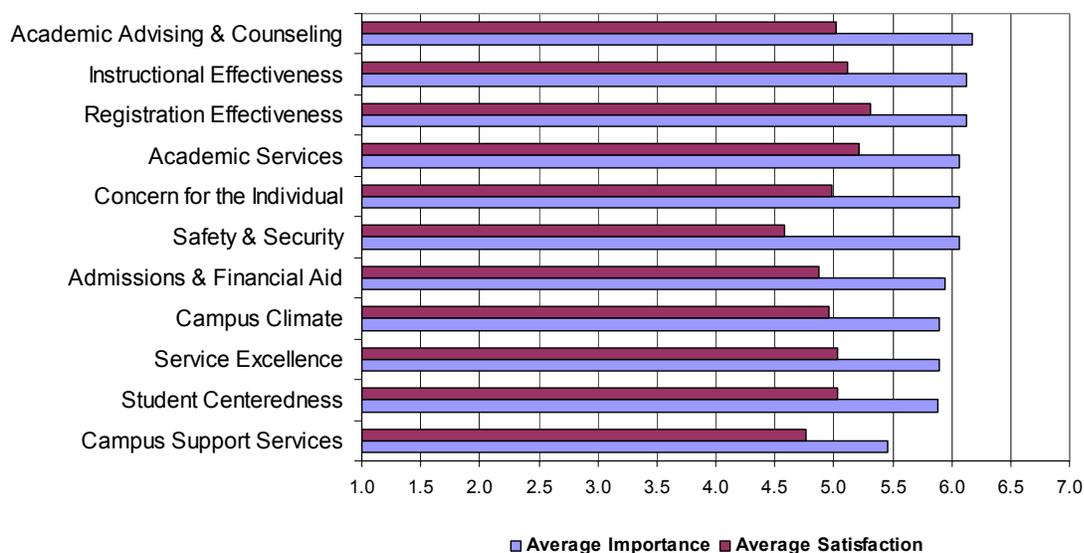
Overall Satisfaction

Three items on the survey addressed the students' overall satisfaction with their experience at Skyline College. These items provided a bottom-line summary of student perceptions.

The first item assessed how well the students' experience at Skyline College met their expectation. Forty-two percent of respondents said that their experience was better, quite a bit better, or much better than expected. The second item assessed the students' overall satisfaction with their experience thus far. Seventy percent of respondents said that they were somewhat satisfied to very satisfied. The third item assessed whether the students would enroll at the college if they could do it over again. Sixty-three percent said they probably or definitely would enroll again.

96. So far, how has your college experience met your expectations?

2%	2%	9%	47%	21%	11%	10%
Much worse than expected	Quite a bit worse than expected	Worse than expected	About expected	Better than expected	Quite a bit better than expected	Much better than expected

97. Rate your overall satisfaction with your experience here thus far.

1%	3%	7%	18%	22%	35%	13%
Not satisfied at all	Not very satisfied	Somewhat dissatisfied	Neutral	Somewhat satisfied	Satisfied	Very satisfied

98. All in all, if you had it to do over again, would you enroll here?

2%	4%	4%	12%	14%	31%	32%
Definitely not	Probably not	Maybe not	I don't know	Maybe yes	Probably yes	Definitely yes
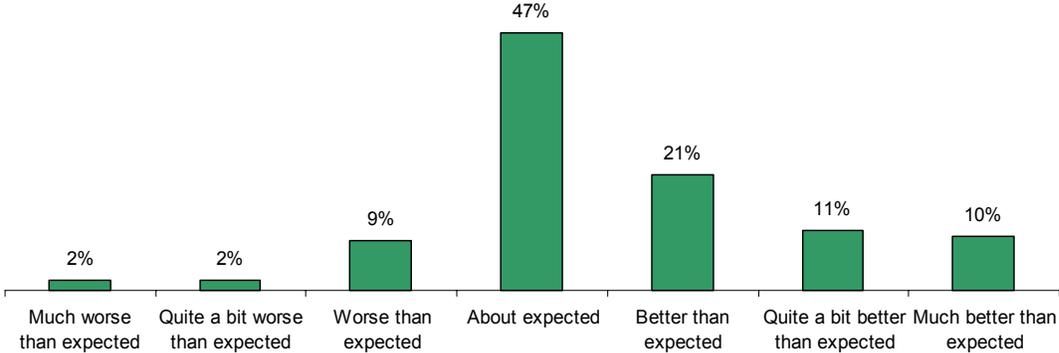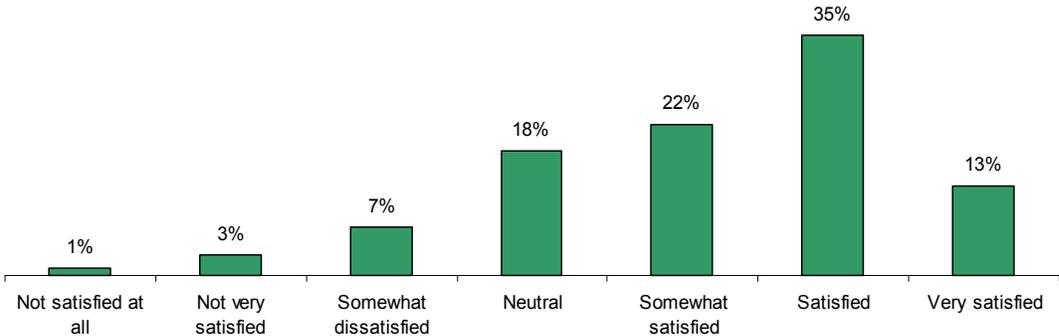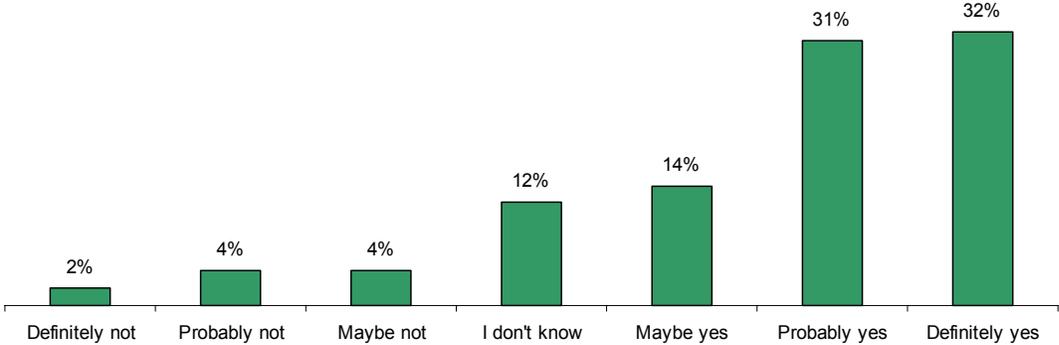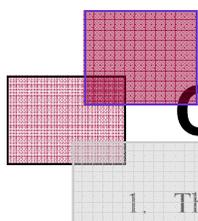
Conclusions

1. The **Academic Advising and Counseling** scale ranked highest on importance, implying that students believed counseling services were critical to their learning experience and success. This scale correlated to several components of the WASC/ACCJC accreditation standards which assess the quality of support services (i.e., II.B.1 and II.B.c). Students rated the items in this scale relatively high on satisfaction, indicating that they believed that Skyline counselors were knowledgeable about transfer and program requirements and were approachable. These sentiments were validated through the related comments which suggested that students were generally pleased with the level of services provided by the counseling department and that Skyline met their expectation. The only notable complaint was the lack of counselors and the long wait or difficulty obtaining a convenient appointment with a counselor. These results were consistent with the focus group study conducted in fall 2005 which found that Skyline students were serious about their learning outcomes and recognized the importance of counseling services.

2. The **Academic Services** scale included questions regarding the library, tutoring services and learning labs, ranked in the top five on importance. This is an indication that students believed this was an area that supported their learning success. The items in this scale also correlated to a number of components in the accreditation standards, particularly those components that assess the quality and adequacy of support services as well as the technology, laboratories, and equipment (i.e., II.B.1, II.C.1, III.C.1.c and III.B.1.b). This scale also rated second highest on satisfaction. The performance gaps between importance and satisfaction ranged from .64 to 1.15, some of the smallest gaps found in the survey. This suggested that the college met students' expectations in this area. Students were particularly satisfied with the usefulness of the library and the helpfulness of the staff, as well as the value and positive benefits of tutoring services. On the other hand, the importance and satisfaction ratings as well as the comments regarding the laboratories and lab equipment indicated that Skyline fell short of students' expectations in this area.

3. The **Admissions and Financial Aid** scale captured student opinion toward how effectively Skyline enrolled students and whether financial aid was adequate. This scale correlated to a few components in the WASC/ACCJC accreditation standards that pertain to the college's portrayal of programs and services as well as the quality of admissions and financial aid services (i.e., II.A.6.c and II.B.1) This scale ranked seventh in overall importance out of eleven scales and was ninth in overall satisfaction. These rankings were identical to the comparison group of California community colleges. The item with the largest gap between importance and satisfaction pertained to the adequacy of financial aid. Although a number of students commented that they were happy with the financial aid packages and the re-payment plans, some students commented that there was insufficient information about financial aid. This is a critical area of importance as evidenced by the survey results, from the questions which asked about factors that contributed to students' decision to enroll at Skyline. Students indicated that financial aid was one of the top three factors in their decision to enroll. However, other questions around this same topic indicated

that it was likely that many students were unaware of the financial aid packages available to them.

4. The **Campus Climate** scale ranked in the bottom five on overall importance and satisfaction. The three items that were rated highest on satisfaction were the items regarding the helpfulness of staff, the campus as a welcoming place, and how enjoyable the student's experience was. Numerous comments clarified these ratings by claiming that the small campus and cool weather made for a cozy atmosphere which was conducive to learning. These same attributes were described by students in the fall 2005 focus group study. The following items within this scale ranked high on importance and low on satisfaction: campus safety and security, helping students reach their education goal, and providing students with channels for expressing complaints. These areas were discussed in the student comments and were perceived as hindrances to a successful learning experience. Students also commented that there was insufficient information about events, activities, and clubs that would help them to stay connected to the college community. Many of the items in this scale, along with the related comments, correlated to various components in the WASC/ACCJC accreditation standards, specifically the components which assess treatment of students and the learning environment (III.A.4.c).

5. Although the **Campus Support Services** scale was ranked lowest in overall importance, the performance gaps between importance and satisfaction were relatively small (.33 to 1.04) with the majority of items falling in the lower end of the range. This is an indication that the college met and even exceeded student expectation in the area of campus support services (i.e., child care services and orientation services). Related comments were also indications that students were generally satisfied with many of the support services offered at Skyline, with particular mention of the transfer center, career services, child care center, and orientation/matriculation services. However, a number of comments indicated that there was lack of awareness and information about support services. Many of the items in this scale as well as related comments correlated to components in the WASC/ACCJC accreditation standards (i.e., II.B.1).

6. The items found in the **Concern for the Individual** scale were focused on the degree to which the faculty, staff, and college as a whole treat the student. This scale tied for fourth on importance and ranked seventh highest on satisfaction. Performance gaps ranged from .81 to 1.29, indicating that there were some areas in this scale where the college fully met students' expectations and other areas where the college partially met student expectation. More specifically, the item regarding fair and unbiased treatment by the faculty rated highest on importance as well as on satisfaction. The item regarding the college's concern for students as individuals rated high on importance but low on satisfaction. There was evidence in other parts of the survey and in the comments that this perception may in part have been due to lack of opportunities to express concerns or complaints as well as lack of information available on programs, services, and campus activities and events.

7. The **Instructional Effectiveness** scale ranked second most important overall and third highest on satisfaction with relatively small performance gap between importance and satisfaction of .82. Many of the items in this scale as well as related comments correlated to components in the WASC/ACCJC accreditation standards (i.e., II.A.1.a, II.A.2.c and III.A.4.c), specifically those items regarding the quality of

instruction, treatment of students, and meeting diverse student needs. The items in this scale that rated highest on importance and satisfaction related to faculty's concern for student success and treatment of students in an unbiased manner. The item that rated the lowest on satisfaction asked about students being alerted early in the term about their performance. The dissatisfaction in this area was echoed in a number of comments, claiming that students would like to know more about their progress early enough to do something about it. Other related comments in this scale indicated that most students were satisfied with the quality of instruction and the variety of courses and programs offered. Students believed that Skyline offered something for everyone, which allowed them to explore options they may not have considered otherwise.

8. The **Registration Effectiveness** scale also ranked second most important overall, but highest on satisfaction. The item that rated the highest on importance but lowest on satisfaction was regarding the convenience of the class schedule. Student comments in this area were conflicting. Many students commented that they were pleased with class scheduling and availability, which allowed for flexibility and choice. Many other students noted that they would like classes to be offered on more convenient days and times (e.g., Saturday classes, more evening classes, and more distance learning classes) and that many of the science classes filled up too quickly. A few of the items in this scale as well as related comments correlated to components in the WASC/ACCJC accreditation standards (i.e., II.B.1), specifically those related to the quality of support services.

9. The performance gap between overall importance and satisfaction in the **Safety and Security** scale was the largest scale gap in the survey (1.48). Students ranked this scale as the fourth most important overall and the lowest on satisfaction. The item in the scale that received the lowest on satisfaction with a high importance rating was regarding the adequacy of lighting and security in the parking lots. The comments echoed these ratings. Many students commented that they did not feel safe on campus, particularly at night, and would like better lighting and a greater presence of security staff patrolling the parking lots. A number of similar issues have surfaced as a result of the Education and Facilities Master Planning Project (EFMPP) which was being developed during the spring 2006 semester. Several items on the scale and related comments directly pertained to components in the WASC/ACCJC accreditation standards (i.e., III.B.1.b), which assess the college environment with regard to safety, security, healthfulness, and physical resources.

10. The **Service Excellence** scale ranked in the bottom five on overall importance and in the top five on overall satisfaction. The areas within this scale that rated highest on satisfaction and importance related to registration services and library services. Student comments reflected general satisfaction with the level of service provided. Students believed that the staff was knowledgeable, supportive, helpful, and caring.

11. The scale that ranked second lowest on importance was **Student Centeredness**. This scale had relatively small performance gaps between importance and satisfaction on most of the items, indicating that the college met students' expectations in this area. However, the item that rated second highest on importance rated lowest on satisfaction within this scale. This item asked whether the college was concerned about students as individuals. Comments related to this scale were somewhat mixed. Many students believed that faculty and staff cared about student success and

achievement of their educational goal, while others believed that the college staff could be more helpful.

12. The scale that asked students about how responsive the college was to varying student needs and interests, **Responsiveness to Diverse Populations**, examined these areas in terms of satisfaction only. This scale received an overall satisfaction rating of 5.18 on a seven point scale. The items that received the highest scores were regarding the college's commitment to part-time and evening students. Many comments echoed these ratings. Students commented about the convenience of attending school at night and how this allowed them to manage conflicting priorities such as school, work and family life. Many of these students also mentioned the need to have alternative instructional delivery modes (e.g., distance learning) available to them so that they could take classes at their convenience. Some students commented on the DSPS services and how these services helped them to succeed. Several other students commented that the college offered many opportunities for older, returning students, which had enriched their lives as a result. A few of the items in this scale as well as related comments correlated to components in the WASC/ACCJC accreditation standards (i.e., II.A.1.a) which assess the college's responsiveness to diverse student needs.

13. The survey included ten **Campus-Specific Items** asked about the usefulness of the college's website, the WebSMART registration system, class schedule, catalog, and student handbook. These items generally rated favorably with relatively high levels of importance. However, the item in this section that asked about the effectiveness of the smoking restrictions at Skyline rated the lowest on satisfaction. Numerous comments mentioned the need for a no smoking policy or smoking restrictions on campus. Many students believed there has been too much smoking on campus and that it was not only a health risk to those who did not smoke but made for an unpleasant environment.

14. Three items on the survey addressed **Overall Satisfaction**. The first item assessed whether the students' experience at Skyline College met their expectations. Forty-two percent of students indicated that their experience met or exceeded their expectations while an additional 47% indicated that it was about what they expected. The second item on overall satisfaction assessed students' experience thus far. Forty-nine percent of the students indicated that they were very satisfied or satisfied, and another 22% indicated that they were somewhat satisfied (70% total). The third item assessed whether the students would enroll at the college if they could do it over again. Sixty-three percent indicated they would probably or definitely enroll again. This figure was consistent with the college's average term persistence rate of 63%.

15. Students were asked to rate various **Factors in the Decision to Enroll** at Skyline. The three factors of greatest importance in their decision to enroll were cost, academic reputation, and financial aid. The three factors of least importance or influence were the opportunity to play sports, campus appearance, and recommendations by family and friends.
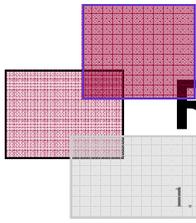
Recommendations

1. The counseling services at Skyline should be recognized as a strength to be maintained, as well as a service that is necessary in order to satisfy minimum student expectation.

2. While comments stated that students were generally pleased to have access to computers and computer labs, many students commented that the labs and lab equipment were outdated and the quality of the facilities and supplies were poor. Students also suggested in the comments that the library hours should be extended to accommodate student work and home-life schedules and that more tutors be added to The Learning Center.

3. Information on financial aid should continue to be part of the orientation and outreach communication efforts. Moreover, this information should be part of the college's general marketing efforts.

4. The college should invest more energy and resources into communicating information about college programs, services, events and activities. Providing greater and more widespread communication in these areas would likely have a positive impact on both enrollment and student retention.

5. The services within the Campus Support Services scale potentially have a positive impact on student success and retention (Astin, 1985). It is important that the college continue to maintain the quality and accessibility of these and other support services, as well as continue to promote these services wherever possible.

6. Students expressed an interest in having the college provide more opportunities for students to voice their opinions and concerns. The college has made some strides in this area the past year through the implementation of the student survey and the focus groups in the fall. The college should continue to provide opportunities for gathering students' opinions and may want to look at ways to collect on-going recommendations from students.

7. The college may want to consider an early alert system as part of the retention and enrollment management strategy. It is evident from the survey responses and comments that the college has provided a transformative experience for many students and that the instructors provided an intellectually stimulating and motivating learning environment. These are strengths that the college should promote and look for ways in which to sustain.

8. The diverse demographics and changing needs of the students at Skyline has made it more challenging to meet the demands of all students. However, continuous investigation into enrollment trends and analysis of scheduling options will help to meet these challenges and respond to the needs of Skyline College students and the community.

9. The EFMPP will likely help to remedy some of the student concerns related to safety and security (e.g., lighting in the parking lot). Moreover, an in-depth assessment of this topic and action planning will occur as part of the accreditation self-study process which will also help to remedy some of these

concerns. The college should conduct regular follow-up studies (annually or biannually) with the students to help determine how well these concerns are being addressed and if perceptions have changed.

10. The conflicting survey results regarding the college's effort to convey to students that they are first and foremost in everything the college does, indicates that this may be an area to further investigate through a focus group or a more narrowly focused survey.

11. Students felt there were many surprising advantages in attending Skyline College (e.g., something for everyone and a convenient way to explore opportunities). These unexpected advantages add to the college experience and should be promoted by the college as a value-added benefit.

12. As Skyline moves forward in its decision to manage the smoking issue on campus, it may be beneficial to communicate the effort throughout the process so that students are aware that it has been recognized as a concern and that it is being addressed.

13. Overall, the majority of students were satisfied with their college experience at Skyline and the majority would do it all over again. However, the survey and persistence data revealed that approximately 30% of the students were undecided about continuing at Skyline or college in general. This indicates that Skyline has the opportunity to influence approximately 2,500 students each semester in their decision to continue. This has strong implications for enrollment management (e.g., retention strategies).

14. Skyline has the opportunity to influence students' decision to enroll in a variety of ways. Two of the top three factors in the students' decision to enroll at Skyline, academic reputation and financial aid, should be carefully leveraged through marketing, communication and other outreach efforts.

Appendix A
Survey Instrument

Noel-Levitz™
a USA Group company

STUDENT SATISFACTION INVENTORY™

Community, Junior and Technical College Version

Laurie A. Schreiner, Ph.D., and Stephanie L. Juillerat, Ph.D.
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Dear Student,

Your institution is interested in systematically listening to its students. Therefore, your thoughtful and honest responses to this inventory are very important.

You are part of a sample of students carefully selected to share feedback about your college experiences thus far. Your responses will give your campus leadership insights about the aspects of college that are important to you as well as how satisfied you are with them.

To preserve confidentiality, your name is not requested.

— *Thank you for your participation.*

Instructions:

• Use a No. 2 pencil only. Please do not use ink or ballpoint pen.
• Erase changes completely and cleanly.
• Completely darken the oval that corresponds to your response.

Each item below describes an expectation about your experience on this campus. On the *left*, tell us how <u>important</u> it is for your institution to meet this expectation. On the *right* tell us how <u>satisfied</u> you are that your institution has met this expectation.

SAMPLE
Copyrighted Items and Materials

Importance to me . . .

1 - not important at all
2 - not very important
3 - somewhat unimportant
4 - neutral
5 - somewhat important
6 - important
7 - very important

does not apply

. . . My level of satisfaction

not available/not used

very satisfied - 7
satisfied - 6
somewhat satisfied - 5
neutral - 4
somewhat dissatisfied - 3
not very satisfied - 2
not satisfied at all - 1

1. Most students feel a sense of belonging here.
2. Faculty care about me as an individual.
3. The quality of instruction in the vocational/technical programs is excellent.
4. Security staff are helpful.

5. The personnel involved in registration are helpful.
6. My academic advisor is approachable.
7. Adequate financial aid is available for most students.
8. Classes are scheduled at times that are convenient for me.

