

# CAÑADA COLLEGE MISSION, VISION, AND VALUES REVIEW

Prepared by Rick Voorhees

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## INTRODUCTION

Revisiting critical institutional statements is a key part of Cañada College's current strategic planning process. A community college's mission, vision, and value statements are fundamental to all institutional operations. They communicate to the public as well as current students, faculty, and staff, the critical nature of the college and what the college is attempting to accomplish. It represents a promise to the community and deserves to be developed in ways that involve the entire college community. A mission statement must resonate with all parts of the college.

Unique among sectors of higher education, community colleges most often undertake six roles in support of their missions. These historically mission-critical roles include: 1) academic transfer programs, 2) vocational-technical education, 3) developmental/remedial programs, 4) continuing education, 5) workforce development, and 6) assessment, skill training, and placement.<sup>1</sup> To these roles community colleges have recently added distance education. Striking a balance among these roles is ongoing work in community colleges that is aided by a clear mission statement.

The mission statement also is the first standard that community colleges must meet or exceed when seeking initial accreditation and reaffirmation of accreditation from the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC) of the Western Association of Schools and Colleges. Viewing a mission statement as the fabric that ties all other accrediting standards together and for focusing on student learning, ACCJC states

“The institutional mission provides the *impetus for achieving student learning and other goals that the institution endeavors to accomplish*. The institution provides the means for students to learn, assesses how well learning is occurring, and strives to improve that learning through ongoing, systematic, and integrated planning (Standard I). Instructional programs, student support services, and library and learning support services facilitate the achievement of the institution's stated student learning outcomes (Standard II). Human, physical, technology, and financial resources enable these programs and services to function and improve (Standard III). Ethical and effective leadership throughout the organization guides the accomplishment of the mission and supports institutional effectiveness and improvement (Standard IV).

ACCJC also expects that:

“The institution demonstrates strong commitment to a mission that emphasizes

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<sup>1</sup>See Richardson, R.C., Jr. And Leslie, L. (1980). *The Impossible Dream: Financing Community Colleges' Evolving Mission*. ERIC report 197783. Washington, D.C. ERIC Document Reproduction Service.

achievement of student learning and to communicating the mission internally and externally. The institution uses analyses of quantitative and qualitative data and analysis in an ongoing and systematic cycle of evaluation, integrated planning, implementation, and re-evaluation to verify and improve the effectiveness by which the mission is accomplished.

Specific guidance is also offered by ACCJC:

“A. Mission

The institution has a statement of mission that defines the institution’s broad educational purposes, its intended student population, and its commitment to achieving student learning.

1. The institution establishes student learning programs and services aligned with its purposes, its character, and its student population.
2. The mission statement is approved by the governing board and published.
3. Using the institution's governance and decision-making processes, the institution reviews its mission statement on a regular basis and revises it as necessary.
4. The institution’s mission is central to institutional planning and decision making.

These expectations for community college mission statements require institutions to assess how they are fulfilling their goals continuously. They create the need for community colleges to use a quality framework in which goals are specified, activities that support those goals are implemented, those activities are evaluated, and what is learned from this process is used to strengthen goals. College goals that are buried in mission statements must become the guide to developing quality indices. None of this can be done without a serious look at the types of students an institution serves and what it hopes to accomplish with those students. Data are critical to quality processes.

## **COMPARING CAÑADA’S CURRENT MISSION STATEMENT**

Given the direction from WASC and the important need to ensure that internal and external stakeholders know about its purposes, how does Cañada College’s current mission stack up? Below, the College’s current mission statement is compared with a small sample of other institutions and commentary about each mission statement is offered.

### **Cañada College Current Mission Statement**

“It is the mission of Cañada College to ensure that students from diverse backgrounds achieve their educational goals by providing quality instruction in transfer and general education courses, professional/technical programs, basic skills and activities that foster students' personal development and academic success. Cañada College accepts

responsibility for serving the community's diverse needs for lifelong enrichment and highly values close teacher to student teaching and learning relationships, support services and a co-curricular environment that contributes to personal growth and success for students.

Strengths	Challenges
Includes a range of activities.	Activities too broad for Cañada to do all things? Sense of priorities?
States that learning relationships are valued. Student growth and success are recognized.	Nothing said about specific goals and/or how to measure those goals
Casts a wide net of activities.	Alignment of programs and services with purpose, character, and student population. More precision in identifying student population would be desirable.
Makes use of <i>ensuring</i> student success not simply <i>providing</i> programs	Cañada's external environment and service area are undergoing change. Not entertained in this mission statement.
	No mention of affordability (low cost) or accessibility (open door)
	No mention of quality, excellence

### Foothill-DeAnza Community College Mission Statement

"The Foothill-De Anza Community College District provides a dynamic learning environment that fosters excellence, opportunity and innovation in meeting the educational needs of our diverse students and community.