9. Internships or practical experiences are provided in my degree/certificate program.
10. Child care facilities are available on campus.
11. Security staff respond quickly in emergencies.
12. My academic advisor helps me set goals to work toward.

13. Financial aid awards are announced to students in time to be helpful in college planning.
14. Library resources and services are adequate.
15. I am able to register for classes I need with few conflicts.
16. The college shows concern for students as individuals.

17. Personnel in the Veterans' Services program are helpful.
18. The quality of instruction I receive in most of my classes is excellent.
19. This campus provides effective support services for displaced homemakers.
20. Financial aid counselors are helpful.

PLEASE DO NOT MARK IN THIS AREA

695149

- 17 -

Importance to me . . .

1 - not important at all
2 - not very important
3 - somewhat unimportant
4 - neutral
5 - somewhat important
6 - important
7 - very important

does not apply

. . . My level of satisfaction

not available/not used

very satisfied - 7
satisfied - 6
somewhat satisfied - 5
neutral - 4
somewhat dissatisfied - 3
not very satisfied - 2
not satisfied at all - 1

21. There are a sufficient number of study areas on campus.
22. People on this campus respect and are supportive of each other.
23. Faculty are understanding of students' unique life circumstances.
24. Parking lots are well-lighted and secure.

25. My academic advisor is concerned about my success as an individual.
26. Library staff are helpful and approachable.
27. The campus staff are caring and helpful.
28. It is an enjoyable experience to be a student on this campus.

29. Faculty are fair and unbiased in their treatment of individual students.
30. The career services office provides students with the help they need to get a job.
31. The campus is safe and secure for all students.
32. My academic advisor is knowledgeable about my program requirements.

33. Admissions counselors accurately portray the campus in their recruiting practices.
34. Computer labs are adequate and accessible.
35. Policies and procedures regarding registration and course selection are clear and well-publicized.
36. Students are made to feel welcome on this campus.

37. Faculty take into consideration student differences as they teach a course.
38. The student center is a comfortable place for students to spend their leisure time.
39. The amount of student parking space on campus is adequate.
40. My academic advisor is knowledgeable about the transfer requirements of other schools.

41. Admissions staff are knowledgeable.
42. The equipment in the lab facilities is kept up to date.
43. Class change (drop/add) policies are reasonable.
44. I generally know what's happening on campus.

45. This institution has a good reputation within the community.
46. Faculty provide timely feedback about student progress in a course.
47. There are adequate services to help me decide upon a career.
48. Counseling staff care about students as individuals.

49. Admissions counselors respond to prospective students' unique needs and requests.
50. Tutoring services are readily available.
51. There are convenient ways of paying my school bill.
52. This school does whatever it can to help me reach my educational goals.

53. The assessment and course placement procedures are reasonable.
54. Faculty are interested in my academic problems.
55. Academic support services adequately meet the needs of students.
56. The business office is open during hours which are convenient for most students.

57. Administrators are approachable to students.
58. Nearly all of the faculty are knowledgeable in their fields.
59. New student orientation services help students adjust to college.
60. Billing policies are reasonable.

61. Faculty are usually available after class and during office hours.
62. Bookstore staff are helpful.
63. I seldom get the "run-around" when seeking information on this campus.
64. Nearly all classes deal with practical experiences and applications.

65. Students are notified early in the term if they are doing poorly in a class.
66. Program requirements are clear and reasonable.
67. Channels for expressing student complaints are readily available.
68. On the whole, the campus is well-maintained.

69. There is a good variety of courses provided on this campus.
70. I am able to experience intellectual growth here.

- 18 -

Your institution may choose to provide you with additional questions on a separate sheet. The section below numbered 71 - 80 is provided as a response area for those additional questions. Continue on to item 81 when you have completed this section.

Importance to me . . .

1 - not important at all
2 - not very important
3 - somewhat unimportant
4 - neutral
5 - somewhat important
6 - important
7 - very important

does not apply

. . . My level of satisfaction

not available/not used

very satisfied - 7
satisfied - 6
somewhat satisfied - 5
neutral - 4
somewhat dissatisfied - 3
not very satisfied - 2
not satisfied at all - 1

71. **(If items 71-80 not available, skip to item 81.)** 71.
72. 72.
73. 73.
74. 74.
75. 75.

76. 76.
77. 77.
78. 78.
79. 79.
80. 80.

How **satisfied** are you that this campus demonstrates a commitment to meeting the needs of:

81. Part-time students? 81.
82. Evening students? 82.
83. Older, returning learners? 83.
84. Under-represented populations? 84.
85. Commuters? 85.
86. Students with disabilities? 86.

How **important** was each of the following factors in your decision to enroll here?

87. [ ]
88. Financial aid
89. Academic reputation
90. Size of institution
91. Opportunity to play sports
92. Recommendations from family/friends
93. Geographic setting
94. Campus appearance
95. Personalized attention prior to enrollment

Choose the **one** response that best applies to you and darken the corresponding oval for each of the questions below.

96. So far, how has your college experience met your expectations?
① Much worse than I expected
② Quite a bit worse than I expected
③ Worse than I expected
④ About what I expected
⑤ Better than I expected
⑥ Quite a bit better than I expected
⑦ Much better than I expected

97. Rate your overall satisfaction with your experience here thus far.
① Not satisfied at all
② Not very satisfied
③ Somewhat dissatisfied
④ Neutral
⑤ Somewhat satisfied
⑥ Satisfied
⑦ Very satisfied

98. All in all, if you had it to do over again, would you enroll here?
① Definitely not
② Probably not
③ Maybe not
④ I don't know
⑤ Maybe yes
⑥ Probably yes
⑦ Definitely yes

CONTINUE TO THE NEXT PAGE

Choose the <u>one</u> response that best describes you and darken the corresponding oval for each of the items below.

99. Gender:
① Female
② Male

100. Age:
① 18 and under
② 19 to 24
③ 25 to 34
④ 35 to 44
⑤ 45 and over

101. Ethnicity/Race:
① African-American
② American Indian or Alaskan Native
③ Asian or Pacific Islander
④ Caucasian/White
⑤ Hispanic
⑥ Other
⑦ Prefer not to respond

102. Current Enrollment Status:
① Day
② Evening
③ Weekend

103. Current Class Load:
① Full-time
② Part-time

104. Class Level:
(Years in attendance at this college)
① 1 or less
② 2
③ 3
④ 4 or more

105. Current GPA:
① No credits earned
② 1.99 or below
③ 2.0 - 2.49
④ 2.5 - 2.99
⑤ 3.0 - 3.49
⑥ 3.5 or above

106. Educational Goal:
① Associate degree
② Vocational/technical program
③ Transfer to another institution
④ Certification (initial or renewal)
⑤ Self-improvement/pleasure
⑥ Job-related training
⑦ Other

107. Employment:
① Full-time off campus
② Part-time off campus
③ Full-time on campus
④ Part-time on campus
⑤ Not employed

108. Current Residence:
① Residence hall
② Own house
③ Rent room or apartment off campus
④ Parent's home
⑤ Other

109. Residence Classification:
① In-state
② Out-of-state
③ International (not U.S. citizen)

110. Disabilities:
Physical disability or a diagnosed learning disability?
① Yes
② No

111. When I entered this institution, it was my:
① 1st choice
② 2nd choice
③ 3rd choice or other

Social Security Number:
Write your Social Security number in the nine spaces of the box provided. Completely darken the corresponding oval.

Your Social Security Number is requested for research purposes and **will not** appear on any report.

112. Major:
Fill in major code from list provided by your institution.

113. Item requested by your institution:
①
②
③
④
⑤
⑥

Thank you for taking the time to complete this inventory.
Please do not fold.

PLEASE DO NOT MARK IN THIS AREA

695149

Campus-Specific Questions

71. The information on the college's website is useful.

72. The on-line registration, *Websmart*, is easy to use.

73. The information in the class schedule is useful.

74. The information in the college catalog is useful.

75. The information in the student handbook is useful.

76. I am satisfied with the availability of student support services.

77. Classrooms and labs are adequately equipped with technology for learning.

78. Most students at Skyline College do their own work and do not participate in activities that might be considered cheating.

79. Skyline's policies adequately control cheating and plagiarism.

80. Restrictions on smoking at Skyline College campus are sufficient.

Open-Ended Comments

1. What do you believe are the best things that Skyline College has to offer and how has this benefited you in achieving your educational goals?

2. What do you believe Skyline College needs to improve on in order to provide a quality educational service to students and the community?

Appendix B
Sample of Verbatim Comments

Sample Of Verbatim Comments

ACADEMIC ADVISING & COUNSELING

"The one thing I really like about Skyline are the counselors. Originally I was to attend College of San Mateo, and when I went to set up my first semester of classes, the counselor was not helpful at all. When I met with [Counselor X] here at Skyline, she was so helpful and easy-going that we were able to plan out the rest of my years in community college. Because of her genuine car, I feel comfortable enough to go to her whenever I need advising."

"Skyline needs to improve its counseling staff. The few appointments I had with counselors usually proved uneventful. They were not very informative and they made me feel rushed."

"My academic advisor is helpful. She explains everything clearly. As a non-native speaker, I feel comfortable to study in this college. Library tutoring service is remarkable. They know what they need to do. English tutors help me how to develop my ideas instead of changing my ideas. They make sure I understand what they say before I leave."

ACADEMIC SERVICES

"The Mac lab is 5+ years out of date. Even the newest hardware lacks the newest software. Many of the computers are bogged down and inefficient. The MIDI program is also too slowmoving and has promoted me to look more seriously at transferring. I have felt slighted by one staff member who has made my experience here very uncomfortable and unpleasant. I will probably elaborate on this in a letter to the president of Skyline."

ADMISSIONS & FINANCIAL AID

"Being able to have the opportunity to attend to even have educational goals thru financial aid."

"I think the people working in the financial aid office should be more helpful and friendlier. I have had a hard time getting financial because of lack of help."

CAMPUS CLIMATE

"I think that Skyline has done a very good job at supplying students with many study resources. It has many great quiet study atmospheres which is very helpful. It is a great, secure campus. It has really helped me to get some quiet time to get my work finished. Knowing that with every corner I turn there is somewhere to go or someone to ask for help really makes me feel good."

"A solid learning experience in a welcoming community with a fair array of courses. It has allowed me to explore interesting subjects."

"Skyline College is a wonderful & diverse learning environment. Skyline instructors are remarkably well qualified and care about their students. I have attended 2 other community colleges and truly see the difference here at Skyline. Skyline has enabled me to go from academic probation to Phi Theta Kappa and become a Deans list honor student. Thanks for letting my dreams come true."

"The construction is noisy and at times it doesn't help students concentrate on their work and exams they are taking."

"The campus seems "dead" a lot of the time. Not a lot is ever going on so students tend to leave more. More connection between the college as a whole w/ its students could help the overall morale."

"Community wise, the school should be fixed up. Some of the classrooms look really dirty and some hall ways & rooms look like they are in desperate need of a paint job. We should just make the school look prettier."

"I think that Skyline really needs to consider limiting its smoking areas. It is very uncomfortable for me to be bombarded by cigarett smoke every second of the day."

CAMPUS SUPPORT SERVICES
"I truly appreciate the counselors in the transfer center – they've helped me so much w/ all my questions. Without those counselors, I don't know how I would have gone through my first 2 semesters @ Skyline. I'm now in my second semester and I feel confident about transferring to my 4-year college in time & prepared."

INSTRUCTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS
"As a returning student planning on applying to graduate school, I have found Skyline College to be so convenient with their classes offered, timings & staff. Skyline professors have a certain passion & love for their students & this is embodied in the way the classes are taught. Returning to college has been a wonderful experience & I've enjoyed every class that I've taken here.

"I think the teachers are the best thing Skyline has to offer. I've had the most incredible fortune in having tremendous teachers in all of my classes. The fact that I've had great, approachable teachers has benefited me b/c I try hard to do well in class, and my teachers have inspired me to transfer and further my education. Also, the soccer program is awesome!"

"Its commitment in making college experience more life enriching and educationally beneficial. It has helped me to find or explore more interests that could direct me in a more narrow career plan for myself"

"The bottom line is that Skyline has some awesome teachers (most of them) that are pretty dedicated to helping the students. But basically these teachers not only teach you the subject you're signed up for, they really do teach you about life. (Sounds corny but its true) But Skyline has been great for these reasons, what it all comes down to is that Skyline finds a pretty good balance of holding your hand yet helping you to succeed independently so that you are prepared for the next step."

REGISTRATION EFFECTIVENESS
"What Skyline really needs to improve on is the diversity and amount of courses needed, based on educational goals. The lack of courses offerred in a semester is lack luster. To wait a whole other year or semester to enroll into that class is appalling."

"I go to SFSU and I chose to come to Skyline as well because getting classes at state is impossible! I love Skyline! I just wish I could get my Bachelors in nursing here"

"Skyline needs to improve the number of classes and spread out the classes more to make it easier to schedual with other classes."

RESPONSIVENESS TO DIVERSE POPULATIONS
"Skyline provides a broad selection of practical courses which enrich the lives of seniors. As a retiree I have benefitted from these opportunties"

"Night classes for people who work but still like to learn for self improvement. I can tell that with each Spanish class I am getting better & better."

"The ability to learn and grow no matter what age you are."

SAFETY & SECURITY
"What Skyline need to improve is security in campus. because there has been couple of stolen cars, so in order for people to feel safe they need to provide security."

 "Skyline College needs to improve on the whole parking issue that starts in the beginning of the semester & ends about the 5th week into the semester. Skyline College should team up with SamTrans & offer free bus rides for Skyline students the first 5 weeks of the semester… just a thought. Skyline College also needs to improve on their financial aid office staff. Everytime I go there the people there seem like they don't want to help anyone. New financial aid staff!"

SERVICE EXCELLENCE
"All the advisors and teachers are understandable. They all want you to succeed so they are really approachable and easy to talk to."

"This campus has offered great staff (Teachers, counselors, office clerks) that not only care about making you understand what you need to know to achieve your goals, but also, you, as an individual your cares or concerns and how they can make it better or easier. Great selection of highly qualified people who are definitely an asset to this school."

STUDENT CENTEREDNESS
"My favorite part about Skyline College that I've truly benefited from would have to be the amazing staff and small class sizes. Each of my proffessors this semester has made entering/matriculation for this spring semester a very challenging and rewarding experience thus far."

FACTORS IN THE DECISION TO ENROLL
"Skyline College definitely is my school of choice. They have been so helpful in my Academic Endeavors and so supportive. Please Thank them ☺ Very Proud Student of Skyline College"

Skyline College Media Preferences Survey

Fall 2006

Introduction

During the fall semester of 2006, Skyline College participated in a national study of community college students and their media preferences. Nearly 35,000 students, including 874 students from Skyline participated in the on-line survey. The survey was designed and conducted by Interact Communications of Onalaska, Wisconsin. The results from the survey was intended to provide colleges with important data on internal communications, college publications, Webpage design and importance, Internet access, lifestyle activities, radio, television and newspaper preferences, and contact preferences. The information will be used to determine strategies appropriate for future marketing and communications to our students and the community, and will be incorporated into discussions on the college's web development and design.

Survey Respondent Profile

The majority of the survey respondents were female and between the ages of 16-25, with moderate distribution from other age groups. This closely matches the age groupings found in the general student population at Skyline College. The survey respondents also closely matched most of the ethnic segments found in the college student population including 16% Hispanic compared to 19% college-wide and 24% White compared to 23% college-wide, 1% African American compared to 4% college-wide and 43% Asian compared to 28% college-wide. It should be noted that there was no category on the survey for Filipino so it might be assumed that Filipino survey respondents selected the Asian category which is 19% college-wide. In addition, the majority of respondents noted transfer-seeking as their primary education goal which is consistent with the college-wide statistics on education goal.

Lifestyle Preferences

The student survey respondents were asked to indicate the type of radio format that was their favorite. The top three formats chosen were: Urban Rock, Alternative and Contemporary Hits. Students were then asked about the frequency of certain lifestyle activities. The top three activities selected as sometimes (all others were selected as not often, seldom or never) were: 1) Going to the coffee shop, 2) Going to the malls, and 3) Going to the movies. When asked about the frequency of newspaper usage, the overwhelming majority indicated that they either rarely or never read the daily, weekly or monthly newspapers.

Preferred Method of Contact

When asked to what degree the student liked being contacted by the college about important information via various stated methods, the majority of students (72%) responded that they preferred to be contacted via e-mail. Their second preferred method of contact was via mail and their least preferred methods were via phone either at work and or at home. Students were then asked about communicating with their professors and their advisors. The overwhelming majority indicated that they preferred either face-to-face meetings or e-mail with their professors and face-to-face meetings with their advisors.

Internet Access and Communication

Students were asked where they have access to the internet. The majority of those surveyed responded that they have access to the internet at home (96%) and at school (77%), while half (51%) responded that they access the internet from work. Students were then asked if they visited the college's website when choosing a college. The majority of respondents indicated that they visited the website. Students were then asked if the college used the web to communicate with students. The median response was favorable (agree). Students were also asked if the college effectively used the web to disseminate critical information and the median response was slightly less then favorable (somewhat agree). When asked whether the student made their decision to apply/not apply to a college based on the information in its website, the median response indicated agreement.

Class Schedule Distribution

Students were asked about their preferred way in which to receive the class schedule. Approximately half (51%) indicated that they liked to have it mailed to their homes, while about a quarter of the respondents (36%) indicated that they liked to either download the schedule (18%) or use the searchable college website (18%). The students were then asked about their preferred way in which to receive financial aid information. Nearly half responded they liked to receive the information by mail, while slightly less than a quarter indicated they liked to download the information from the college's website.

Conclusions

The information on Lifestyle Preferences indicates that malls, coffee shops and movie theaters may be the best venues for advertising. Information on newspaper preferences indicates that Skyline's largest population segment (18-25 year olds) does not read the paper regularly. Not the best venue for advertising. Students clearly prefer e-mail communication of college information over any other form of communication and dislike any type of phone contact. Students prefer one-to-one personal contact with

their professors and advisors/counselors over any other type of contact. Students prefer the class schedule to be mailed to their homes rather receive this information from the website. Students prefer receiving Financial Aid information by mail. This may indicate a need to reinstate the letter campaign to parents. Students validated the belief that the website is an important source of information when they rated the question about visiting a college website when choosing a college.

Recommendations

The survey results lead to three immediate conclusions: 1) Skyline needs to develop policies and procedures for communicating with students on a regular basis. This needs to be done often enough to be valuable, but not too often to overload and frustrate students, 2) Skyline should update its web site to make the college more attractive to new students, and 3) Skyline should use the survey results to tailor its current and future marketing efforts to its targeted audiences.

REPORT ON FIRST YEAR EXPERIENCE STUDENT SURVEY
SOCIOLOGY 665 AND 660
SPRING AND SUMMER 2007

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OCTOBER 2007

Introduction

This report summarizes the findings of a student initiated, designed and implemented survey conducted with first year students at Skyline College during the spring and summer semesters, 2007. This survey was conducted in coordination with the Foundations of Excellence (FOE) First Year Experience Project to focus specifically on Skyline College first year students' experiences.

In the spring, 2007 four students enrolled in Sociology 665, Survey Research Practicum, a course designed to introduce students the survey research methods and to analyze the Foundations of Excellence online survey of first year students' experiences conducted with faculty, administration and staff, and in a related, but separate survey, with students at Skyline College during the fall semester, 2006. During the summer 2007, complementing the initial four students, two additional students were included in Sociology 660, a Special Projects class, which was a continuation of the Survey Research Practicum class. (See course syllabus in the appendix.)

Methodology

Beginning spring semester 2007, four students enrolled in Sociology 665, Survey Research Practicum. In addition to class work, these students were also included in the Foundations For Excellence First Year Experience Project as members of the Learning Dimension Committee. Students were given copies of the Foundations of Excellence materials on the First Year Experience and the results of the Faculty/Staff and Students surveys conducted in the fall 2006. In addition to reading and being quizzed on the textbook for the course, students also read and were quizzed on the results of the surveys.

As the course progressed, students and the instructor began designing the Sociology 665 First Year Experience survey, focusing specifically on first year students at Skyline College. With all students contributing, this survey went through several drafts, re-writes and pre-testing before we agreed on a final survey in late March 2007. (See First Year Experience Student Survey, Sociology 665 in appendix.) Before any surveys were

administered, the instructor trained and evaluated each of the Sociology 665 students on personal interview techniques and implementation. Prior to conducting the surveys, these students read Skyline College's Human Subjects Policy and signed an Agreement to Abide by the Human Subjects Policy. (See Human Subjects Policy and Agreement to Abide by the HSP in appendix.) The Academic Senate Institutional Research Committee approved the Sociology 665 First Year Experience survey and the research protocols before any surveys were conducted. In addition to designing the survey itself, the class also designed an Initial Screen for Educational Experiences Survey, which, with the instructors' permission, was administered to 19 classes in April 2007. (See Initial Screen for Educational Experiences Survey in appendix.) This initial screen is essentially a qualifying screener, which focused only on students who have specific educational goals designated by Skyline College's First Year Experience Project as representative of First Year Students, students who have earned 24 units or less at Skyline College, and who were willing to be interviewed for the larger First Year Experience Student Survey. As part of the instructions for the qualifying screener, students were informed that if they qualified and agreed to participate in the larger survey they had a chance to receive a 2GB iPod nano. The Initial Screen took approximately five minutes to administer in each class.

Unlike the Foundations of Excellence online survey, the Sociology 665 survey used only pre-qualified first year students in its sample, survey and analysis. The Foundations of Excellence online survey sampled and contacted 6,700 Skyline students and got an overall response rate of six percent (401 students). Of these students, 121 (31 percent) classified themselves as first year or Freshman students, 177 (46 percent) classified themselves as Sophomore, Junior or Senior students, and 88 (23 percent) did not know their academic standing. The Foundations of Excellence online survey did not question the students about their educational goals.

As mentioned above, the Sociology 665 students contacted 19 classes in April and May 2007 and administered the Initial Screen for the survey. Additionally, students used a snowball survey technique (survey students' and respondents' knowledge of friends or acquaintances who were eligible for the Initial Screen) to contact, qualify and administer the survey. Sociology 665 students contacted qualified students using either e-mail addresses or telephone numbers that the respondents wrote on their Initial Screens to schedule appointments for the personal interviews. Prior to conducting the personal interviews for the survey, each eligible respondent read and signed an Informed Consent form agreeing to participate. (See Informed Consent form in the appendix.) The students were able to complete 34 interviews with qualified first year students. The average time to complete the survey was approximately 10 minutes. We determined that this was an insufficient sample size and extended our survey to 2007 summer classes.

In June 2007, two additional waves (first 5-week classes and second 5-week classes) of Initial Screens were administered to first year students at Skyline College. During the first wave (early June), the Sociology 665 instructor contacted 23 instructors for 34 classes (some instructors taught more than one class). Of the 23 instructors, 18 responded (23 classes) and allowed the Sociology 665 students to administer the Initial Screen in

their classes. During the second wave (mid June to July), the Sociology 665 instructor contacted an additional 105 instructors in 105 classes and 32 (30.4 percent) of these instructors replied and allowed the Sociology 665 students to administer the Initial screen in their classes.

Including first and second waves, a total of 983 students completed the Initial Screen and 446 of these students were not qualified, mainly because they had too many credits (more than 24). Among those who qualified to take the larger survey (N = 531), 333 declined to participate. Of the remaining students who qualified to complete the larger survey (N = 198), 164 students did not show up for their scheduled interviews (most common), failed to respond to repeated attempts to contact, or could not be contacted because of illegible e-mail addresses or telephone numbers. In all, Sociology 665 students completed an additional first year student surveys, approximately 12.6 percent of the 198 who qualified to do so. Thus, including the spring and summer semesters 2007, a total of 59 qualified first year students completed the Sociology 665 First Year Experience Student Survey.

Findings

We designed the Sociology 665 First Year Experience Survey to focus on five areas of inquiry for Skyline College's students:
- High School Preparation
- Orientation and Counseling Sessions
- College Experience and Learning
- Proposed First Year Orientation Program and
- Demographics

I. High School Preparation

The majority (78 percent) of respondents reported that they primarily took regular high school courses and 20 percent primarily took advanced placement courses.

In their meetings with their high school instructors, advisors or counselors, students stated that they most commonly talked with them about their
- educational goals (64 percent), followed by their
- career plans (56 percent),
- academic challenges of college (44 percent),
- availability of financial aid (36 percent), and
- other things (31 percent), including scholarships, school performance and foreign colleges.

We asked students how well (good, fair or poor) they felt their high school prepared them for college-level work at Skyline College on eight skill areas. In rank order (from highest to lowest), students listed
- English writing (mean of 2.5 out of 3) highest, followed by a related skill,
- reading (mean of 2.4), with three other skills,
- library, computer and in-class presentation ranked at a mean of 2.3, respectively.

- At the low end, students ranked their high school preparation for college-level note taking (mean of 2.1) and
- study habits (mean of 2.0) as only fair.

While some students felt well prepared for college-level work, overall students ranked their high school preparation as slightly above fair. This finding is in keeping with the Foundations of Excellence online survey, which found that only nearly 50 percent (49.1 percent) regarded their high school preparation for college-level work as moderate or less.

II. Orientation and Counseling Sessions

First year students have the opportunity to take a virtual online orientation before they attend classes. However, in our sample, only about a third (34 percent) reported doing so. Among those who did take the virtual orientation (N =35), 35 percent found it very helpful, 50 percent found it somewhat helpful, and 15 percent did not find the virtual orientation very helpful.

Overall, nearly 7 in 10 (69 percent) of the first year students have met with an academic counselor.

To follow up on their experiences with their counselors, we asked these students who had met with their counselors to reflect on their counseling meetings. We asked students if they agreed or disagreed with the following components in counseling sessions. In rank order (from the highest agreement to the lowest agreement) Table 2.1 summarizes students' agreement with the following counseling session components.

Table 2.1: Student Agreement with Counseling Session Components

Counseling Session Component	Percent of Agreement
Helped select your courses	76
Spent a sufficient amount of time with you	73
Discussed required courses for transfer and to receive a diploma	73
Discussed future enrollment plans	71
Explained the requirements for specific programs and majors	68
Was familiar with your specific career goals	68
Discussed the requirements for academic success	68
Was available at a convenient time	68
Suggested you meet with him or her again	61
Discussed how college can help achieve your life goals	49

Importantly, in two areas (explained the requirements for specific programs and majors and suggested that the student meet with the counselor again), more that 1 in 10 (12 percent, respectively) stated that these areas were not discussed at all.

Among the students who had met with academic counselors (N = 41), slightly over 7 in 10 (71 percent) stated that they would recommend their academic counselor to a friend, while over a quarter (27 percent) indicated that they would not.

III. College Experience and Learning

In the third part of the questionnaire, we asked first year students about their awareness of, and if they were aware of a specific campus program or service, how well informed (well, somewhat or not well informed) they were about 27 programs or services. In rank order (most aware to least aware) the following table summarizes students' awareness of and how well informed they feel about the various programs and services. The mean scores (3 = well informed, 2 = somewhat informed, and 1 = not well informed) for each program or services are listed on the right column.

Table 3.1: Awareness and how well informed about campus programs and services

81 to 100 percent Aware	Mean (informed scores 3-1)
Bookstore	2.6
Library	2.6
Counseling services	2.2
61 to 80 percent Aware	
Learning Center	2.2
Financial Aid	2.3
Career Center	2.1
Transcripts	2.4
41 to 60 percent Aware	
Honors Transfer	2.0
Health Services	2.0
Student Activities	2.0
Student Clubs/Organizations	1.9
21 to 40 percent Aware	
Transfer Opportunity Center	2.1
Enrollment/Degree Verification	2.2
Kababalyan Program	1.9
Phi Theta Kappa	2.3
20 percent or less Aware	
Child Care	1.9
Disabled Student Program	2.1
EOPS (Extended Opportunity Program And Services)	2.3
Puente Program	1.5

20 percent or less Aware (continued)	Mean (informed scores 3-1)
ASTEP (African American Success Through Excellence and Persistence)	2.0
International Students Program	1.4
Calworks Program/Post Employment	1.8
Learning Communities	2.1
Veterans/Veteran's Dependents	1.6
Women in Transition	1.3
STARRS (Student Transfer, Academic Achievement And Retention Services)	2.2
CARE (Cooperative Agencies Resources for Education)	2.5

It is clear from the preceding table that even with the campus programs and services that students are most aware of (bookstore, library and counseling services, for example), many do not feel well informed. At best, most students in our sample feel only somewhat informed about the various programs and services.

First year student awareness of and information about campus programs and services was only one part of the college experience and learning dimension we used to survey students. In the second part of this dimension, we asked students if they had ever used and, if so, how satisfied they were with 11 educational skills programs and services. There is some overlap between these 11 programs and services and the previous 27 programs and services. Our purpose was to find out about actual use of and, in a sense, a consumer satisfaction rating with the 11 programs and services. In rank order, from the most highly used to the least used the following table summarizes students' use of and degree of satisfaction with the 11 programs and services. The mean scores (3 = very satisfied, 2 = somewhat satisfied, and 1 = not very satisfied) for each program and service are listed in the right column.

Table 3.2: Use of and Satisfaction with Campus Programs and Services

Program/Service Percent Used	Mean (satisfaction scores 3-1)
1. Library (84 percent)	2.6
2. Counseling Services (71 percent)	2.4
3. Instructor's office hours (48 percent)	2.8
4. Learning Center (47 percent)	2.4
5. Tutoring (31 percent)	2.4
6. Reading/Writing Lab (24 percent)	2.4
7. Out of class programs like movies, plays and concerts (22 percent)	2.8
8. Math Lab (21 percent)	2.4
9. Basic Skills Lab (3 percent)	2.0

Program/Service Percent Used	Mean (satisfaction scores 3-1)
10. Off campus programs (3 percent)	2.0
11. ESOL Lab (0 percent)	0.0

The table above indicates a relatively high use of four programs or services, with two of the programs or services (instructor office hours and the Library) generating high satisfaction scores. Program and service use drops significantly (31 to 0 percent) for programs ranked 5 through 11. While only slightly more than 1 in 5 (22 percent) students have ever used out of class programs like movies, plays and concerts, those who have are highly satisfied with them.

IV. Proposed First Year Orientation Program

In the fourth part of the survey, Sociology 665 student interviewers read the following description of a proposed campus orientation course to the respondents to ascertain their interest:

> I'd like to read a description of a proposed campus orientation program at Skyline College and get your reactions to it. Orientation programs at colleges help promote student's success in college. Suppose Skyline College offered a required, one-unit orientation course that would give first year students an introduction to Skyline's programs, services and faculty. In this course students would tour the campus and its buildings. They would meet faculty and academic advising staff on a one-on-one basis and be encouraged to discuss a wide-variety of programs and career opportunities. They would also explore practical vocational programs as well as discover library and Internet research opportunities.

After the proposal was read, the interviewers asked the respondents how helpful 20 specific components of the proposed orientation would be, very helpful, somewhat helpful or not very helpful. In rank order, from the most helpful to the least helpful the following table summarizes the respondent's mean scores (3 = very helpful, 2 = somewhat helpful, and 1= not very helpful) for each proposed component to the orientation course.

Table 4.1: Helpfulness of Orientation Course Components

Orientation Component	Mean (helpfulness scores 3-1)
Providing Learning Center information	2.8
Listing availability of scholarships	2.8
Discussing transfer to 4-year universities	2.8
Discussing academic programs	2.7
Discussing career opportunities	2.7

Orientation Component	Mean (helpfulness scores 3-1)
Providing a good campus map	2.7
Discussing access to academic counselors	2.7
Providing tutoring	2.7
Offering mentoring programs	2.7
Discussing student health clinic	2.7
Discussing low cost health plans	2.7
Discussing library hours	2.6
Discussing campus security	2.6
Discussing psychological services	2.6
Discussing Micro Computer Labs	2.5
Discussing public transportation	2.5
Providing childcare information	2.4
Listing parking regulations	2.4
Discussing food service availability	2.3
Offering detailed information on faculty	2.0

In addition to the above, the respondents also mentioned needing current classes, more parking spaces, smoking areas need to be enforced, orientation course should have one person to show the student around campus, would like inspirational speakers, and information on internships and jobs. Only one of the 59 students in the sample indicated that he or she thought the orientation course should not be required.

It is clear from the above table that the respondents are interested in and would find very helpful to at least somewhat helpful several orientation course components. By in large, the respondents thought that academic components (Learning Center, Academic programs for example) as well as pragmatic components such as scholarship availability, transfer to 4-year universities and career opportunities would be especially helpful to their college success.

V. Demographics

First year students reported the following demographic information:
Gender group with which they most commonly identify:

Gender Group	Percent who identify
Male	54
Female	42
Transgender	2
Other	2

Racial or ethnic group with which they most commonly identify:

Group	Percent who identify
Black/African American	2
Latino/Latina	14
Asian/Pacific Islander	46
White	14
Middle Eastern	5
Multiracial/ethnic	1
Other (not specified)	12
Don't know	2

Respondents reported the following age groupings:

Age	Percent of Cohort
Under 18	5
18 to 22	61
23 to 27	24
28 to 32	3
33 to 42	3
43 to 52	2
53 to 62	0
63 or over	2

Respondents reported currently living in the following cities:

City	Number of Respondents
South San Francisco	14
Daily City	13
Pacifica	10
San Francisco	9
San Bruno	6
Brisbane	2
San José	2
Milbrae	1
San Mateo	1
Oakland	1

Respondents reported attending high school in the following cities:

City of high school	Number of Respondents Attending
San Francisco	14
South San Francisco	14
Pacifica	9
Daily City	5
Out of area	4
Milbrae	3
Out of country	2
Out of state	2
Campbell	1

Respondents reported attending high school in the following cities (continued):

City of high school	Number of Respondents Attending
Aptos	1
Burlingame	1
San Mateo	1

Respondents reported their current living conditions:

Living Condition	Percent of Respondents
Live by yourself	7
Live with a roommate or partner	24
Live with parents or relatives	61
Live with your spouse and/or child or children	5
Live only with child or children	2
Some other arrangement	2

Respondents reported the following approximate total yearly household income before taxes:

Yearly Household Income	Percent of Respondents
$25,000 or less	19
$25,000 to 40,000	14
$40,000 to 55,000	17
$55,000 to 70,000	14
Over $70,000	22
Don't know	15

Sixty-six percent of the respondents reported working at a paying job. Among those working individuals, 82 percent worked part-time.

APPENDIX:

REPORT ON FIRST YEAR EXPERIENCE STUDENT SURVEY

SOCIOLOGY 665 AND 660
SPRING AND SUMMER 2007

Topical Survey-Fall 2007
Marketing and Outreach Communication

Executive Summary

Office of Planning, Research and Institutional Effectiveness

Highlights

- Of the 8,480 students registered at the time of the survey, 792 responded to the survey (9% response rate).

- The majority of survey respondents reported that they learned about the college through word-of-mouth or referral. This has implications for the way in which the college manages its reputation and how it brands its image and is consistent with other service industries that heavily rely on referral-based marketing techniques.

- The majority of students (64%) responded that they use either the printed class schedule or the printed college catalog to find out about classes. This confirms the decision to reinstate the mailing of the class schedule.

- One third of the respondents indicated the college website as the way in which they usually find out about classes and student services at Skyline. This confirms our decision to upgrade the college website and to continue mailing the class schedule.

- When asked how they usually find out about events and activities that are happening on campus the majority (42%) response was flyer or posting on a bulletin board. This is consistent with the behavior of the majority of the Skyline students who are part-time and on campus intermittently or for the primary purpose of attending their classes. This behavioral characteristic lends itself to a communication method that is quick and easy to access, such as a flyer or posting.

Overview

The Skyline College Development, Marketing and Public Relations Office conducted a survey as part of its on-going effort to gather feedback from the college community and collect critical information on operational and planning topics of interest. The purpose of this survey was to gather information from current students on how they find out about classes, programs services and events on campus. The information from this survey will be used to improve the way in which the college communicates to students.

An invitation to survey was e-mailed to all students during the second week of the fall 2007 semester, and a link to the survey was posted on the college's homepage for two weeks. Of the 8,480 students registered at the time of the survey, 792 responded to the survey (9% response rate). The respondents were representative of the student population in terms of age (3% under 18, 33% 18-22, 20% 23-28, 19% 29-39, and 25% 40 or older) and enrollment status (55% continuing students, 13% first time, 17% returning). This and the relatively large sample size indicate that the responses are generally representative of the student population as a whole.

Findings
When asked how they first learned about the college, the majority of respondents selected the three responses that imply word-of-mouth or referral (16% from a classmate, 27% from a family member, and 17% from a high school teacher or counselor). Another 23% responded to the "Other" category. The most common responses found in the "Other" category were: from a friend or that they live or grew up in the area near the college. Both of these responses indicate word-or-mouth or referral as the most common way that students learn about the college.

When asked how they usually find out about the classes that the college offers the majority of students (64%) responded that they use either the printed class schedule or the printed college catalog. About one third of the respondents indicated the website as the way in which they usually find out about classes at Skyline. This was consistent with the students' comments in question #5 about the best way to communicate with students.

When asked how they usually find out about the student services that are available on campus (e.g., counseling, financial aid and the Transfer Center), one third of the students responded that they use the college website, 24% responded that they find out through the class schedule or college catalog, 13% responded that they find out from an instructor, 11% responded that they find out from a counselor, and 10% indicated they find out from a classmate. The majority of responses found in the "Other" category were related to postings on bulletin boards and flyers. The was consistent with the comments in question #5 about best way to communicate with students.

When asked how they usually find out about events and activities that are happening on campus the majority (42%) response was flyer or posting on a bulletin board. Another 26% responded that they hear about events and activities from instructors or classmates, and 18% indicated that they use the college website to find out about events and activities. The majority of responses found in the "Other" category indicated that the student was not interested in events and activities on campus or was unaware that there are events and activities on campus.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The majority of respondents reported that they learned about the college through word-of-mouth or referral. This has implications for the way in which the college manages its reputation and how it brands its image and is consistent with other service industries that heavily rely on referral-based marketing techniques. The recommendations are as follows:

1. Apply the visual identify that was developed as a result of the research that was conducted for the Fresh Look Project and other research that has been done recently (i.e., 2006 Student Climate Survey).
2. Use the positive images that were extracted from the research to promote the reputation of the college (e.g., friendly environment, supportive faculty, helpful staff, cozy environment, serious and academically oriented students).

The majority of respondents indicated that they use the printed schedule and/or catalog to find out about classes. While we know that we currently distribute approximately 3,000 catalogs per year, we believe that students taking the survey may confuse the class schedule with the catalog. We are thereby assuming that the preferred method for finding out about classes is the class schedule. This confirms the decision to reinstate the mailing of the class schedule. The recommendations are as follows:

3. Continue mailing the class schedule each semester and increase its distribution.
4. Increase the number of targeted ads in the schedule of classes.
5. Continue to improve the quality of the ads as well scrutinize the choice of ads so as to maximize advertising for under-enrolled and new or struggling classes and programs and services.

One third of the students indicated that they use the website to find out about student services while 24% use the class schedule or college catalog. This confirms the college's decision to upgrade the college website and to continue mailing the class schedule. The recommendations are as follows:

6. Provide adequate resources to upgrade the college website in a timely manner.
7. Create a referral book for faculty to refer students to the various student services.

One third of the students who responded to the survey reported that they find out about events and activities through posted flyers or flyers they receive in some other manner. This is consistent with the behavior of the majority of the Skyline students who are part-time and on campus intermittently or for the primary purpose of attending their classes. This behavioral characteristic lends itself to a communication method that is quick and easy to access, such as a flyer or posting. The recommendations are as follows:

8. Establish a bulletin board area or kiosk in building 6 where flyers on events and activities can be posted and more clearly designated areas in each building.
9. Develop an oversized poster advertising the numerous services available and where the student can go to access these services. The poster would then be placed in strategic areas such as high-use classrooms and lecture rooms.
10. Develop an e-newsletter that could be distributed to students on a regular basis informing them of events and activities on campus.

1. How did you first learn about the college?

Response	Percentage
From an ad in the newspaper	1%
From a classmate	16%
From a family member	27%
From a high school teacher or counselor	17%
From the college website	11%
From a college postcard	3%
On My Space.com	0%
At College Night at my high school	2%
Other, please specify	23%

2. How do you usually find out about the classes that the college offers?

Response	Percentage
The college's printed class schedule	25%
The college catalog	39%
The college website	33%
Other, please specify	3%
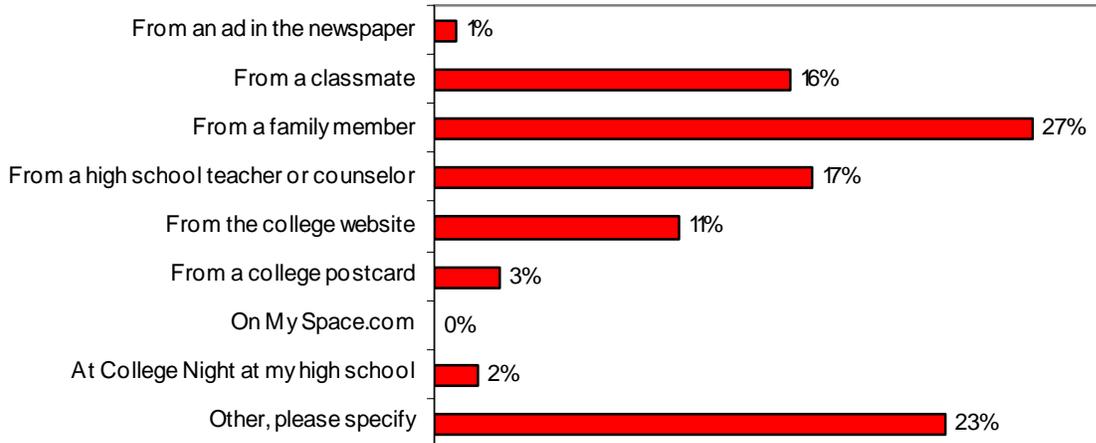
3. How do you usually find out about the student services that are available on campus (for example: counseling, financial aid and transfer center)?
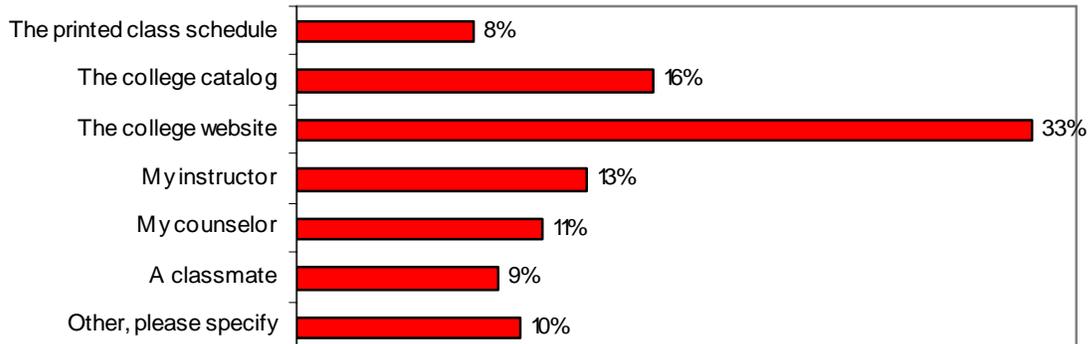
Response	Percentage
The printed class schedule	8%
The college catalog	16%
The college website	33%
My instructor	13%
My counselor	11%
A classmate	9%
Other, please specify	10%

4. How do you usually find out about events and activities that are happening on campus?

Source	Percentage
A classmate	11%
An instructor	15%
A counselor	1%
A college flyer	23%
A college bulletin board	19%
The college website	18%
The Associated Students of Skyline College (ASSC)	2%
Other, please specify	11%

6. What is your age group?

- Under 18: 3%
- 18-22: 33%
- 23-28: 20%
- 29-39: 19%
- 40-49: 12%
- 50+: 13%
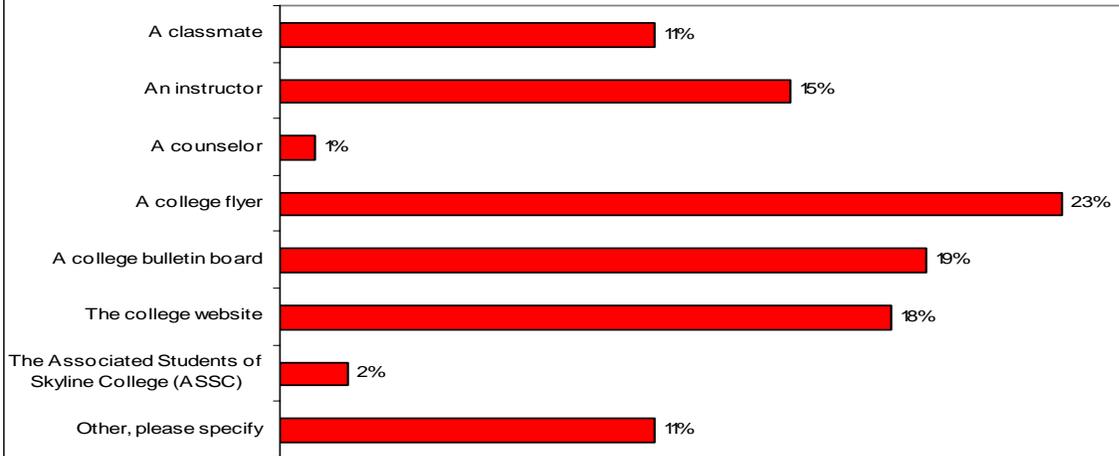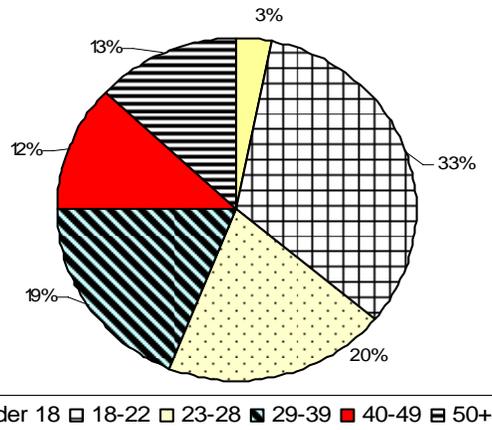
7. What is your enrollment status?