Strengths	Challenges
Focuses quickly on a dynamic learning environment	No mention of specific activities that support a dynamic learning environment
References excellence, opportunity, and innovation as keystones.	Goals are aspirations. Environment <i>fosters</i> , but does not <i>ensure</i> .

Strengths	Challenges
	Alignment of programs and services with purpose, character, and student population. More precision in identifying student population would be desirable.
	Foothill's external environment and service area likely are undergoing change. Not entertained in this mission statement.

### Roxbury Community College Revised Mission Statement

“Roxbury Community College is a comprehensive, urban, student-centered, open-access community college providing higher learning opportunities for all who may benefit. The primary mission of the College is to serve the needs of a diverse Greater Roxbury area and the surrounding Boston metropolitan communities. Roxbury Community College offers quality post-secondary higher education learning opportunities in developmental academic skills, the liberal arts and sciences, career and transfer programs, workforce development, and private and public sector training. Roxbury Community College grants associate degrees and certificates, affording its students a solid foundation for college transfer, employment, professional advancement, personal enrichment and lifelong learning.

Strengths	Challenges
Describes the college's attributes in ways that distinguish it from other higher education institutions, including being <i>student-centered</i> .	Focuses on <i>offering</i> of services and <i>affording</i> opportunities, not necessarily <i>ensuring</i> student success.
Lists traditional goals of a community college.	Doesn't distinguish which goals are particularly important for the College to pursue.
Makes an effort to locate the college's efforts, i.e., Roxbury area and surrounding communities	Alignment of programs and services with purpose, character, and student population. More precision in identifying student population would be desirable.

## Honolulu Community College Mission Statement

“Serve the community as an affordable, flexible, learning-centered, open-door, comprehensive community college that meets the post-secondary educational needs of individuals, businesses, and the community. Serve the Pacific Rim as the primary technical training center in areas such as transportation, information technology, education, communications, construction, and public and personal services.

To accomplish this mission, the goals of Honolulu Community College are to:

1. Provide two-year transfer educational programs that offer students the general educational component of the Baccalaureate Degree.
2. Provide two-year, four-year, short term, and apprenticeship occupational/technical curricula for employment, skill upgrading and career advancement, and transfer to four-year technical programs.
3. Insure general educational competency in communication, problem-solving, and cultural diversity/global awareness.
4. Provide developmental instruction to build skills necessary to pursue educational objectives.
5. Maintain flexible educational delivery systems to enhance student access by providing affordable education when and where it is needed.
6. Continuously monitor all programs to insure educational excellence.
7. Develop activities to increase resources for programs and operations.
8. Provide avocational curricula and extracurricular/cultural activities for personal growth and the development of leadership skills.
9. Contribute to the support of the community's economic and social growth.
10. Maintain a multicultural environment where diversity is appreciated, respected and celebrated.

Strengths	Challenges
Describes the College's distinguishing characteristics.	Few challenges noted in this mission statement. It is specific in how it operationalizes support for its mission.
Locates the College's efforts (large catchment area...Pacific Rim) for specific training offered	
Lists <i>how</i> the mission statement is supported, what types of competencies (student learning) are pursued	

Strengths	Challenges
Indicates a commitment to continuously monitoring its educational quality.	
Ratifies the importance of not only <i>diversity</i> , but also understanding diversity via <i>multiculturalism</i> .	

### COMPARING CAÑADA'S CURRENT VISION STATEMENT

Vision statements support mission statements by projecting what a college may look like in the future. They are most often aspiration statements that allow institutions to dream about the best possible future that they can create. More than just dreams, vision statements also tell the reader how the college plans to reach those dreams. Mission and vision statements are often interchangeable in many schools of thought, but one helpful distinction is that a vision statement should drive mission far into the future.

#### Cañada College Current Vision Statement

“Cañada College ensures success through personalized, flexible, and innovative instruction. The College infuses essential skills and competencies throughout the curriculum and assesses student learning and institutional effectiveness to make continuous improvement. Cañada responds to the changing needs of the people it serves by being involved in and responsive to the community, developing new programs and partnerships and incorporating new technologies and methodologies into its programs and services.

Comments:

Hard to argue with this vision statement other than to note that it doesn't address what Cañada might look like in the future and how it intends to get there.

#### Foothill College Vision Statement

- The college's values are honesty, integrity, trust, openness, and forgiveness.
- The college's purpose is to provide educational opportunity for all with innovation and distinction.
- The college's mission is to promote student learning through lower-division academic instruction, career preparation, and continuous work force development to advance California's economic growth and global competitiveness.