Status	Percentage
First-time to college	16%
First-time to Skyline, transferring from another institution	13%
Continuing Skyline student	55%
Returning after one or more semesters or not attending Skyline	17%
Concurrently enrolled in high school	1%
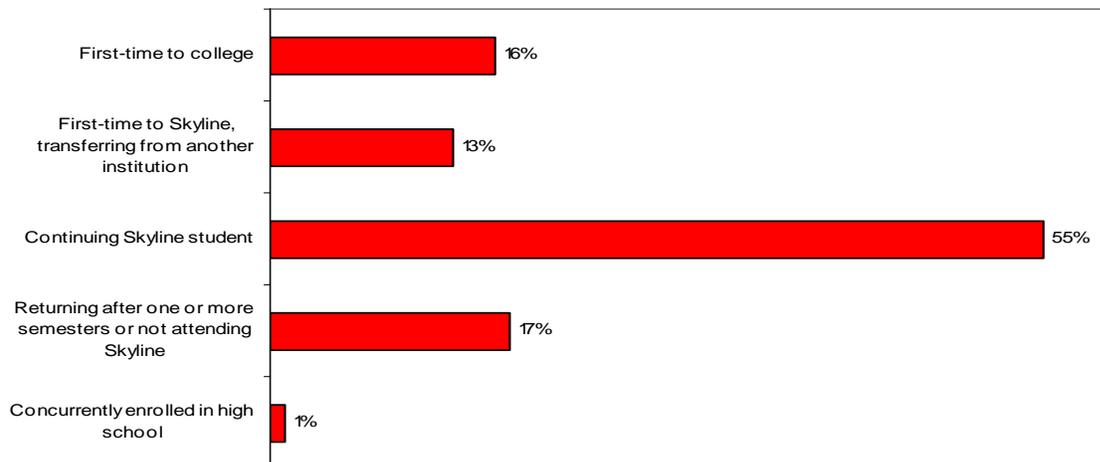
First Year Experience
Student Survey and Faculty and
Staff Survey Results

Fall 2007

Prepared by:
Skyline College
Office of Planning, Research & Institutional Effectiveness

Background

The Foundations of Excellence in the First College Year (FOE) is a project of the Policy Center on the First Year of College. The FOE began in 2003 and was funded by the Lumina Foundation for Education and The Atlantic Philanthropies. The purpose of the Foundations of Excellence is to encourage institutions of higher education to engage in a comprehensive process of self assessment and improvement planning related to the new student experience. The FOE uses an aspirational model comprised of nine components referred to as Dimensions, and measurement principles which serve as the framework for the self-study and improvement planning process. Each year a small group of colleges and universities are selected to participate in the FOE project and receive assistance from the Policy Center and access to their various assessment tools and resources. In the summer of 2006 Skyline College was selected to participate in the Foundations of Excellence national cohort for 2006/07.

The self-study began in the summer 2006 with training by the Policy Center of group of Skyline College faculty, staff and administrators who formed the Skyline College FYE Steering Committee. In order to accurately evaluate the programs, services, activities and interventions related to the first year experience, the FYE Steering Committee created an operation definition of a freshman at Skyline:

> The First-year cohorts at Skyline College consist of students who: were transfer, degree and/or certificate-seeking or whose education goal was undecided and were continuing, transfer, first-time or returning, and had not completed an associate degree or higher, and who completed 24 or fewer units at Skyline College.

As part of the self-study process Skyline College engaged in two different surveys: Faculty and Staff Survey and Student Survey. Both were administered in the Fall 2006 via an on-line survey. All faculty and staff were sent e-mail invitations to participate with several automated reminder notifications to complete the survey. Similarly, all students were sent an e-mail invitation, reminder notifications and a link to the survey was placed on the college's website. Students were also provided an incentive to participate through the possibility of receiving an iPod Nano. At the completion of the survey, five students were randomly selected to receive an iPod Nano.

A total of 401 students responded to the survey. Of the students who responded 31% were freshman and more than half of the respondents (70%) had been at Skyline for 1-3 semesters. The majority of students who responded to the survey were part-time (63%) and female (63%). Of those students who responded to the 41% were Asian, 16% were Hispanic, 28% were White and 1% were Black, closely reflecting the student population at Skyline College. About one third (35%) of the student respondents were between the ages of 18-21 and most were employed off campus (70%).

A total of 149 faculty and staff responded to the faculty and staff survey. Of those who responded 58% were faculty, 19% were staff, 14% were professional staff and 9% were administrators. The majority of respondents (89%) had worked at Skyline for at least one year and 83% responded that they had direct working relationships with new students and/or had knowledge of institutional practices regarding the first year of college.

Highlight of the Findings

- Faculty and staff who took the survey believed that the college had not established a common philosophy on working with new students for their first year experience. However, there was agreement among faculty and staff that the college is highly committed to new student success.

- Students who took the survey believed that they know where to go to get help with non-academic matters and believed that faculty and staff was able to refer them to the right office when they had questions.

- Students who responded to the survey believed that there was not enough information about out-of-class activities nor did they know where to go to get involved with college-sponsored organizations or events or feel that the importance of these activities was conveyed.

- Both faculty/staff and students who took the survey believed that the college communicated fairly well the expected standards of behavior (i.e., academic honesty and ethical conduct).

- Students opinion about academic advising differed somewhat from that of faculty and staff. Students who took the survey believed that they were receiving a moderate amount of assistance from faculty and staff in future enrollment plans, selecting courses and explanation of requirements. Faculty and staff believed students were receiving a high amount of assistance.

- Faculty and staff who responded to the survey believed that the college was meeting the needs of sub-populations of students (i.e., Honors students, students with learning and physical disabilities and racial/ethnic minority students) fairly well.

- Students who responded to the survey felt that their academic needs were being met and felt respected and that they were being treated fairly.

- The faculty and staff who took the survey believed that there was a fairly high degree of diversity awareness infused into the curriculum and out-of-class activities, but the students believed there was only a moderate amount.

- The faculty and staff who responded to the survey believed that assessment and assessment information (including research) was slightly used to influence their work with new students and that assessment was used only moderately for improvement planning.

- Faculty and staff who took the survey believed that Skyline College was providing a moderately high quality experience for new students and that the delivery of the first year experience at the college enhanced student learning.

- Students who took the survey responded that they were highly satisfied with their decision to attend Skyline College, believed the college was committed to new student success, and would recommend the college to friends.

Philosophy Dimension

The Philosophy Dimension received an overall mean score rating from the faculty and staff of 3.4. This was the third lowest of the nine overall dimension ratings. This dimension asked questions about the degree to which the institutional philosophy for working with new students was institutionalized and communicated to the college and the degree to which individual departments operated from a common philosophy on working with new students. These questions received the lowest ratings within this dimension with a range from 1.3-3.3 mean scores. In addition, a question was asked about the degree to which the college was committed to the success of new students received one of the highest ratings of 4.0 mean score.

There were no questions on the student survey that were linked to the Philosophy Dimension.

Organization Dimension

The Organization Dimension received an overall mean score rating from the faculty and staff of 3.5. This was the sixth highest of the nine overall dimension ratings. This dimension asked questions about the degree to which faculty and staff could accurately refer students to various organizational structures including: Administrative questions, academic rules, help with coursework, personal issues, and institution-sponsored events. The ratings for this cluster of questions were from 4.3 mean score on the high end (help with coursework) to 3.7 mean score on the low end (help with personal issues). Questions were also asked about structures and resources including the degree to which the institution effectively organized itself to develop an integrated first college year that supported the following: Routine communications among units, collaborations between academic and student services, and adequate resources for academic support services, entry-level course, and extracurricular activities. All of these received mean scores ranging from 2.93-3.46. Two additional questions were asked regarding whether student services and faculty partnerships were encouraged by institutional leadership (3.4) and whether faculty/staff had a voice in decisions about new student issues (2.96).

A similar set of questions were asked of students. This dimension received a 3.5 overall mean score rating (fourth highest rating out of seven) with the highest rating of 3.9 found under the degree to which the student understood how the college was organized so that the student could get help with non-academic matters/personal issues. The lowest rating (2.9) was found under the question which asked about the student's understanding of where to go to get involved with college-sponsored organizations or events. An additional question was asked as to the degree to which faculty and staff referred the student to the right office when they had questions. This question received a relatively high rating of 3.8.

Transitions Dimension

The Transitions Dimension received an overall mean score rating from the faculty and staff of 3.5, and was the fifth highest rating of the nine overall dimension ratings. This dimension asked faculty and staff about the degree to which the institution communicated to new students the importance of standards of behavior, academic honesty, acknowledging the source of ideas not their own, ethical conduct and assuring academic support outside of the classroom. The responses to this cluster of questions ranged from 3.3-3.6. Faculty and staff

were also asked questions around academic advising. This included a question on overall effectiveness of academic advising (3.5 mean score) , as well as the degree to which faculty and staff helped new students select courses, discussed with students what it takes for them to be academically successful, and future enrollment plans. In addition a question about the degree to which faculty and staff received training to effectively address new student needs was asked. This cluster of questions rated relatively high, ranging in mean scores from 4.6-4.7.

The same set of questions was asked of the students with the addition of several other clusters of questions. This dimension received a 3.1 overall mean score rating making it the second lowest rating out of seven dimension ratings. When asked about the degree to which the college communicated standards of behavior including academic honesty, acknowledging the source of ideas not their own and ethical conduct, the student responses ranged from 3.5-3.9. When asked about academic advising and the degree to which faculty and staff explained program requirements, discussed future enrollment plans and helped students to select courses, the student responses ranged from 3.2-3.5. Students were then asked about making connections and the degree to which the college helped them connect with other new students and continuing students, as well as with faculty members and academic support services and making their family feel part of the college experience. The student responses ranged from a high of 3.2 (connecting with academic support services) to a low of 2.4 (helping family to feel part of the college experience). Students were also asked two questions about out-of-class activities and the degree to which the college communicates the importance of these activities and the opportunities for involvement that the college provided. Both questions rated relatively low (2.7). Finally, the survey asked questions about pre-enrollment information and activities and the degree to which the college communicated academic expectations to students as well as information about programs and majors, tuition and financial aid. This cluster of questions rated relatively high with a range of 3.3-3.6.

Campus Culture Dimension

The Campus Culture Dimension received an overall mean score rating from the faculty and staff of 3.6, and was rated the fourth highest of the nine overall dimension ratings. This dimension asked faculty and staff about the degree to which faculty involvement with new students was considered important to institutional leaders, department leaders, and colleagues. All three questions rated relatively high with mean scores ranging from 3.9-4.0. Faculty and staff were then asked about the degree to which excellence in teaching new students was acknowledged and/or rewarded by faculty colleagues and department leaders. Both questions received mean scores of 2.9. When asked about the hiring process (responsibilities to new students described in job description, candidate interviews and during the new faculty orientation), faculty and staff responses ranged from 2.6-2.8.

The students were asked one question related to the Campus Culture Dimension. This question asked students the degree to which the instructor made him/herself available outside of class. The mean score rating for this question was relatively high at 4.0.

All Students Dimension

The All Students Dimension received an overall mean score rating from the faculty and staff of 3.9, and was rated the highest of the nine overall dimension ratings. The questions in this

dimension asked faculty and staff about the degree to which the institution addressed the needs of the following subpopulations of students: Honors students, students with academic deficiencies, students with learning disabilities, students with physical disabilities, student athletes and racial/ethnic minority students. The responses ranged from 4.2 (Honors students) to 3.7 (students with academic deficiencies). The other questions rated 3.8 and 3.9.

The students were asked a similar set of questions along with a few additional questions about campus environment and quality of courses. This dimension received a 3.9 overall mean score rating making it the second highest rating out of the seven overall dimension ratings. The first question asked the degree to which the student felt safe on campus. This question rated 4.0 mean score. The remaining questions asked the student the degree to which they felt respected (3.9), felt they could express their beliefs without concern about how others will react (3.8), felt their academic needs were met (3.8), felt their social needs were met (3.4) and felt they belonged (3.6). A final question asked the student to what degree the instructor treated all students fairly regardless of gender, race or ethnicity. This question rated the highest with the dimension at 4.5 and among the highest on the survey overall.

Learning Dimension

The Learning Dimension received an overall mean score rating from the faculty and staff of 3.7, and was rated the third highest of the nine overall dimension ratings. The questions in this dimension asked faculty and staff about the degree to which the institution assured all new students individualized attention from faculty and staff as well as out-of-class learning opportunities. These questions rated 3.6 and 3.3 respectively. The survey then asked faculty and staff the degree to which they understood the institutions intended education goals for new students. This question rated among the lowest in this dimension at 3.3. Faculty and staff were asked to rate the degree to which they, as faculty, communicated academic expectations to new students, encouraged students to ask questions in class, effectively managed student behavior in classes, initiated communication early in the term with students who are performing badly, encouraged students to participate in course-related out-of-class events, made themselves available to students outside of class, developed and documented specific learning goals for a course. For this cluster of questions the mean scores ranged from 3.9 (documented specific learning goals) to 4.7 (encouraged students to ask questions in class).

The Learning Dimension rated third highest overall of the nine dimensions at 3.8 mean score. This section of the student survey asked several questions about the degree to which a student-identified course was appropriate to the student's academic preparation with regard to writing (3.2), reading (3.3), library research skills (3.3), mathematical skills (3.2) and computing skills (3.4). This section of the survey also asked the student the degree to which the course material was valuable (4.0). Students were then asked several questions regarding instructors including the degree to which the instructor: helped the student learn course material (4.1), provided individual attention (3.8), provided prompt feedback (3.9), encouraged the student to ask questions in class (4.3), effectively organized course material (4.1), communicated concepts clearly (4.0), used effective teaching methods (4.1), communicated academic expectations to the student (4.1) and encouraged the student to participate in course-related out-of-class events (3.6).

Diversity Dimension

The Diversity Dimension received an overall mean score rating from the faculty and staff of 3.8, and was rated the second highest of the nine overall dimension ratings. The questions in this dimension asked faculty and staff the degree to which the curriculum and out-of class activities experienced by new students included appropriate attention to diverse ideas and world views. The responses to these two questions were 3.7 and 3.9 respectively. The survey then asked about the degree to which the institution provided opportunities for the following groups to interact with individuals from differing backgrounds and cultures: other students (4.0), faculty and staff (3.8), people outside the institution (3.2). The last question in this section of the survey asked faculty and staff about the degree to which the institution communicated to new students the importance of respecting others with differing opinions. The response was 3.8 mean score.

The students were asked a similar set of questions along with a few additional questions about interactions and standards of behavior. This dimension rated 3.2 mean score overall and was the lowest rated dimension of the seven on the student survey. The first set of questions asked about the degree to which the college exposed the student to different world cultures, world religions, political perspectives, and issues related to social and economic status. The results for this cluster of questions ranged from 2.7-3.3. The next cluster of questions in the Diversity Dimension section of the survey were the same as those asked in the faculty and staff survey. These questions included the degree to which the institution provided opportunities for the following groups to interact with individuals from differing backgrounds and cultures: other students (3.5), faculty and staff (3.3), people outside the institution (2.7) and the degree to which the institution communicated the importance of respecting others with differing opinions (3.6).

Roles and Purposes Dimension

The Roles and Purposes Dimension received an overall mean score rating from the faculty and staff of 3.4, and was rated the second lowest of the nine overall dimension ratings. The questions in this dimension asked about the degree to which the institution helped new students explore their motivation for getting a college education in terms of their: knowledge for personal growth (3.4), preparation for future employment (3.7), active engagement in the community (3.0), contributions to the betterment of society (3.0), and achievement of life goals (3.5).

The student survey asked a similar set of questions as those found in the Roles and Purposes section of the faculty and staff survey. The overall rating for this dimension of the student survey was 3.4 mean score, making it the third lowest rating of the seven overall dimension ratings. Students were asked about the degree to which the faculty and staff advisors discussed how college helped them to achieve their goals (3.2), and to examine their personal reasons for getting a college education (3.0). In addition, the survey asked the student the degree to which the college helped the student understand how attending college increased knowledge for personal growth (3.7), prepared them for involvement in the community (3.4), and to contribute to the betterment of society (3.4).

Improvement Dimension

The Improvement Dimension received an overall mean score rating from the faculty and staff of 2.7 and was rated the lowest of the nine overall dimension ratings. The questions in this dimension focused on professional development and the use of assessment. The first set of questions asked about the degree to which the faculty and staff were engaged in various professional activities that focused on the first year experience including: Attending conferences and workshops (2.8), attending national or regional conferences and workshops (2.4), reading professional materials (3.0), and presenting at conferences or contributing to publications (2.0). The second set of questions asked the faculty and staff about the degree to which specified information had influenced their work with new students including: Demographic information from the college's database (2.7), measures of pre-enrollment academic skills (2.7), academic skills measured after one semester or more (2.8), measures of student time spent studying (2.6), measures of student alcohol consumption (1.8), current practices at other institutions (2.4), and professional/published research (2.8). There were three additional questions which asked faculty and staff to provide overall ratings on assessment capabilities including: Assessing what is relevant (3.3), disseminating results in a timely manner (3.3), and using results for improvement (3.2).

There were no questions in the student survey related to the Improvement Dimension.

Overall Evaluation of Institution

The faculty and staff survey asked respondents to provide an overall evaluation of the institution's delivery of the first year in the following areas: Demonstrating that the success of new students is an important goal (3.5), enhancing students' personal development (3.4), enhancing student learning (3.7), improving the probability that students will re-enroll at this institution (3.6), and providing a high quality experience for students (3.7).

The student survey also asked respondents to provide an overall evaluation as follows: The degree to which the college provided the student the right amount of attention and support (3.5), helped the student make the transition to college (3.4), had been a good place for college students (3.8), helped the student succeed as a student (3.7), satisfied with the decision to attend this college (4.0), the college was committed to the success of new students (3.8), the value of the college experience (4.0), expanded awareness of issues (3.6), ability to discuss a broader range of topics (3.6), ability to better defend position on issues (3.5), ability to make better decisions (3.6), ability to objectively evaluate information (3.7) and would recommend the college to friends (4.0).

Student Survey-Overall Evaluation

Chart with values:
- 65. Attention and Support: 3.5
- 66. Transition to College: 3.4
- 67. Good Place: 3.8
- 68. Helped to Succeed: 3.7
- 69. Recommend to Friends: 4.0
- 70. Satisfied w/ Decision: 4.0
- 71. Committed to Ss Success: 3.8
- 72. Expand Awareness: 3.6
- 73. Broader Range Topics: 3.6
- 74. Defend Issues: 3.5
- 75. Make Better Decisions: 3.6
- 76. Evaluate Information: 3.7
- 77. Overall Value: 4.0

Overall Dimension Ratings

Chart (Faculty/Staff, Student):
- All Students: 3.9, 3.9
- Diversity: 3.8, 3.1
- Learning: 3.7, 3.8
- Campus Culture: 3.6, 4.0
- Transitions: 3.5, 3.3
- Organiztion: 3.5, 3.5
- Philosophy: 3.4
- Roles and Purposes: 3.4, 3.4
- Improvement: 2.7

■ Faculty/Staff   □ Student

(9)

PREFACE

Students Speak, a student focus group initiative, developed in Spring 2007 as a means to identify and analyze the practices at College of San Mateo which may contribute to its persistent student enrollment decline. In fact, since 1968, CSM's enrollment has declined 40%. *Students Speak's* goals as an initiative have also included: making recommendations to improve services or processes that may affect enrollment and building a capacity to conduct qualitative institutional research that measures organizational effectiveness.

Purpose:

This first phase of this institutional self-examination focused primarily on the "front end" of the student experience: for example, those factors that influence students' initial decisions to enroll, how (and what) they first learn about CSM, how they maneuver through application and enrollment processes, what ancillary or support services they use, and how they finally select courses, among other areas.

In more sweeping terms, its charge has been to measure how easy or difficult it is for students to "navigate" through CSM—from the perspective of students. Simply asked, what do students think about the ease of navigation through CSM?

Participants:

An internal team trained in focus group methodology and institutional research was assembled to execute the project and included a CSM faculty member, a dean, two staff members, and a professional researcher from University of California.

Presentations were made in 38 day and evening classes in 15 disciplines to recruit students. Eighty students indicated an initial interest in joining the project. Fifty-seven students finally participated in a total of 28 sessions: 15 one-on-one interviews and 13 focus groups. Interviews also included sessions dedicated solely to evaluating the functionality of CSM's website; 2 students who attended other institutions of higher education were included in the latter group.

In addition, several counselors, administrators, and faculty members were interviewed.

The team gathered a variety of demographic information about the students: students ranged in age from 17 to 60 years old; their ethnic identifications roughly mirrored that of the college as a whole; 53% were bilingual; as a group they spoke as many as 15 different languages; and 20 or more students were enrolled or had been enrolled in ESL classes.

Findings and Recommendations:

The findings reported here constitute a synthesis of more than a 100 pages of session transcripts. Recommendations are intended as suggestions and as starting points for further discussion and analysis in the respective program areas and among pertinent staff and subject-matter specialists.

Themes:

1) Every interaction matters.

Students have dozens of interactions at CSM with a large number of staff members and programs before they ever make it into an actual classroom. And many CSM students highly value and admire the often outstanding faculty, counselors, and staff who assist them; these students in turn view CSM as a reputable, highly-respected "academic" institution with opportunities for all. Those interactions include their experiences not only with individuals but navigating the website, using the class schedule, or simply calling an office at CSM to seek information. **_Each interaction is an "opportunity" for students to choose to attend and eventually enroll in classes or to reject CSM as a confusing and inhospitable place, seek another institution, or give up on higher education entirely._**

2) In several key program areas, CSM's processes are convoluted, cumbersome, sometimes illogical, and ultimately off-putting for many students.

In a well-intended effort to provide students with "all" the information students need in using programs or services, CSM frequently drowns them with dense text that is, for many, indecipherable. Overly complex "steps" and overly detailed text appear in a variety of media, both hard-copy and web-based. As CSM identifies critical enrollment management strategies, it needs to streamline key application, enrollment, matriculation, and course-selection processes; eliminate unnecessary steps in those processes; and simplify print- and web-based communications about those processes.

3) CSM needs to focus strategically its outreach, marketing, and recruitment efforts.

Findings identify multiple sub-populations of students. In identifying these subpopulations, CSM has several genuine opportunities to expand enrollment in purposeful, coherent, targeted ways, rather than through reactive, scatter-shot efforts that culminate with no measurable outcomes.

Next Steps for "Students Speak":

Beginning in Fall 2007, a new series of focus groups and interviews will specifically target evening students. In addition, focus groups and interviews will begin systematically with faculty and staff to probe at their analysis of enrollment management issues and recommendations for improvement.

SUMMARY OF
KEY FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Why Students Attend CSM

Findings:

- *Students report attending for reasons typical of community colleges: to earn college credit while in high school; prepare for transfer; acquire fluency in English; complete an interrupted education or jumpstart a delayed one; retrain for a job because of injury of layoff; prepare for a new career post-retirement, and enjoy personal enrichment.*

Recommendations:

- *Enrollment management strategies need to address multiple and disparate issues. Including the diverse needs of CSM's students.*

- *For the purposes of developing enrollment management strategies, "diversity" needs to be defined broadly and include the many issues affecting students' lives.*

A Reputable "Real" College

Findings:

- *CSM is viewed by many as a reputable institution with high academic standards and long respected history of offering a variety of opportunities for students.*

- *CSM "looks" like what students expect of a college.*

- *Students value CSM's sweeping vistas, landscaping, and style of architecture.*

- *Students value the mild sunny weather and relatively easy access from major freeways.*

- *Students highly value CSM's high rate of transfer and numerous guaranteed transfer agreements with other institutions, including University of California, and pay attention to CSM's rankings.*

- *Some students will move a great distance because of highly rated programs at CSM.*

- *Many students value activities like learning communities; they see them as enhancing CSM's prestige regardless of whether or not they participate in them directly.*

- *Many students describe CSM's faculty as challenging and excellent.*

- *Students report valuing their own accomplishments (and CSM as an institution) when they earn good grades from demanding instructors who uphold high standards.*

- *Students, at the same time, value staff and faculty who are friendly and welcoming; students prefer faculty who are both serious about their work, but warm in their demeanor.*

Recommendations:

- *CSM should consider "branding" CSM as a high-ranking academic institution with high standards but also a place with opportunities for all.*

- *In "branding" itself as a highly-regarded academic institution, CSM should not characterize itself as exclusionary or elitist but as genuinely preparing a diverse student body to be successful students in the 21st Century.*

- *In its outreach and marketing efforts, CSM should consider promoting the physical beauty of the campus as well as those specific facilities that are renovated, well-maintained, or new.*

- *In its outreach and marketing efforts, CSM should broadly promote CSM's success as an institution (e.g. rate of transfer and guaranteed transfer agreements) as well as the diverse programs that contribute to a vibrant campus life.*

Image to Counter: CSM as "High School on the Hill"

Findings:

- *Students are aware of negative stereotypes about community college students and report that they are commonly held.*

- *Students are divided about attending CSM alongside their former high school peers: for some, it provides a sense of community; for others, it becomes a negative extension of high school.*

- *Younger students report the benefits of taking classes with "older" students.*

- *Students of all ages and demographics do not like to witness uncivil behavior tolerated on campus.*

- *Uncivil behavior by students reinforces negative stereotypes about community colleges as organizations which are "not serious institutions."*

Recommendations:

- *CSM might consider reinforcing its image as a reputable academic institution that offers life-changing opportunities for students of all ages by discouraging incivility throughout the campus and within the classroom.*

- *CSM might consider promoting high expectations about standards of student behavior as an antidote to the perception of CSM as "high school on the hill."*

- *CSM might consistently encourage faculty and staff to view appropriate "classroom management" as an aspect of "enrollment management."*

People Who Recommend CSM

Findings:

- *Students of all ages report choosing CSM because an individual important to the student recommends or endorses it.*

- *Many students describe multi-generational connections to CSM which shape their decisions to attend.*

- *Several students report that counselors in local high schools do not consistently endorse CSM as a college option.*

- *Students report that counselors in local high schools typically endorse four-year institutions as the sole path for high-achieving high school graduates and, in some cases, may not be familiar with CSM's guaranteed transfer agreements.*

- *Students report that CSM's high school Outreach Counselor and EOPS staff members were instrumental in introducing them to CSM and helping them complete the initial enrollment process.*

Recommendations:

- *Marketing and outreach activities need to appeal to the diverse age cohorts who "influence" the decisions of others as well as attend themselves; these populations are multi-generational.*

- *Liaison with local high schools should educate high school counselors and faculty about CSM as a low-cost alternative with competitive transfer agreements.*

- *CSM should continue its efforts to secure adequate resources for outreach.*

Choosing CSM over "X" Institution

Findings:

- *At least half of the respondents report attending an institution of higher education prior to enrolling at CSM.*

- *Several students report experiences with baccalaureate institutions that were unsatisfactory; they see CSM as helping them to transfer eventually to a "better" baccalaureate institution.*

- *Several students report overcrowding, lack of available classes, disappointment in their major courses, a sense of personal isolation, and considerable expense as reasons for leaving a CSU and enrolling in CSM.*

- *Students who live in San Francisco will commute to CSM because of the "unfriendly" environment and overcrowding at CCSF and because CSM provides a more "welcoming" setting.*

- *Students who are UC eligible may consider CSM if they feel confident that as transfers they can secure a spot at highly desirable UC campuses in the schools of their choice.*

Recommendations:

- *CSM should consider targeting outreach activities to high school seniors and others who are likely to have been accepted by a CSU or UC. (Cohorts may be identified through SAT reporting, for example.)*

- *CSM should consider a targeted recruitment of prospective math and science majors at Mills and Burlingame high schools for whom acceptance as freshmen by their first-choice UC in a first-choice major is remote. These students are significantly more likely to secure a spot in competitive departments and majors as transfers.*

- *CSM should consider outreach that specifically targets San Francisco residents.*

- *If CSM targets AP students, it might review processes which include the timely evaluation of AP courses/scores, efficient transition for students from a concurrently-enrolled status, the assignment of priority registration dates, and the use of discipline-specific advisors.*

Pre-college Paths to CSM

Findings:

- *Positive experiences as concurrently-enrolled high school students and as MCHS students do influence students' attitudes about CSM; they do not, however, ensure that students will continue college study at CSM.*

- *Enrolling in CSM coursework while a high school student can help ensure acceptance at a UC or a highly-rated baccalaureate institution.*

- *Positive experiences with College for Kids can influence a prospective college student's enrollment decisions even a decade after the childhood experience.*

Recommendations:

- *CSM should begin to cultivate MCHS students and concurrently-enrolled students early in their high school experience (especially those enrolled in AP courses).*

- *CSM should look upon College for Kids as a means to cultivate future students as well as cultivate the families of those children as those families become "key influencers" for prospective students.*

Other Paths to CSM

Finding:

- *Some students choose CSM solely because of job training, retraining, and career preparation opportunities*

ESL: A Path to Other Coursework and New Goals

Findings:

- *Anecdotes reported by students suggest that San Mateo Adult School does not actively or consistently promote CSM's ESL program.*

- *ESL students who had previously attended an adult school report difficulty with the transition to CSM and with navigating the college.*

- *ESL students frequently report a general lack of familiarity with CSM's programs and services.*

- *The ESL program is an "enrollment management" opportunity—a path for some students to enroll in other additional courses.*

Recommendations:

- *CSM might consider offering activities that would bring San Mateo Adult School faculty to the CSM campus.*

- *CSM might consider developing a "bridge" course designed as, in part, an orientation for the adult school graduate.*

CSM Website as Recruitment Tool

Finding:

- *CSM's website is a critical source of information about CSM for prospective students investigating the college.*

Recommendations:

- *Summary information about CSM (its history, programs, and students served) needs to be easily accessible from the homepage.*

- *CSM's success stories, including personal vignettes about students, data on academic rankings, and/or information about award-winning programs, needs to be highlighted on the homepage in an easy-to-read format.*

- *CSM should pursue a strategy to ensure that internet search engines and online web resources easily link to CSM's homepage. For example, they might also include:*

  - √ *Sponsored links on Google and Yahoo Search, among others, associated with a variety of key word searches*

  - √ *Robust Wikipedia entry that is dynamic and maintained; and*

  - √ *Reciprocal link with College of Saint Mary (who owns "CSM.edu").*

Components of Matriculation
Applying to CSM

Findings:

- *Students report that the use of jargon and "insider" terminology is confusing for first-time student when used by staff or used in web-based and hard-copy materials.*

- *Students report the need for clearer signage that identifies building and facilities and large-format maps located throughout the campus at key locations, including parking lots.*

- *The class schedule is a critical and widely-used tool for virtually all students; few students, however, were familiar with the course catalog.*

- *Students report that the text on "New Students Steps" and "Welcome to CSM Online Application" pages is far too dense and confusing and the steps need to be simpler.*

- *Online information does not clearly delineate the steps new students should expect after completing CCCApply, including information about registration dates and how (or whether) to log on to WebSMART.*

- *CCCApply does not offer enrollment options for a given semester which are in sync with the availability of CSM's schedule online; no information is provided online that instructs students to apply on CCCApply for a "current" semester in these cases.*

- *One case study indicates that Admissions & Recordss email support is timely and courteous.*

Recommendations:

- *Materials which are likely to be used by a first-time student need to define key terms.*

- *CSM might encourage staff who are likely to work with first-time students to define and explain key terms repeatedly.*

- *CSM might consider a campus-wide effort to improve signage, posting large-scale maps at key locations.*

- *CSM might consider the prospect of renaming buildings to connote their function, e.g. planetarium, (rather than using building numbers that do not tell students about the primary purpose of the building).*

- *CSM should consider making the course catalog available to students at no charge, both as a service to students and as a marketing tool.*

- *Online PDF versions of the class schedule and the catolog need to be genuinely searchable.*

- *Both the text and the steps in the online application need to be simplified.*

- *Online information should inform students in simple straight-forward terms what to expect of CCCApply and the next steps in the enrollment process.*

- *Online information needs to direct prospective students how to use CCCApply if the next term is not yet an option for application.*

- *Information about Admissions & Records' email resource needs to be widely distributed.*

- *CSM might consider the option of a stream-lined application for students who are taking classes purely for "personal enrichment."*

Matriculation: What is It?

Findings:

- *Students are divided about the usefulness of the matriculation process.*

- *Some students view the matriculation steps as enrollment barriers.*

- *Few students reported being aware of matriculation exemptions or options for opting out of processes.*

- *Most students are not aware of orientation materials, unless they are associated with a special program.*

- *Students are divided about their experiences with using WebSMART: initially some find it challenging and need help learning it. Once they master it, they find it often "easy to use."*

- *Many students do not know that the WebSMART graphic on the homepage is a link to WebSMART and thus may have difficulty finding it for the first time.*

- *Students expect complete course descriptions to be available online.*

- *Some students report selecting courses only using WebSMART so those course descriptions are especially important.*

- *Some students report difficulty with their first default log on to WebSMART and are dissatisfied with having to go in person to Admissions & Records to have it reset.*

Recommendations:

- *Online instructions and other materials about the matriculation steps need to be simplified and the density of text reduced.*

- *Prospective students need to be offered matriculation exemptions as genuine options in a simplified, easy to understand formats.*

- *Matriculation processes can vary college-to-college since Title V is interpreted in a variety of ways. CSM might consider a broad discussion among a variety of college constituencies about who should be included in the matriculation net and develop policies that are widely understood.*

- *The new "CSM Welcome Team," who were introduced in Summer 2007 as mentors and guides through the matriculation process, may be a timely and effective intervention for some students and might be explored as an option to adopt broadly at CSM.*

- *Develop a brief interactive online orientation that is placed on the WebSMART homepage (not solely with "Orientation").*

- *Indicate that the WebSMART graphic on the homepage is a live link.*

- *Bring online all course descriptions for all courses listed in WebSMART's class schedules.*

- *CSM might consider developing a process for resetting a logon in WebSMART that a student can complete online.*

Placement Testing

Findings:

- Students generally report satisfaction with the placement test process.

- Many students, especially returning students, report anxiety about the placement testing; as a result they consistently need good "customer service" skills in this setting and sensitivity to their needs.

- Several respondents questioned why CSM does not recognize placement test results from other community colleges.

Recommendations:

- Good customer service be a high priority for this key unit, especially as it provides one of the first experiences and impressions of the college for prospective students

- Appropriate staff and faculty consider examining what constitutes an "acceptable" retake rate for math assessments and explore ways of improving that rate if needed.

- Appropriate staff and faculty explore the issue of accepting placement test results from other community colleges as a way of eliminating unnecessary steps in the matriculation process for new students.

Counseling

Findings:

- Students engage in numerous ways to obtain information for academic planning, including using resources from the CSM's website and consulting with informed classified staff and student aides.

- Students are divided about the quality of their experiences with counselors.

- Students describe counselors or advisors as "effective" when they teach students concrete skills, help them set goals, and "broaden their horizons."

- Students consistently report that some counselors appear disengaged during counseling sessions, providing either incorrect or "formulaic" guidance.

- Students frequently cite "academic advisors" as providing important discipline-specific knowledge, accurate information, and valued guidance.

Recommendations:

- Counseling program consider developing "enrollment management" strategies to ensure more consistent quality in its service delivery.

- Counseling program offer students a range of options in seeking academic planning information, including access to accurate online materials and the assistance of trained students and classified staff.

- *Counselors should not underestimate the importance of their roles as teachers—helping students learn how to use institutional and other resources effectively as well as define and meet their educational goals.*

- *Counseling program might consider making counseling processes more transparent for students. The counseling program could define standards of service—explicitly articulating, for example, what students should expect from Drop-in Counseling or during a "typical" session with a counselor or advisor; those standards should be clearly communicated to students.*

- *Counseling program continue to offer students the services of discipline-specific academic advisors.*

"Work-arounds" the Matriculation Processes
Case Studies

Findings:

- *Because of perceived inefficiencies or barriers in the matriculation process, some programs have created "work-arounds."*

- *Their strategies include simple, straight forwarded instructions about how to apply to CSM displayed on the respective program website.*

- *In one case, the program provides information explicitly about "how to avoid matriculation " for its population of largely working adults.*

Recommendations:

- *CSM might examine these programs' strategies as possibly symptomatic of systemic problems.*

- *CSM might consider adopting similar styles of communication as it instructs students on the application and matriculation processes.*

- *CSM might consider providing similar explicit instructions in a variety of venues about exemptions for non-matriculating students.*

Special Programs and Matriculation Processes

Finding:

- *Students who are associated with special programs generally describe high levels of satisfaction with the matriculation process, including initial enrollment, placement testing, counseling, and academic planning. Programs include EOPS, International Students, Middle College High School, PEP, and Intercollegiate Athletics.*

EOPS

Findings:

- *Respondents who identified themselves as EOPS students report high levels of satisfaction with the support and guidance they receive from program staff.*

- *Respondents included EOPS students who described successful high school outreach.*

International Students

Finding:

- *Respondents who identified themselves as international students report high levels of satisfaction with the support and guidance they receive from program staff.*

Recommendation:

- *Given the high levels of student satisfaction with the program, CSM might consider targeting this population for enrollment growth that also would produce considerable revenue.*

Middle College High School

Findings:

- *MCHS students report being insulated from many of the "hassles" of the matriculation process.*

- *MCHS students report successfully learning a variety of student success strategies as a result of the program.*

Priority Enrollment Program (PEP)

Findings:

- *PEP students are generally very satisfied with assistance in the enrollment and matriculation processes.*

- *Students value priority registration, especially students who have clearly-defined transfer goals.*

- *Students who already possess clearly-defined transfer goals and majors report needing accurate, discipline-specific counseling from the very beginning.*

Recommendation:

- *PEP outreach, orientation, and counseling activities be adapted, where appropriate, to target the recruitment of high-achieving high school students who enroll at CSM because of its guaranteed transfer arrangements.*

Issues About the Physical Environment
Facilities Problems

Findings:

- *Both the consistency and quality of facility maintenance affect students' perceptions of the college as a whole and campus safety in particular.*

- *Deficits in facilities maintenance—ranging from broken desks and chairs to graffiti in restroom stalls—convey the message that CSM can't control destructive behavior and, as an institution, is not concerned with students' well-being.*

- *Students find few "welcoming" locations on campus where they can congregate.*

Recommendations:

- *CSM maintain classroom furniture in the older classroom buildings 14, 16, and 18 and ensure that classrooms and lab are well-lit at all times of the day and evening.*

- *CSM aggressively address graffiti on a consistent basis.*

- *CSM ensure that restrooms are sanitary, amenable, and genuinely safe for students.*

- *CSM explore low-cost temporary options for making Bldg. 5 more amenable for students to congregate.*

Campus Safety

Findings:

- *Many students describe CSM as a "safe" environment—a reason to attend.*

- *Many students also report concerns with the safety of remote, poorly lit parking lots and poorly lit campus grounds and stated they were, therefore, deterred from enrolling in evening classes,*

- *Students report as "troubling" the absence of emergency phones and pay phones.*

- *Several students report being aware of security officers only when they are issuing parking tickets, rather than as a presence on the campus grounds.*

- *Anecdotes reported suggest there may be "customer service" problems with some of the security personnel.*

Recommendations:

- *CSM should consider addressing concerns about lighting and emergency phones and pay phones as an "enrollment management" issue.*

- *CSM should consider that security officers have a more prominent and visible presence on campus, a version of the neighborhood uniformed "cop on a beat."*

- *CSM should consider a comparative study of evening and day enrollment patterns to examine whether women are, in fact, consistently less likely to enroll in evening courses than men.*

Student Support Services
Key "Frontline Points of Contact

Findings:

- *Students highly value good "customer service" from frontline staff in key areas: information booth, Admissions & Records, Security, Placement Center, Cashier's Office, and Counseling Center.*

- *Some students report frustration with long lines, untrained staff, and limited hours of operation for many key frontline services.*

Recommendations:

- *CSM revisit the issue of how to foster good "customer service" skills among key frontline staff.*

- *CSM should ensure that key frontline staff possess accurate knowledge about basic college functions and are familiar with appropriate protocols for referring students to other offices, functions, or programs.*