Comments:
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This is more a values statement than a vision statement since it, too, doesn't directly deal with Foothills aspirations for the future.
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### **Broward Community College Vision Statement**

*“It is now the year 2015. Ten years ago, Broward Community College placed student learning at the heart of all decisions. It was the right thing to do. Leadership recognized that the students BCC served in 2005 were much different from those it first served when its doors opened in 1965. Massive demographic changes in South Florida brought learners to the College that were lacking in college-level preparation. Other learners were attracted to BCC because it was a respected place to begin a 4-year degree. Other learners were not interested in degrees or transfer but sought quality learning experiences to support their life and/or career goals. Regardless of their goals, these new learners were more technologically adept than their predecessors. Using a deep understanding of existing and potential learners, BCC worked hard to match content and delivery to their needs, preferences, and circumstances. BCC also was diligent in creating new networks of businesses, community-based organizations, public sector employers, and other learning providers. These networks flourished to create new opportunities, propelling the College’s efforts to manage its future to new heights. Strategy now is everywhere. It is no surprise that enrollment has swelled beyond expectations in ten years. BCC has become the national model for community college renaissance.*

By the year 2015, Broward Community College will have increased its enrollment by more than half. While it is focused on the educational needs of Broward County and South Florida, learners throughout the nation and the world engage with the learning opportunities it has created. It has reached this landmark by building on networks that are marked by excellence in teaching and learning, creativity in nurturing quality partnerships, and by placing the needs of its current and future learners first. BCC has become a key resource in a knowledge-based economy that can create, and keep, high skilled jobs. Because it creates its own future, it serves as a model for its partners. Broward Community College is the epicenter of a growing number of networks. Relying on these networks in the same way that other parts of these networks now rely on BCC, the College has become adept at identifying new opportunities and in pursuing the entrepreneurial partnerships necessary to pursue these opportunities. College-wide improvements since 2005 are both tangible and measurable. Sweeping changes in demographics, attitudes toward learning, and shifting labor markets predicted in 2005

have come to pass. Fueled by natural population increases as well as in-migration from other states and throughout the Caribbean, Central and South America, and other countries, South Florida is now the most racially and ethnically diverse region in the nation. Population density has increased pressure on commuting patterns. Most workers do not commute to an identified core. Rather, they commute from suburb to suburb in the Tri-County area, beyond the reach of efficient public transportation. While improvements have been made in the transportation infrastructure since 2005 residents of the County are still confronted with congested streets and time consuming travel to jobs, schools, shopping, and leisure pursuits. The largest cohort of Internet Users, aged 18 to 24 in 2004, is now in its early working careers. Those that have come behind are even more tech savvy. The College has capitalized on this and other demographic realities in matching the format and delivery mode of its classes. Creative thought has been required and the College has delivered unselfishly. South Florida has been a bellwether for dealing with massive change that is now being experienced in other regions of the United States and which will soon be the reality for the entire nation.

Over the past ten years, learners and prospective learners--regardless of economic circumstances--have become extremely sophisticated about the quality of educational opportunities and have made decisions about where to find value. Competition, especially from more costly providers is everywhere. In response, Broward Community College has gained a deep understanding of learner needs and has configured its learning opportunities accordingly. This approach has served the College and its network partners well. South Florida now is viewed as a national test bed for how nimble partners can come together to increase economic opportunities while adding to the quality of life for all citizens. The College is deservedly proud of its role in developing an educated, skilled workforce and by improving access to quality jobs. Because it has worked tirelessly with its partners, Broward Community College also has advanced their success and, in turn, the success of those that they serve. Old problems that could not be solved in isolation by any one entity are now seen as opportunities.

Broward Community College forged strategic partnerships from necessity. As one learning organization in an expanding tide of alternative providers, it understood the need to develop niche opportunities. It created new programs where justified and strengthened programs that meet new needs. BCC was also been unafraid to eliminate programs that serve neither students nor the community well. The College actively uses all of the information gathered from its networks to embrace technology that enhances learning. Awareness that it could not meet every education need resulted in an expanded number of partners, from traditional universities to community based organizations. The College selected those partners that met its same commitment to quality while seeking to lowering barriers for learners. Learners throughout the College expanding networks can access quality learning content and have that content distributed to them in ways that match their interests, needs, and lifestyles.

These changes did not just happen. Ten years ago, Broward Community College made fundamental choices about its future. It unflinchingly faced the reality of an



increasingly diverse population base and the opportunities those changes brought to expand BCC's role as a human maximizing organization. Pushing the boundaries of its traditions, the College began to view itself as much more than an institution whose prime mission was to prepare its students for transfer to 4-year institutions. Focusing on what was important to students as a foremost strategy, BCC determined that it would resist "mission creep" and, instead, make student success its first priority.