- *CSM ensure that key frontline services are genuinely available to day and evening students alike.*

- *CSM continue to explore ways web-based alternatives for typical and customary transactions.*

- *CSM continue to explore ways to improve phone services and to ensure the availability of "live" staff to answers phones.*

Financial Aide

Findings:

- *Students consistently value an opportunity to receive financial assistance while attending college and value accurate information about securing such aide.*

- *Students were consistently divided about the quality of their experiences with Financial Aide.*

- *Students were highly satisfied with the quality of their experience at the Scholarship Office.*

- *Students reported the need for more explicit coordination between Financial Aide office and the Scholarship office.*

Recommendations:

- *CSM explore ways to ensure consistency in the quality of services delivered by the Financial Aide office as an important resource for students.*

- *CSM encourage consistent coordination between Financial Aide and Scholarship services.*

DSPS

Finding:

- *Students generally report satisfaction with DSPS services.*

Student Life
Connections with other Students and Faculty

Findings:

- *The majority of students are too absorbed by demands from work, school, and family to become involved with extracurricular on-campus activities. Similarly, extracurricular activities are seen as irrelevant to their educational and occupational goals.*

- *A small minority of students actively participate in extracurricular activities and place high value on these activities.*

Recommendation:

- *Marketing and outreach materials, including web-based, should include information about a range of campus activities as a means of promoting the value of CSM—even to those students who are unable to participate.*

Finding:

- *Students highly value "knowing" at least one student in each class.*

Recommendations:

- *CSM encourage faculty to conduct discipline-appropriate classroom activities that allow students to develop "study buddy" relationships with their peers.*

Findings:

- *Students value web access to current contact information for their faculty.*

- *Students report the importance of email and voicemail as ways to communicate with faculty and expect faculty to respond in a timely way to messages.*

- *Students report being frustrated, dismayed, or put-off by faculty members who don't use email and/or voicemail; in some cases, they perceive those faculty members as possessing weak technology skills.*

Recommendations:

- *CSM consider developing processes for ensuring that faculty provide students with current contact information, including voicemail and email addresses.*

- *CSM should consider establishing standards for use of email and voicemail by faculty and provide appropriate training (or continue to provide training via the CTL).*

Academic Support
Labs & Library

Findings:

- *Students report high levels of satisfaction with the library.*

- *Students report needing better access to general-use computers where they can work and print school work.*

- *Several users of the foreign language lab report problems with computer maintenance and the limited availability of instructional assistance.*

Tutoring

Findings:

- *Students report the need for tutors in a variety of disciplines.*

- *Students generally value the assistance they receive in the Writing Center and Math Lab.*

Recommendation:

- *CSM needs to address both the near-future and long-term need for a student learning center which provides a variety of tutoring support for students.*

<u>Selecting Classes</u>
Scheduling and Program Availability

Findings:

- *Most students reported that courses are scheduled at times convenient for them.*

- *Several students reported an interest in enrolling in afternoon classes and would even prefer them to evening courses.*

- *There is no comprehensive repository of information about career preparation and job training maintained on the college website.*

- *Several students reported that generally beginning foreign language classes were offered in the evenings and not mornings when they would enroll.*

Recommendations:

- *CSM explore the viability of offering a comprehensive afternoon educational program.*

- *CSM develop the "Career Programs" website to become a comprehensive source of information about career preparation and job training offerings with links to pertinent programs.*

- *Comparable hard-copy information about CSM's career and job training programs should be widely-available for marketing and outreach.*

Choosing Faculty

Findings:

- *When students select classes, one of the most important considerations is the reputation of faculty assigned to courses.*

- *Students seek a variety of information about faculty from many types of sources, including other students, faculty, and counselors.*

- *Students frequently avoid enrolling in classes which are listed as "staff" in class schedules.*

- *A large number of students report using RateMyProfessor.com or similar faculty evaluation review sites when considering courses to take.*

Recommendations:

- *Whenever possible CSM should try to staff sections so that the names of individual faculty members are included in the hard-copy or online class schedules.*

- *As an enrollment management strategy, CSM should consider the impact of assigning key faculty to core "gatekeeper" or "gateway" courses within individual programs.*

College Website

Summary of Findings:

- *Many students find the home page "boring, "really bad, with the text "too dense" and confusing, and the graphics irrelevant; they expect, instead, images of students of all ages.*

- *They report disliking "linking pages" that contain links that loop back to the page.*

- *Students consistently find all the pages "too dense" with too much text, and too many links and directions on a given page that have no relevance to that particular page.*

- *90% of the time, the search function failed.*

- *The website does not replace the catalog and schedule for students; they are frequent users of the hard-copy schedule which they thumb through as they use WebSMART.*

- *Many students reported using the website almost solely for WebSMART tasks, enrolling in classes, seeking contact information about their faculty, or finding where and when a service is available.*

Recommendations:

- *As CSM develops policies that govern both the style and content of the website, it should involve all constituencies in that development.*

- *CSM should consider that Captivate might serve as a tool in any efforts to further evaluate the college website as it develops*

- *CSM should consider exploring ways to improve the quality of the website immediately and to begin planning and resource identification.*

- *CSM should explore using Google as a search engine within the site itself.*

CSM Enrollment Management Cycle

- Every interaction counts
- Amplify Engagement
- Mind the Store
- Integrate
- Simplify

Establish Measurable Objectives

Integrated Scheduling

Integrated Recruiting Strategies

Intake Processes

Manage Semester Start

Retention and Persistence

Measure Results
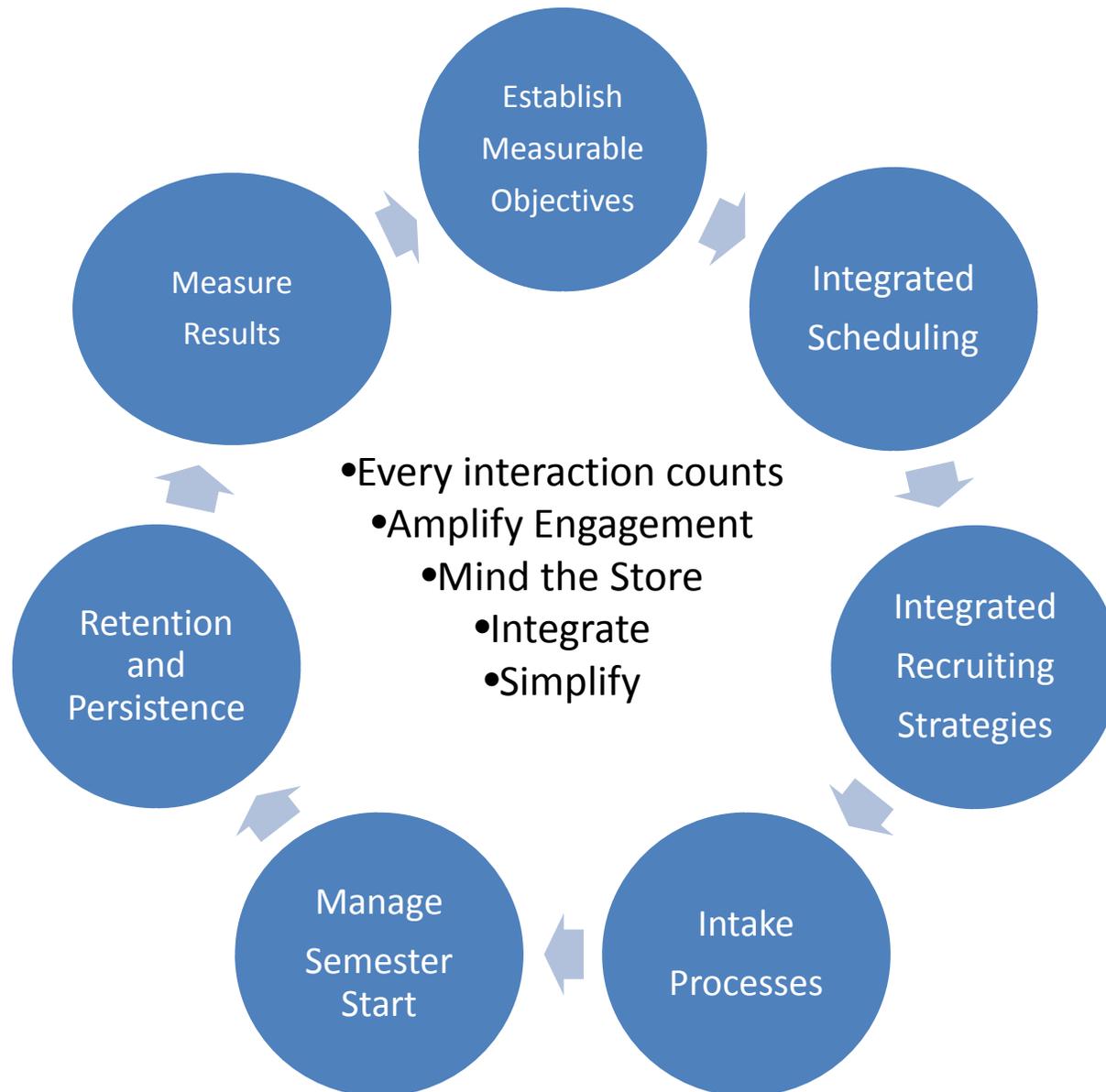
Student Survey Report

Results of recent surveys and focus groups of Cañada College students and prospective students.

Thomas Mohr
President • Cañada College • February 3, 2008

Cañada College

Table of Contents

Student Surveys & Focus Groups

A guide to understanding students and prospective students.

PREFACE

Cañada College routinely surveys students in a variety of ways to better understand them.

Over the past year, Cañada College has surveyed students and prospective students in a variety of ways to better understand both their long-term and short-term academic goals, impediments to these goals and how they view the service they receive from the college. We also look at their lifestyles and communication patterns and their perceptions of the college.

A Review of Recent Student Surveys & Focus Groups

Over the past several years the college has conducted several large student surveys along with a number of smaller focus groups to help us better understand our students. In 2006, the Office of Research conducted the Student Campus Climate Survey. The purpose of this survey was to measure current student attitudes and perceptions toward Cañada's programs, services and learning environment. In 2006 and 2007 Cañada participated in a national study of community college students and their media preferences. The survey was designed and conducted by Interact Communications of Onalaska, Wisconsin. Results provided colleges with important data on internal communications, college publications, website design and importance, Internet access, lifestyle activities, radio, television and newspaper preferences, and contact preferences. This information helps guide the marketing efforts at the college.

In addition to these major surveys, the college engaged students and prospective student in focus groups aimed at specific student populations. The Humanities and Social Sciences Division conducted focus groups involving English as a Second Language (ESL) students. Students in four different ESL classes (both day and evening) were interviewed for 1.5 hours each to determine their short-term academic goals, long-term academic goals, and obstacles they face in achieving those goals. This was an extremely important research project as ESL students are a large component of the student population and it is the goal of the college to find ways to move these students from ESL into transfer and degree programs.

Another focus group involved students enrolled in the First-Year Experience Program. This is a critical learning community largely composed of low-income, first-generation students. These at-risk students make up the majority of the student body at Cañada and the college has struggled keeping them in school. Understanding their experience is essential in aiding retention.

Another important student population that participated in a focus group last year was Latino high school students at Sequoia Union High School enrolled in the Cañada College Upward Bound Program. Approximately 42 percent of the student population at the college is Latino and the majority are first-generation, low-income students. Enrollment in the Upward Bound Program mirrors the general student population at the college so it is important to understand the experiences of these students and how they view college.

The Cañada College Marketing Department also conducted focus groups in the five Sequoia Union High School District high schools to determine how prospective students viewed the college. The focus groups were convened to determine the validity of various messages for a new recruiting brochure that was developed for the college. More than 50 students were surveyed about the strongest influences in their college decision-making process and their perceptions of Cañada, other area community college, and community colleges in general. While the focus group was not a scientific sampling, it did provide important feedback as to the perceptions prospective students have regarding the college and community colleges in general.

In short, the college connected with current students and prospective students to better understand their perceptions of the college and how we can provide better services. This report details those surveys and focus groups and will help you understand how the college interacts with students and prospective students to collect information that helps us better serve those students.

Student Campus Climate Survey

Noel-Levitz Survey measures current student attitudes about Cañada.

SUMMARY

The Noel-Levitz Survey was conducted by first constructing a statistically representative stratified sample of current students (if 55 percent of the college's enrollments were during the day, then 55 percent of the surveys went to day students. If 8 percent of the college's enrollments were in Math classes, then 8 percent of the surveys were performed in Math classes. The selected classes were also stratified by day of the week, starting time of the class, and weekly frequency).

Cañada students said they were satisfied with their experience at the college.

More than 600 surveys were collected

More than 600 surveys were collected, resulting in a margin of error of +/- 5 percent and a 99 percent degree of certainty. In addition to the extensive battery of questions in the normal Noel-Levitz survey, the Accreditation Steering Committee added 10 questions of local importance. The survey provided the college with a simple listing of strengths (high importance and high satisfaction) and challenges (high importance and low satisfaction and/or large performance gap). The college was also compared to other community colleges across the nation and the results were sorted by demographics including gender, ethnicity, enrollment status, class load, class level, educational goals, employment status, residency, disabilities, and current GPA.

How Well Are We Meeting Student Expectations?

The survey items were grouped into 11 scales. Each item was weighted from 1 (lowest) to 7 (highest) in both importance and satisfaction. Importance scores for the scales ranged from 5.43 (Campus Support Services) to 6.21 (Registration Effectiveness). Satisfaction scores for the scales ranged from 4.71 (Campus Support Services) to 5.50 (Registration Effectiveness). Performance gaps for the scales ranged from 1.21 (Safety and Security) to .63 (Student Centeredness). Registration Effectiveness ranked highest on importance (6.21), and ranked highest in overall satisfaction (5.50). Instructional Effectiveness was second highest in overall importance with a score of of 6.20 and it placed fifth in overall satisfaction (5.36). Campus Support Services ranked lowest on importance (5.43) and it ranked lowest on satisfaction (4.71). Academic Services ranked second highest in overall satisfaction (5.45) and ranked fifth on importance (6.10).

Survey Scales

Bar chart legend: ■ Average Importance   ■ Average Satisfaction

Scale	Average Satisfaction	Average Importance
Campus Support Services	4.71	5.43
Student Centeredness	5.40	6.03
Service Excellence	5.26	5.93
Campus Climate	5.25	5.98
Admissions & Financial Aid	5.13	5.94
Safety & Security	4.86	6.07
Concern for the Individual	5.27	6.12
Academic Services	5.45	6.10
Registration Effectiveness	5.50	6.21
Instructional Effectiveness	5.36	6.20
Academic Advising/Counseling	5.24	6.17

## Has your college experience met your expectations?

When asked if their college experience has met their expectations, the majority of students replied positively. Only a small percentage (8 percent) felt their college experience was worse than they had expected. The chart below details the results of this important question.

Legend:
- Much worse
- Quite a bit worse
- Worse
- What I expected
- Better than expected
- Quite a bit better
- Much better

Values: 1% · 2% · 5% · 33% · 26% · 14% · 19%

So far, has your college experience met your expectations?
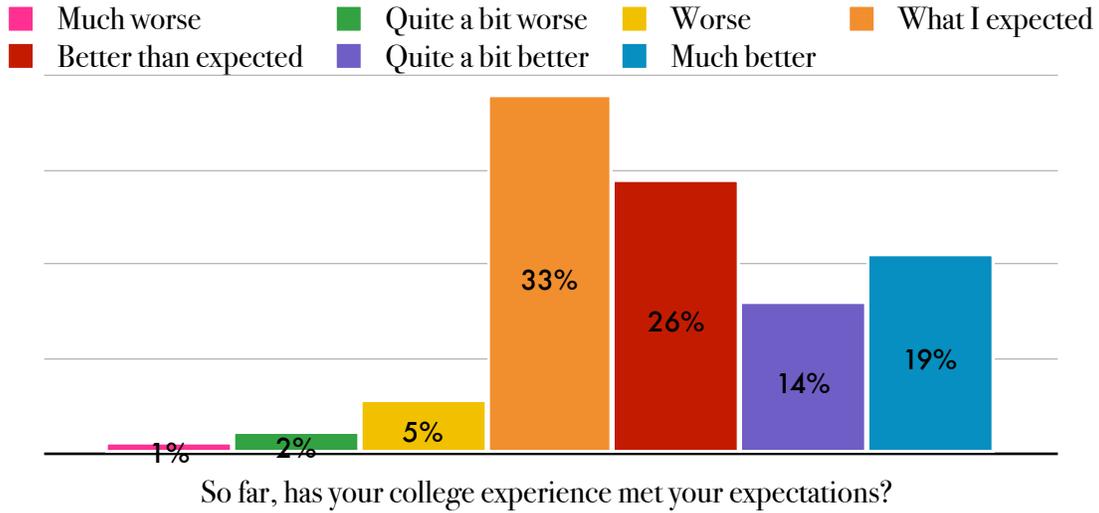
Rate your overall satisfaction with your experience

When asked to rate their overall satisfaction with their experience at the college thusfar, a large majority of students (85 percent) answered positively. Only 6 percent of the students felt dissatisfied at all. Here are the results of that question.

Legend:
- Not satisfied at all
- Not very satisfied
- Somewhat dissatisfied
- Neutral
- Somewhat satisfied
- Satisfied
- Very satisfied

Values: 0% · 2% · 4% · 10% · 17% · 46% · 22%

Rate you overall satisfaction with your experience here thusfar
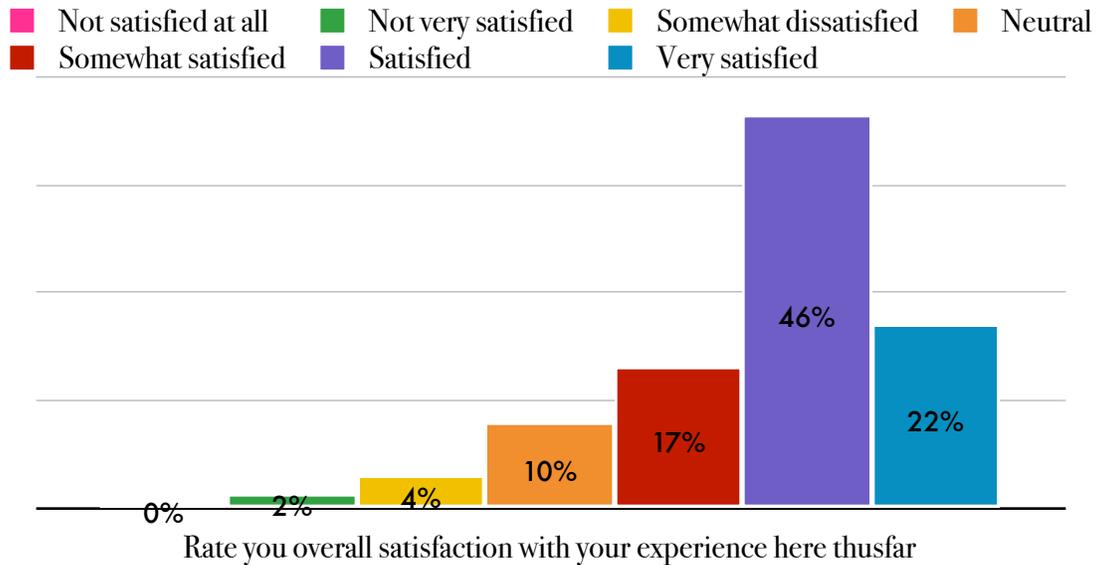
If you had to do it all over again, would you enroll at Cañada?

The final question worth noting in the Noel-Levitz Student Campus Climate Survey asked students if they had to do it all over again, would they enroll at Cañada? This question goes to the heart of customer satisfaction and the college performed extremely well. Only 6 percent indicated they would not enroll again. Eighty-seven percent said they would enroll again. Here are the results of the survey question.

All in all, if you had to do it over again, would you enroll at Cañada?
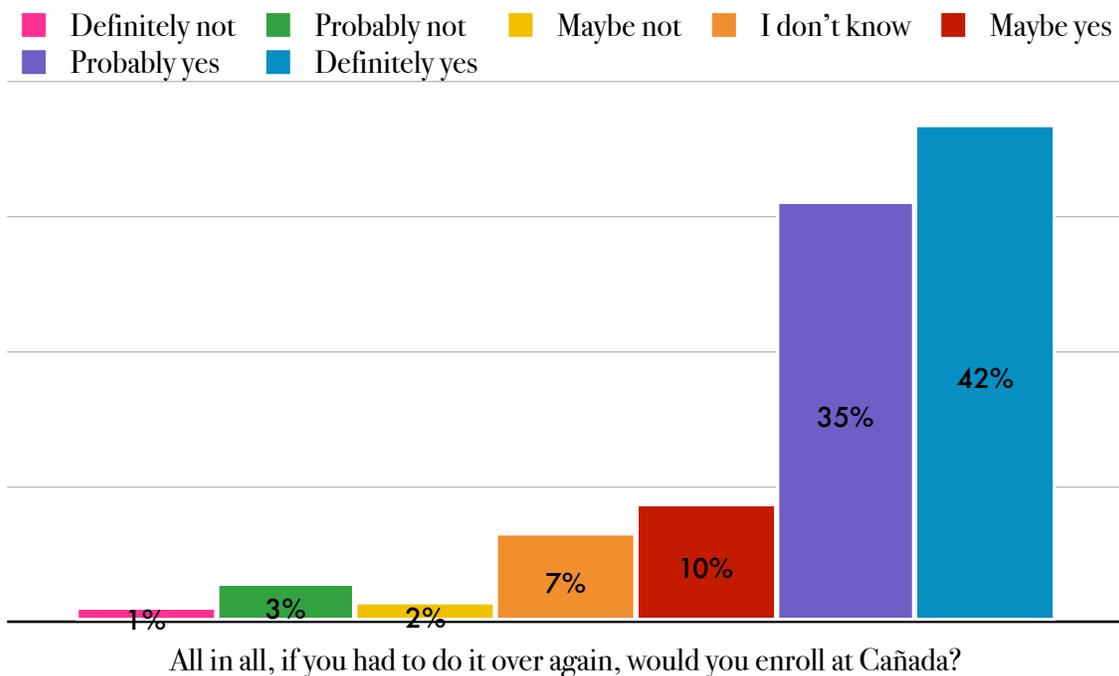
Students view the college favorably

The Noel-Levitz Student Campus Climate Survey showed that students generally have a favorable perception of the college. The services at the college that they deemed important were generally viewed favorably.

More than 41 percent of the students surveyed said they would enroll again. Another 35 percent said they would probably enroll again. This is a positive reflection on the college.

Student Media Preferences Survey

Students provide information about their lifestyles and communication patterns.

SUMMARY

Students want to communicate with the college via e-mail and the college website.

During the past two fall semesters, Cañada students have participated in a national study of community college students and their media and communication preferences. Approximately 35,000 students, including nearly 500 Cañada students, have participated in the on-line survey each year.

Communicating With Our Students

For Cañada College, the most important aspect of the Student Media Preferences Survey is learning about the ways in which our students want to communicate and interact with our faculty, academic counselors, and the institution as a whole. The survey also provides insight as to why students choose the college, how big a role friends and family play in the decision to attend Cañada, and the lifestyle choices made by our students.

Location, Location, Location…

In last year's survey students overwhelmingly told us that location was the biggest factor in choosing to attend Cañada. The second most important factor in choosing the college was specific academic programs. Reasons that were less important included the availability of financial

aid, small class sizes, and personal service. Here is a look at the reasons students provided for choosing the college.

Reasons for Attending Cañada College

Legend: Location, Transfer, Low Cost, Programs, Career Prep, Small Classes, Financial Aid, Service, Faculty

Values: 49%, 7%, 6%, 19%, 5%, 3%, 1%, 3%, 5%
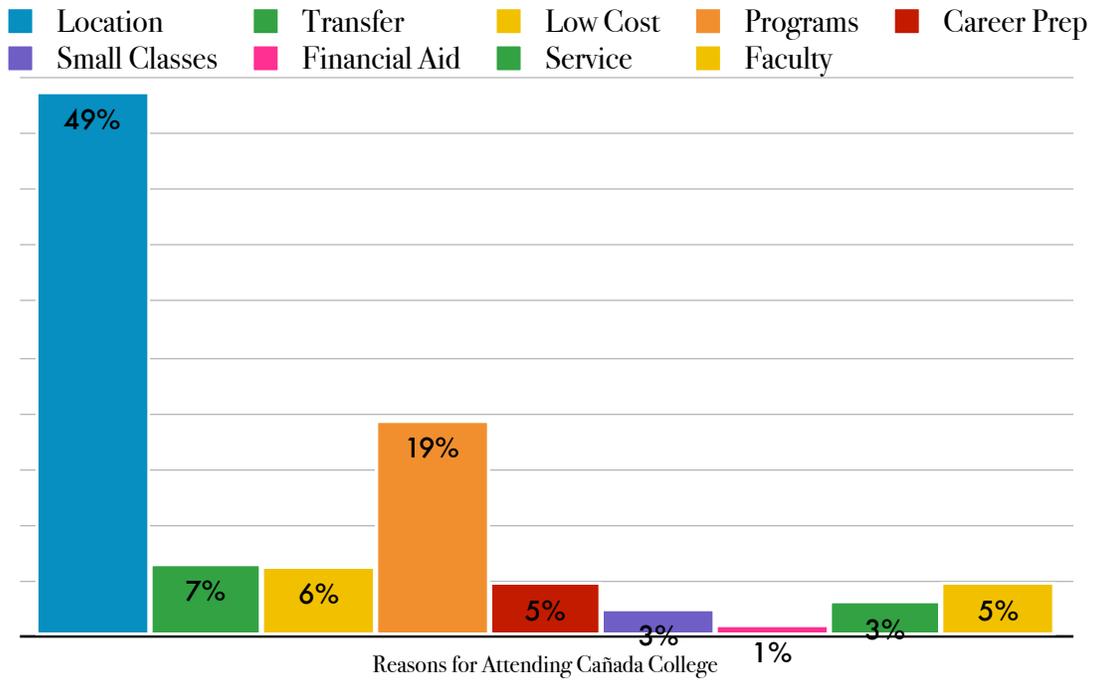
Communicating with the College

Students were asked the importance of a school-issued e-mail address. In the past, students have indicated a desire to have school-issued e-mail addresses. Here's what they said about the importance of school-issued e-mail addresses.

Importance of School-Issued e-mail

Very Important 31% — Somewhat Important 30% — Not At All 39%
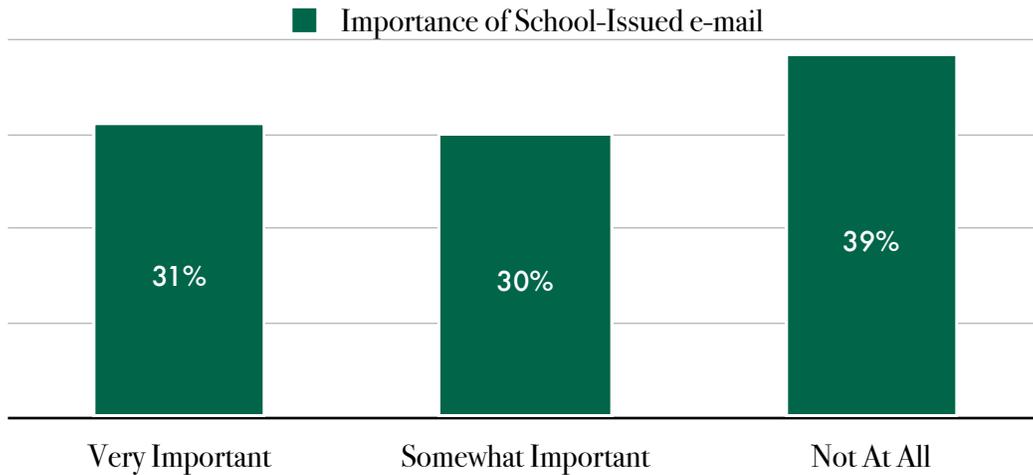
## How do students want to receive information about the college?

We asked students how they would prefer to receive information about the college. This was designed to help us determine the the preferred way for students to receive information about the college. Here's what students told us.

■ How do you prefer to receive info about Cañada?

Newspaper	Magazines	Radio	Television	Theaters	Brochures	Website
8%	2%	1%	2%	1%	15%	72%
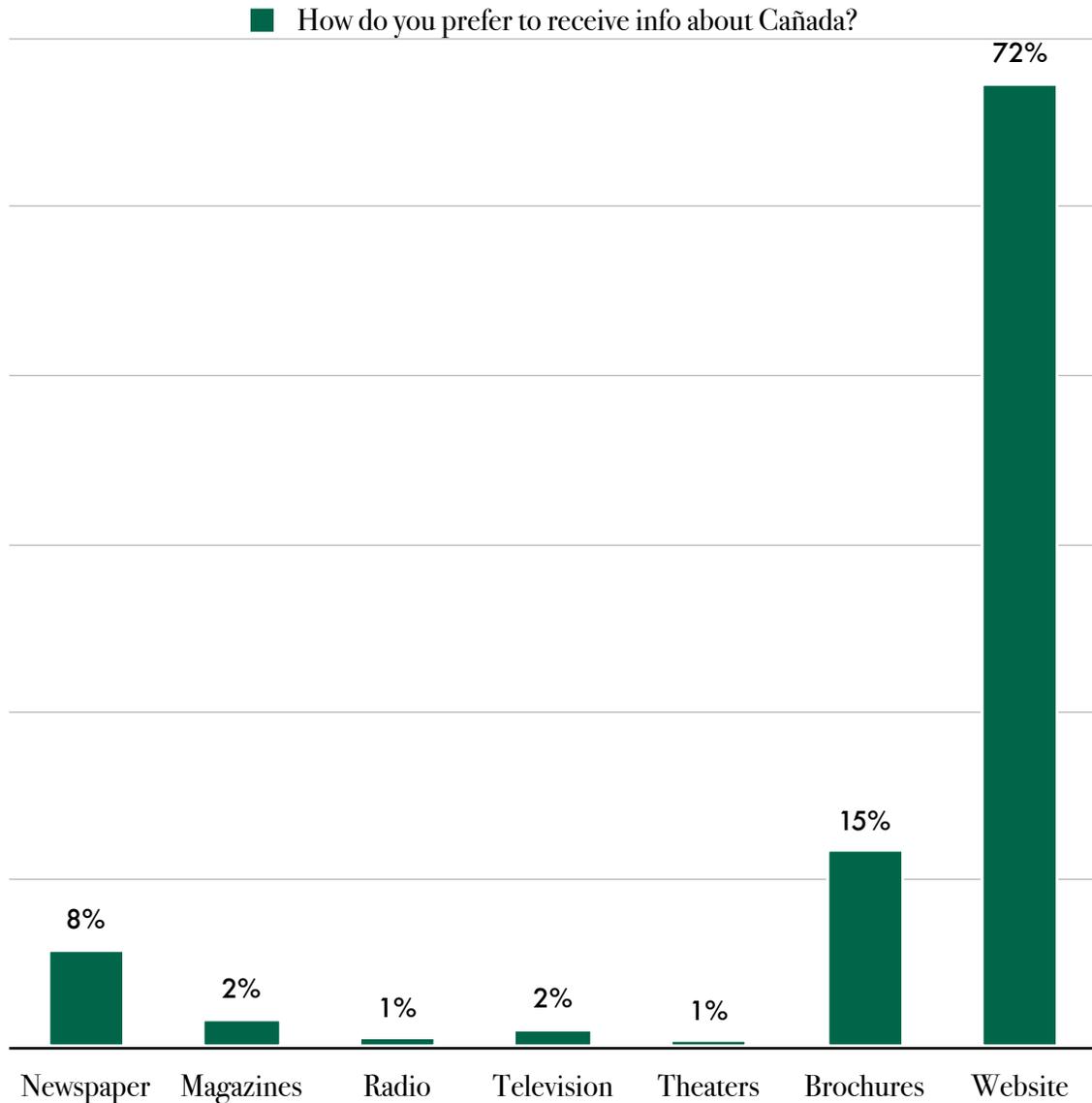
This information made it clear the importance of a high quality website. The college is currently developing a Request for Quote to completely redesign its current website,which is approximately five years old. Thought should be given to how the District plans to move forward with website design at all three colleges and how to maintain the brand identity of each college while providing students and prospective students with a consistent web presence across the district.

How important are parents/peers in your decision to attend Cañada?

We also asked our students the importance of parents and peers in their decision to attend the college. This information is important as we design outreach events and determine the most effective way to market our college to students. Here are the results.

How important were parents in your decision to attend Cañada?

Not at all	Unimportant	Some Unimp.	Some Imp.	Important	Very Imp.
30%	5%	7%	15%	24%	16%

How important were peers in your decision to attend Cañada?

Not at all	Unimportant	Some Unimp.	Some Imp.	Important	Very Imp.
24%	10%	9%	21%	22%	10%
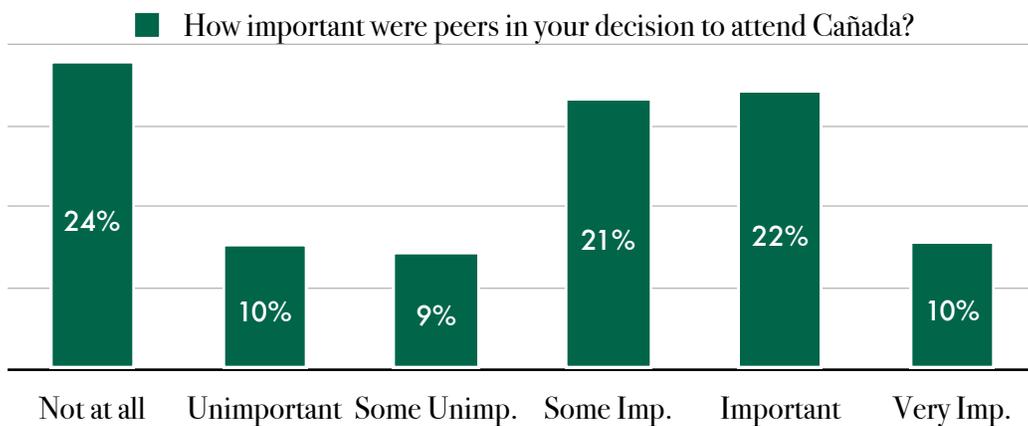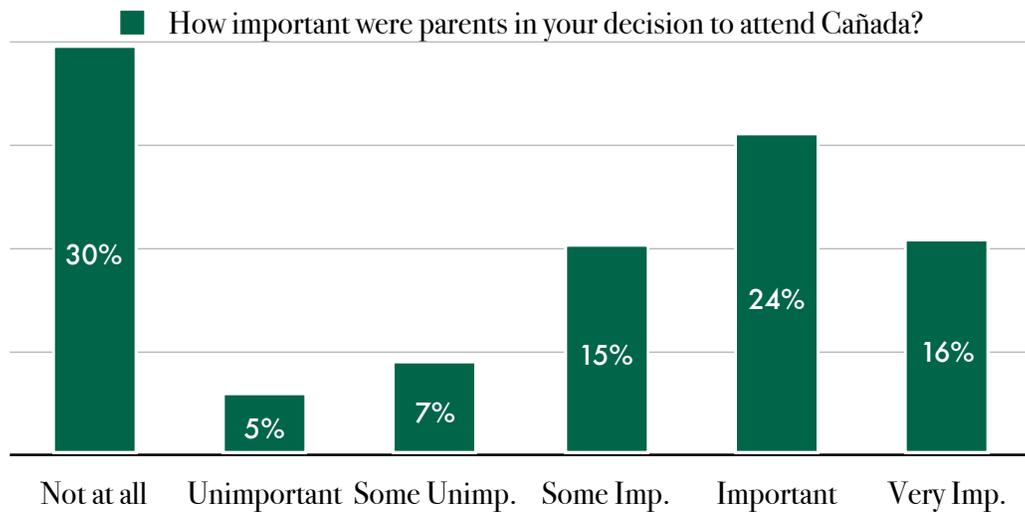
In both cases, family and peers were not seen as a very important factor in why they chose the college but both had some influence. This is similar to results we saw in focus groups conducted at local high schools.

ESL Focus Groups

Understanding the academic goals and lives of ESL students.

SUMMARY

ESL student at Cañada College usually work full-time and have families.

Dean of Humanities and Social Sciences, Katie Townsend-Merino, and Professor of ESL and English, Anniqua Rana recently completed an ESL focus group, visiting four ESL classes for 1.5 hours each. Two day classes and two night classes were visited. The results provide a glimpse of the short-term and long-term academic goals of the students and the obstacles they face.

Work and family make it difficult to study

ESL students at Cañada find it difficult to study because most work full-time (or more) and have to care for families. Many also face the fear of their immigration status.

The short-term academic goal of most ESL students is to quickly learn English and improve their job prospects. The long-term academic goals don't differ much from other students as they want to earn an associate's degree and eventually transfer to a four-year college or university. Unlike traditional transfer students, ESL students often feel limited to pursuing degrees that are offered at Cañada and they don't understand the full-range of possibilities. The college is looking to expand the "Discipline Parade" to help ESL students broaden their ideas about what type of subjects they can study and what they need to do to transfer to four-year colleges and universities.

Upward Bound Focus Groups

Understanding outreach strategies for prospective Latino students.

SUMMARY

Latino students face a variety of hurdles as they attempt to further their education, including academic counselors and and teachers at the high school level who discourage them based on their ethnicity, language skills, and citizenship. A recent focus group composed of Latino high school students enrolled in the Cañada Upward Bound Program illustrated this. The Upward Bound Program is a gateway program designed to help low-income, first-generation students think about attending college.

Latino high school students were often discouraged from attending college.

Outreach to Latinos should begin in sixth grade

Students participating in the focus group emphasized the need to begin outreach to both parents and prospective students in sixth grade. This outreach effort should include information on financial aid, tuition, expenses, scholarship opportunities and how college works. The college is currently working with the SUHSD to transform the popular KinderCaminata into an outreach event designed for sixth-graders. Students said they would participate in a Summer Bridge program if it included microbiology, marine science, and environmental science. They also felt it was important to send mentors to high schools to talk about college and send mentors to the Boys & Girls Club and Red Morton Community Center.

First-Year Experience Study

Understanding low-income, first-generation students.

SUMMARY

Students participating in the First-Year Experience Program had increased GPAs and success.

In 2006, the college surveyed students in the First-Year Experience Program taking English 836 and Math 110 compared to non-FYE students enrolled in the same classes. The FYE program is a learning community designed to increase the academic success and retention of freshmen students who might be at-risk for dropping out of school. The majority of students in this program are low-income, first-generation or disabled.

First-Year Experience increases student GPAs, success

Students in the First-Year Experience Program are divided into cohorts. These cohorts take English 836, Math 110 and a career class together. The college examined how students taking these classes in the FYE cohort did compared to other freshmen enrolled in English 836 and Math 110 classes. The retention rate for FYE students in English 836 was 84.8 percent compared to 63.9 percent for non-FYE students. The retention rate for FYE students in Math 110 was 76 percent compared to 53.9 percent for non-FYE students. There was also a significant increase in GPAs. FYE students enrolled in English 836 had an average 2.83 GPA compared to 2.17 for the general student population. FYE students in Math 110 had an average 2.45 GPA compared to 1.83 for the general student population.

SUHSD Focus Groups

How do prospective students view the college and community colleges in general?

SUMMARY

Affordability, academic counseling, and transfer rates were strong influences for students.

In December and early January Rose Media of San Francisco was hired to conduct focus groups at the five high schools in the Sequoia Union High School District. The focus groups were designed to solicit perspectives of high school students about the college, other area community colleges, and the strongest influences in their decision to choose a college. Fifty-two students, mostly high school seniors, participated.

Affordability, strong academic counseling, and transfer rates score high

Of the 52 students who participated, 32 were high school seniors and the majority were Latino and female. Every student participating in the study was familiar with Cañada and some had parents who had attended the college. This sampling is similar to the current demographics at the college. The majority (35) said they plan to attend college but only eight said they wanted to attend a community college. This was especially true at Sequoia High School where a group of 15 participants all said they were going to attend college but said community colleges were "too easy"…"shameful"…and were meant for students who "didn't try hard enough." The academic counselor said that the majority (80 percent) of the students participating in the focus group would, in fact, attend a two-year school.

Faculty serve as important ambassadors

Respondents indicated that they had a favorable impression of Cañada because faculty members had either given a talk or taught a course at their school. They also had positive impressions of the Middle College Program and the fact that they could take college courses while still enrolled in high school. When asked about what they liked about Cañada respondents said affordable, conveniently located, diverse, campus environment, small, and able to explore study options.

2008 STUDY SESSIONS

PROPOSED TOPICS

March 12	Career Technical Education (CTE)
April 9	Articulation/Transfer/University Center
June 11	Bay Area Environmental Scan
July 9	Enrollment/Outreach/Marketing/Research
September 10	Compressed Calendar
October 15	Closing the Achievement Gap

DISCUSSION OF STATE BUDGET

There is no printed report for this agenda item.

COMPRESSED ACADEMIC CALENDAR – 15/5/15/5/5

There is no printed report for this agenda item.

DISTANCE EDUCATION

There is no printed report for this agenda item.

SAN MATEO COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT
PROPOSED 2008 GOALS

Integration of Planning, Budget and Resource Allocation: In order to develop a shared vision of the future that faculty, staff, students and community understand and support, the District, through its shared governance processes, has been working to develop an integrated strategic planning model. This model incorporates and builds upon five elements: the District's Educational Master Plan; the Facilities Master Plan; a coordinated institutional research component; a comprehensive program review process; and an annual budget that is based upon the other four elements.

Many elements required for the integrated strategic planning system are already in place; however, they are not completely standardized within the District nor appropriately linked. The Vice Chancellor for Educational Services and Planning has taken responsibility for developing an organizational infrastructure that will produce the integrated strategic planning system for the District.

Specific goals for 2008 include:

Education and Planning Goals

1. The Strategic Planning process was discussed by the Board in April, 2007. The 2008 goal is to complete the District's Strategic Plan in the Spring and begin implementation in the Fall, with careful attention to integration of this plan with current College planning efforts, in order to assure concurrence with a Districtwide vision.

2. Analyze the results of the community needs assessment and the survey of high school students. Using these results, the Colleges will undertake an analysis of current course and program offerings and modify these offerings and delivery methods as deemed appropriate.

3. The District and Colleges will continue their efforts to improve high school to college transition and success (e.g., CalPASS, Summer Bridge Academy, Jump Start, Hermanos, concurrent enrollment, etc.) and expand the number of concurrent enrollment classes on high school campuses. The District and the Colleges will develop a comprehensive plan for concurrent enrollment with clearly defined targets and measurable performance outcomes.

4. Upon completion and adoption of the District's distance education plan (scheduled for the Spring), the District will begin implementation of the plan with annual review of goals and targets established by the Colleges in response to the plan.

5. Complete the implementation of the automated degree audit system to improve student access to information and provide tools, in addition to counseling services, that will allow students to be informed of progress made on their chosen program and able to plan the next steps towards their final goal.

6. The District Research Council will complete the agreed-upon research agenda and further refine the structure of research support in order to assure that both District and College research goals are coordinated and adequately address the needs of the Board, administration and faculty.