In a series of steps guided by its own research, Broward Community College recognized that the future of all of its programs as well as the health of the region depended on the success of students who would not be able to cross the threshold to transfer and/or high skills programs without remedial help. Broward Community College with its partners has focused on inner-city and suburban public middle and secondary schools where dismal student performance has meant disaster. It has partnered in efficient ways with the Broward Public School District to create Early College models that have made significant progress in ensuring that secondary graduates are prepared to meet the challenges of the future. The College placed a premium on the programs and support services that spelled success for remedial students. Rather than focusing on the causes or looking for places to blame, BCC actively began to search for solutions in conjunction with its partners.

Strategy at all levels now permeates the College's fabric. BCC is guided by data and information gathered internally and throughout its networks. The College regularly takes its own pulse and makes appropriate adjustments. It assesses student learning outcomes, evaluates its progress on strategic goals, and makes revisions to its strategies each year. It allocates necessary resources to achieve goals and, where its resources fall short, it raises resources through opportunities found in, or created by, the entrepreneurial networks it has built. Continual alignment of services and programs to first meet the needs of learners has institutionalized the change process at BCC so that dealing with new realities is second nature. Students, employees, and external stakeholders participate as full partners in that change. The College's success in managing change is known locally and throughout the United States, placing it without peer when solutions to intellectual, cultural, social, and economic challenges are sought. Broward Community College constantly monitors trends both within the college and throughout the networks it has built. The ability to anticipate changes in its environment has spawned new opportunities and new networks. The future for Broward Community College in the year 2015 looks brighter each year.

Comments:
This is a very lengthy vision statement, but leaves little untouched and little to chance. It reinforces the need for strategy as well as data converted to information to make that strategy happen. This statement links aspirations to the steps needed to get there.

## COMPARING CAÑADA'S CURRENT VALUES STATEMENT

Not every community college publishes a separate values statement and as a result, examples are not abundant. Many prefer instead, to embed value statements in mission statements and/or vision statements. In fact, values should rightfully permeate mission and vision statements. Where they exist separately they should support and animate institutional mission.

### Cañada College Current Values Statement

“Striving to produce responsible, life-long learners who become resourceful, adaptive, independent, and productive employees, employers, and members of their community, Cañada College values and actively promotes:

- Personalized instruction and service
- Active learning and interaction
- High standards of excellence
- Increased student access
- Diversity in staff, student body, and curriculum
- Partnerships with business, schools, colleges and universities, governments, and community based organizations

Comments:
It might be helpful if this statement began, “Cañada College values...” Values statement should stress student learning as the penultimate value for the College? First mention in any of the three statements made about excellence, access, and partnerships. Could consider moving these to the mission statement as the umbrella statement about what the College sees as critical.

### Foothill College Values & Purpose

“Foothill College provides educational opportunity for all who can benefit from the instruction and support services offered. Foothill College is a multicultural institution committed to meeting the evolving educational, economic and cultural needs of an increasingly technology-based global community. Foothill fulfills its mission by offering academic courses, programs and services unique to the Silicon Valley.

Students who attend our college achieve their goals because relevant instruction occurs in an engaging, stimulating, inclusive manner, and appropriate support services are provided. Students feel accepted as part of the Foothill family and realize they made the right choice in choosing Foothill to further their education and personal development.

Classes and programs are scheduled to maximize student accessibility in a variety of settings and modes. Foothill provides the necessary support services to help students with diverse needs and learning styles succeed in reaching their educational goals.

Comments:
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As was the case above, it might be helpful if this values statement began, “Foothill College values...” Although there some elements of this statement that might be incorporated in the College’s mission statement, there are some nice statements of human interaction here including belonging, multicultural acceptance, and matching programs/services to student needs.
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## SUMMARY

The examples and commentary presented above are intended to start institution-wide dialog about what Cañada College views as its critical and how that might be expressed through mission, vision, and goal statements. The process of examining Cañada's current statements will be marked by some differences in opinion as values of different stakeholders are brought forward in discussions. There will be no "right" or "wrong" answers in these discussions, however, since it is unlikely that the many roles that the College now plays will go away. Instead, the dialog should focus on how best to pursue those roles by aligning them with current and future learner needs.

To represent any college well to the public while serving a focus for internal stakeholders, mission statements, vision statements, and value statements must be supportive of good intentions while providing evidence that the institution is accountable to students. The mission statement should be the touchstone for all subsequent planning, both strategic and operational. The vision statement projects the mission statement into the future and the values statement strikes at the key beliefs held by the entire College community.

To be effective these statements need to be understandable by persons inside the College as well as people who have little contact with higher education. They serve as the reason that taxpayers and future will continue to support the College. Finally, they must reflect the input and feedback of all stakeholders: students, faculty, staff, and the public.