7. The Vice Chancellor of Educational Planning and Services will work with Vice Presidents of Student Services and Instruction, Faculty Senates and staff to implement the action plan which responds to Board directives received at study sessions concerning counseling. The goal is to identify and implement strategies to ensure efficiency, consistency and relevance in student counseling.

8. Work in company with the District Academic Senate to effect the remaining standardization of graduation requirements across the District.

9. Develop an equivalence matrix of all courses offered at all three Colleges.

10. Continue work to ensure the ongoing viability of the University Center at Cañada College, including pursuing opportunities for alternative funding sources and adding at least one new bachelor's degree program that can be offered through the University Center.

11. Open and begin offering classes at the Half Moon Bay satellite center; ensure that all facilities and support services are fully functional (e.g., computer lab, testing center, counseling and general lecture classrooms).

12. Reexamine District and College marketing strategies and practices and develop an integrated and targeted marketing program that utilizes multiple media to reach prospective students, current students and opinion leaders in the County.

13. Examine the potential for a Districtwide compressed calendar, including review of prior research and investigation of both opportunities and logistical requirements as identified by colleges which currently utilize the compressed calendar.

Human Resources/Recruitment/Retention Goals

14. Conduct a benchmarked salary survey for the classified professional and supervisory positions to determine if current compensation is competitive with other Bay 10 and comparable districts.

15. Implement two-year employment contracts for administrators.

16. After a successful pilot of diversity training in 2007, Diversity Coordinator Gerry Frassetti will conduct train-the-trainer sessions in spring 2008. Once we have certified trainers, we will roll out additional trainings later in the spring semester and into 2009 and 2010. The goal is to have all permanent employees experience diversity training as a supplement to our twice yearly Museum of Tolerance trainings.

17. Implement the Districtwide Accreditation Team recommendations that call for the District to 1) incorporate effectiveness in producing student outcomes into the evaluation of faculty and others responsible for student progress; and 2) develop rules and regulations regarding the evaluation of College presidents.

18. Begin construction of Cañada Vista to provide safe, affordable upscale housing close to work for District faculty and staff.

Facilities Goals

19. Complete negotiations with the successful Design/Build teams for the Skyline and CSM projects; begin construction on those projects. Regarding Cañada College, complete the RFP process and initiate construction on the gateways/landscaping project at the College.

20. The District will focus its Capital Improvement efforts on ensuring that all existing buildings that have not been addressed as part of the first phase of construction, and not slated for demolition, are modernized to meet the needs of the instructional and support mission of the Colleges.

21. The District has been successful in securing more than $87.5 million dollars through the CCCCO State Capital Outlay to date. The District will work to ensure that the $60 million dollars (currently approved for project in FY 2007/08 and 2008/09 by the Board of Governors and slated for the November 2008 General Election) is secured through a vigorous awareness campaign with the local community and business partners.

22. The current campus security operation is autonomous; has different operating procedures, policies, staffing models, levels of trainings, hours of operations; different equipment; and is not coordinated cohesively. The District will review and reorganize the current campus Security, parking and public safety operations and procedures as well as incorporate electronic access controls and video monitoring technology in order to provide a cohesive, secure and safe campus environment.

23. The District will revamp its emergency preparedness readiness by ensuring that all administrators, supervisors and key staff are compliant with Office of Emergency Service (OES), National Incident Management System (NIMS) and Standard Emergency Management (SEMS) standards. The District will also work with the Colleges to ensure that Emergency Preparedness training and emergency drills are conducted with local Law Enforcement, Fire, and Emergency Medical Teams at the Colleges.

24. The District will revise its Hazardous and Chemical Action plans and procedures as well as conduct training in order to ensure that all staff, faculty, and students who come in contact with chemicals are OSHA compliant.

25. Expand course offerings associated with the Skilled Trades Preparation Program that was developed last year and extend the program to at least one additional high school this year.

26. Develop a comprehensive plan to provide the increased maintenance staff needed as new buildings are brought on line.

27. Evaluate and refine the Capital Improvement Program's revenue "sources and uses" document to assure that there is adequate funding available from all sources (bond, State, private donations and other local revenues) to complete all projects.

Finance Goals

28. Maintain fiscal stability; develop strategies and actions to manage the effects of the State's budget deficit on our District.

29. Improve and expand on efforts to sustain and increase student enrollment.

30. In order to enhance the value of bond funds on deposit, the District will direct investments to earn the maximum amount permitted under federal arbitrage limits while maintaining appropriate levels of safety and liquidity.

SAN MATEO COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT
2007 PROGRESS REPORT ON GOALS

Education and Planning Goals

Progress on goals for 2007 includes:

1. In order to successfully develop an integrated strategic planning system for the District, the Colleges and the District will work on identifying a process that enables broad participation of faculty and staff and the community; gathering of data to gauge the health of the District; vision development; and strategic and well coordinated approaches to enhancing student success and broadening access.

    The SMCCCD Strategic Planning process has been established and was discussed with the Board at an April 11, 2007 Study Session. This presentation included the phases of the process (such as timetables that sync with the Colleges' various planning processes), planning task force, and objectives. The planning task force has representatives from all key constituent groups and has been meeting regularly. To date, internal environmental scanning is nearing completion; most of the external scans have been conducted, except for the community needs survey and high school surveys which are commencing in early February and late spring, respectively. Planning assumptions are being written. The planning assumptions will lead to broad strategic visioning, which will provide the three Colleges and the District with directions for enhancing student success and broadening access via a coordinated planning process. The plan is scheduled to be in place by the end of spring 2008.

2. Conduct a community educational needs assessment to identify unmet demands and the level of interest in distance education. Surveys and focus groups will be conducted with high school students, parents and staff; with current San Mateo County residents who are taking courses outside the District; and with select other groups.

    The District contracted with Wide Angle Communications, a firm that specializes in marketing and research and which earlier helped with the successful marketing of the FUTURES initiative (summer concurrent enrollment). The survey instrument has been developed and the survey will be conducted in early February. The survey questions include inquiries about how existing SMCCCD students evaluate their experience in the District; students' reasons for choosing non-SMCCCD colleges; students' desired educational objectives and their need and desire for distance education courses.

    The District has also asked Wide Angle to review an in-class written survey instrument intended for high school students (grades 11-12). The high school survey is particularly important because it helps with obtaining information from the age group that may be difficult to reach via a traditional phone survey.

3. Through the program review process, establish a schedule for all educational programs and student services in the District to be reviewed using common criteria and assessed at predetermined points in time.

    The program review processes established in consultation with the Academic Senates share common criteria as determined by best practices and accreditation standards, which include student learning outcomes, student success and retention, as well as common processes that begin with identifying needs; establishing goals; and assessing economic, staff and physical resources. The three Colleges have agreed to align their program review cycles with the District

strategic planning cycle. Therefore, data from the program reviews is easily accessible for planning purposes. The program review schedules can be found at the following sites:

Cañada College Program Review Schedule:
http://canadacollege.net/inside/program_review/index.html

CSM Program Review Schedule:
http://www.collegeofsanmateo.edu/research/

Skyline Program Review Schedule:
http://www.smccd.net/accounts/skycurr/Program_Review/Program%20Review%20Schedule_1998-2016_rev%20%203-07.xls

4. In response to direction from the Board, Chancellor, the San Mateo County Grand Jury and growing national trends, the District will encourage the Colleges to form task forces with their feeder high schools to address high school-college curriculum articulation and to devise strategies for offering college classes on high school sites.

   In late 2006, high school superintendents participated in a study session with the Board of Trustees on concurrent enrollment, which reinforced the mutual benefit of concurrent enrollment for K-14 education. In early 2007, research was conducted to determine baseline information pertaining to concurrent enrollment within the District. With involvement from the Districtwide Academic Senate and administrators, research on nationwide practices of concurrent enrollment was gathered to better understand the benefits and pitfalls of dual enrollment. Those efforts culminated in the District's concurrent enrollment whitepaper: "Enhancing "High School-to-College Success through Enhancing High School and College Partnerships in San Mateo County." This paper contains specific recommendations for the Colleges on forming task forces to enhance their partnership relationships with local high schools. In late spring 2007, the District completed work on a MOU between CSM and the SMUHSD. On January 23, 2008, a concurrent enrollment update was provided to the Board of Trustees that described the growth of concurrent enrollment in the District; the recommendation from the Districtwide Academic Senate to reconsider the MOU; and all three Colleges provided their own updates and plans to further implement strategies to enhance concurrent enrollment. The Board requested that a comprehensive plan with clearly defined targets and measurable performance outcomes be developed.

5. The Distance Education Advisory Committee (DEAC) will work with the three College subcommittees to complete work on developing standards and guidelines for online curriculum standards, resource allocation, and technology by summer 2007.

   The Distance Education Advisory Committee has completed a number of tasks, including vision planning; developing a training curriculum for faculty to teach online; distance education gateway; and selection of platforms. The distance education plan is being developed and is scheduled to be completed in spring 2008. Originally DEAC planned to develop Districtwide distance education guidelines. However, a number of the items contained in the draft document were considered to be "negotiable" topics with AFT. Therefore, DEAC concluded that it should work exclusively on the distance education plan, while incorporating those items from the draft document not considered negotiable.

6. The District Research Council will assess the research demands of individual Colleges and that of the District. The Council will develop a common research agenda and further refine the structure of research support for teaching and learning in the District.

The District Research Council (DRC) has met regularly every two weeks starting in 2007. It developed a District research and planning agenda that aligned the Colleges' research and planning agendas. DRC members have participated in various research projects to assist the District Office in designing surveys and reports.

Staff recommended the Research Council be chaired by a President (Vicki Morrow) to ensure that both College and Districtwide research goals are coordinated and adequately address the needs of the Board, executives, administrators and faculty. Moreover, staff recommends the addition of one "supervisory level" research position to assist Cañada College and the Vice Chancellor of Education Planning and Services. Unfortunately, economic constraints preclude the execution of this latter recommendation at this time.

7. The Vice Chancellor of Education Planning and Services will work with Vice Presidents of Student Services and Instruction, Faculty Senates and staff to formulate an action plan in response to the Board policy directions given at Study Sessions held in early 2007 on counseling. The goal is to identify and implement strategies to ensure consistency and currency in student counseling.

    Following the study session on counseling, the Vice Presidents of Student Services organized a Districtwide counselors' workshop that resulted in identifying potential strategies to provide consistent counseling services to students in the District. Following the retreat, VPSS and deans of counseling/enrollment services identified and prioritized 20 specific actions to enhance counseling services. For example, they implemented a Districtwide "early alert" system that enables faculty to identify and refer "at risk" students to Student Services for evaluation, intervention and follow-up; and developed an "online" orientation for new students that augments and supplements the "in person" orientation to provide alternative ways of meeting the diverse needs of students. VPSS will continue efforts to evaluate, modify and implement a variety of counseling strategies in the coming years.

8. Work with the District Academic Senate to standardize graduation requirements among the three Colleges.

    Following the study session on intra-district articulation, the three Colleges reviewed the differences through their curriculum process. The CSM Curriculum Committee found the additional residency requirement at CSM ("Either 48 units of the 60 units required or the last 12 units must be completed at CSM") to be unnecessary; therefore, in April, 2007, the CSM COI (Committee on Instruction) approved the proposal to align its residency requirement with that of Skyline and Cañada The Academic Senates at the three Colleges are continuing with discussions about the remaining differences in graduation requirements and recently have begun to examine changes to the general education requirements.

    Since early fall 2007, Instructional Deans and the Vice Presidents have been conducting faculty dialogs on aligning the 70+ courses with differing prerequisites. A number of the 70 courses are cooperative education courses that were aligned quickly, reducing the total number of courses in need of alignment to about half of that when the efforts started . In many cases, faculty reviewed the course content and discussed the prerequisite differences and aligned those for which they reached consensus. The remaining nonaligned prerequisites will be addressed in 2008.

9. Develop an equivalence matrix of all courses offered at all three Colleges.

    Due to the various other initiatives under development in 2007, this goal was not addressed this year. In 2008, the Education Services and Planning (ESP) Council will work with the appropriate College staff to design and execute an equivalency matrix.

10. In order to improve enrollment, the District will implement strategies and actions that allow the District to be more responsive to student demand within the current registration cycle.

In response to requests from the three Colleges, the District ITS Department locally developed and implemented a waitlist process starting in the fall 2007 semester for courses that had reached maximum enrollment. The waitlist project had two main goals:

1. *To place students in courses that were full at the time of registration but later had open seats due to other students withdrawing.*

2. *To function as an enrollment tool for managers to assess unmet student demand and improve enrollment management techniques such as opening new sections for highly impacted classes.*

Feedback from students has been overwhelmingly positive. Students who place themselves on a waitlist receive an automated email if a seat opens up in a selected course. In the fall semester, 1,837 students were able to move from the waitlist to enrolled status prior to the start of the term. In the spring 2008 semester, 2,397 students were able to move from the waitlist to enrolled status prior to the start of the term. In addition, Deans reviewed new reports which assisted them in managing waitlists and the creation of new sections to accommodate demand. Tools have also been created for Instructional Deans allowing them to send emails to students regarding new sections or alternate classes. The waitlist data also provided critical planning information so that additional sections could be added to the spring semester in advance of the printing of the class schedule.

In addition to this effort, the concurrent enrollment application and registration process was enhanced by removing obstacles confronting high school students who apply for college, and by promoting educational opportunities directly to high school students and their families. A key accomplishment was the FUTURES brochure and related website. The concurrent enrollment headcount increased in summer and fall of 2007. In fall 2007, the concurrent enrollment headcount increased by 41% as compared to fall 2006. To continue these efforts, a comprehensive evaluation of the FUTURES initiative was conducted, including student focus groups that took place at CSM and Cañada College during which concurrent enrollment students praised all aspects of the campus environment, and offered valuable insight on how they pursue concurrent enrollment activities in the District. Staff is currently redesigning the concurrent enrollment process with a more streamlined application and registration process.

11. In order to assure the ongoing viability of the University Center at Cañada College, explore options for alternative means of funding University Center operations with members of our local legislative delegation.

In 2007, the District formed a coalition with the State Chancellor's Office and two other colleges in California that have a University Center — Santa Clarita College in Los Angeles and Shasta College in Northern California. This Coalition has requested $4 million in federal funding to support current operations and to fund future growth for the Centers. The District will continue to work with our federal representatives on this possible new source of funding.
Due to the current state of the California budget, we do not believe we will be successful in seeking State funds.

The College also worked very hard during the year to attempt to bring two new baccalaureate programs to the University Center — one in Health Sciences and one in Liberal Studies. We are hoping to successfully conclude these negotiations in 2008.

12. Reexamine District and College marketing strategies and practices and develop an integrated and targeted marketing program that utilizes multiple media to reach prospective students, current students and opinion leaders in the County.

The District made substantial progress on this goal in 2007. We launched two, new Districtwide marketing efforts that resulted in heightened awareness of the Colleges' offerings and increased enrollment. The "Futures" initiative, launched in the spring, was directed at high school students and their parents. This effort was designed to increase awareness among the target audience of the concurrent enrollment program, which offers opportunities for high school students to earn college credit while still in high school.

The "Futures" initiative consisted of two postcards mailed to the target audience; development of a web page devoted to concurrent enrollment; streamlined application and registration processes; and outreach to local high school administrations and counselors.

The "Careers" initiative was targeted to 18-34 year old County residents who had not yet finished a bachelor's degree program. It consisted of a postcard and a mailed catalog that described all of the District's workforce or career training programs, linked to associated job opportunities, salary ranges and an estimate of regional demand. A searchable "Careers" web site was also developed.

In addition to these efforts, all three Colleges are involved in major upgrades of their websites, which is considered to be the primary means for students to learn about the Colleges.

Finally, the District is involved in a marketing audit by outside professionals, who are assessing the effectiveness and impact of all of the print, audio and video messages created by the Colleges and the District. The results of this audit will be available in a few weeks as will the recommendations from the outside experts about suggested future directions.

Human Resources/Retention/Recruitment Goals

13. To build upon previous efforts to ensure a culturally proficient staff, conduct "Train the Trainer" sessions on a diversity program titled "MEET on Common Ground," an excellent diversity awareness training program. This training will be funded by AB 1725 funds.

In 2007, the District hired Counselor Gerry Frassetti on a post retirement contract in the role of Diversity Coordinator. His role is to conduct assessments of diversity education needs at each College. Gerry will continue in his role through spring 2008. He piloted the training "Meet on Common Ground" in preparation for moving forward into the years to come.

14. Conduct a review of executive and administrative management compensation, including implementation of two-year employment contracts.

This study was completed in November, 2007 and adopted by the Board in December, 2007. The District will implement two year contracts for administrators in 2008.

15. The District will assess the financial and political feasibility of building a second housing complex for faculty and staff. The study shall include analysis of General Plan and zoning issues, geotechnical and utility infrastructure, city fees, and an employee survey.

The feasibility study was completed in spring and the Board authorized the administration to proceed to design and entitle the project. The Cañada Vista Faculty/Staff Housing project is

currently undergoing entitlement review by the City of Redwood City. We are anticipating that the project will be under construction later in 2008 and completed in summer or fall of 2009.

Facilities Goals

16. Complete the prequalification process for Design/Build entities to complete the Master Plan projects at College of San Mateo and Skyline College; issue RFPs for the work; and award contracts for these projects. Work with landscape architects to design and begin construction of the landscape, signage and circulation project for Cañada College; secure approval for the plans from appropriate agencies and the College community; and award the construction contract.

    During 2007, the Board received a number of updates on these projects; this goal is substantially complete. Both Design/Build projects are designed and the contractors have been selected via a competitive RFP process. The District has successfully negotiated the Design/Build project at CSM and is currently in final price and contract negotiations at Skyline. We anticipate that construction – under the Project Labor Agreement – will begin on both Design/Build projects during 2008.

    Regarding the Cañada gateway/landscape project, the RFP is being circulated now; we anticipate awarding a contract in spring, with construction to begin in summer 2008 and completion in 2009.

17. Implement the Skilled Trades Preparation Program that was developed last year. The curriculum is designed to help under-prepared, underrepresented and at-risk students learn the skills required to enter careers in the construction trades. Work with the Buildings Trades Council, secondary schools, community based organizations and other organizations with job training expertise to identify youth who could benefit from this program. To the extent possible, incorporate requirements for District contractors to hire local graduates of apprenticeship programs, including graduates who meet at-risk standards.

    The Skilled Trades Preparation Program will be launched this spring at the Half Moon Bay High School. The first course is TRAD 880 Survey of Skilled Trades. This is an 8 week class that exposes students to what it's really like to be a skilled-trades worker. The course is taught by Kathleen Barber, a local resident and journeyman's electrician. Participants earn .5 college units that can be used as 1 unit toward their high school graduation. During the course, students will take Math and English placement tests. Students continuing in the program will be encouraged to take MANU 100 Science in Technology, a Career course, and Co-op at CSM campus.

18. Incorporate LEED, California High Performance Schools and Sustainable San Mateo County guidelines into all RFP and bid documents.

    This goal has been accomplished; LEED certification and sustainable building practices are part of all RFPs issued by the District on new buildings and are incorporated into the two Design/Build projects. Buildings 5N and 10N at CSM are planned to be LEED Silver and building 4N at Skyline is planned for LEED Certification. Both the Skyline and the Cañada Facilities Maintenance Centers will achieve LEED Silver. As new buildings are completed, the District will submit completed buildings for award consideration to Sustainable San Mateo County.

    The District also mandates the use of PG&E's Saving by Design Program on all new construction projects, and in the CCCO/IOU Energy Efficiency Partnership program for all renovation projects. Both programs are energy efficiency and sustainability-oriented toward

reducing the District's electric and gas consumption as well as maintenance operating cost. They generate cash incentives that are used for the overall Capital Program.

19. Continue efforts to increase the vendor database for facilities projects, with particular attention to small, locally owned and women- and minority-owned businesses. Implement the California Construction Uniform Cost Accounting procedure for award of public works contracts up to $125,000 without a formal bid.

    The Board took action on this item on May 9, 2007.

    In addition, the District designed a website and online prequalification application to make the annual recurring prequalification process easier for contractors to complete. The District now has a database that will hold each contractor's application information. This means that in subsequent years, contractors will only have to update information that has changed over the course of the year, thereby streamlining the prequalification process. More than 100 contractors were prequalified this year, including local, small and emerging firms.

Finance Goals

20. Maintain fiscal stability.
    The District completed the 06-07 fiscal year in the black and the Board adopted a balanced budget for 2007-08.

21. Continue efforts to sustain and increase student enrollment.

    Both the "Futures" initiative and the "Careers" initiative (described earlier in this document) were developed to increase the public's awareness about these special programs within the District and to increase enrollment. The District's activation of the "waitlist" function within Banner in fall 2007 provided Deans with an additional tool to help them assess and respond to student demand in a timely fashion.
    Actual student enrollment for the past terms is as follows:

	06-07	07-08 Goal	07-08 Projection
Cañada	4,254	4,240	4,467
CSM	8,791	8,885	9,097
Skyline	6,801	7,104	7,313
District	19,846	20,229	20,877
	0.5%	1.9%	5.2%

22. Develop a finance plan for funding the unfunded liability for Post Retirement Medical Benefits.

    The District completed an actuarial study of post retirement benefit liability as required by GASB 45 which was presented to the Board on February 28, 2007. The results were shared with the Board by the CFO. Discussions at the District Committee on Budget and Finance include charging out the current cost of retiree benefits to all funds to allow the District to recoup some retiree benefit costs from grants and categorical. Discussions also include how to invest the funds that we have to maximize returns. The District can cover its liability with a reasonable augmentation to the general fund budget and with the distribution of costs to non-general fund programs that contribute to the liability.