

Section IX: Observations & Recommendations

Overview

For the future, the College should set its sights on looking forward, not backwards. While the projected annual rate of growth over the next 15 years is realistic, it is incremental, based on the quantifiable data examined. With a concerted, planned program for growth, the College could exceed the numbers for growth that are projected. Exceeding (the numbers) is where the focus of College should be.

In addition to the observations drawn from the External Environmental Scan, the following observations and recommendations are offered for consideration.

Striving for Efficiency

Since the last Educational Master Plan, enrollment, the generation of WSCH and efficiency of the program of instruction has regressed. The College will need to first address the issue of curricular efficiency. This includes close monitoring of the number of class sections offered and amount of WSCH generated for each class section. Expansion of the curriculum should occur only after the efficiency values of disciplines or programs are improved.

More WSCH, More Space

The need for space increases with the addition of each, new WSCH generated. The greater the production of WSCH, the greater the need for new space. This is addressed through increased enrollment and healthy course loads taken by students.

Attention to the Impacts of the Delivery Modality

The delivery of the program of instruction has changed significantly since the last EMP and should be revisited. Lecture hours as a delivery modality has increased by 11% and laboratory hours have decreased by 11%. The Title V standard favors laboratory space by a margin of at least 3 to 1 (in some cases, it is 5 to 1 or greater depending on the discipline or program) over lecture space. The 11% shift in lecture and laboratory space and the addition of lecture space has had a significant impact on the allowances for academic space.

Reflective of the delivery of the program of instruction, the College added over 3,000 ASF of lecture space to its inventory since the last EMP was completed.

The College qualified for more laboratory space in the 2010 than it did in 2015.

Keeping the Core Strong

The College should bolster its core programs that support general education / transfer education. The division of Natural Sciences and Mathematics presently accounts for 11.97% of the curriculum but generates 22.42%

(almost one-quarter) of the WSCH produced at the College. The division of Language Arts offers a more homogeneous ratio of curriculum percentage (20.55%) to WSCH percentage (22.24%). The Social Science division, while still prominent as a core program, has slipped over the past five years, maintaining its position as a percentage of the curriculum (19.31%) but declining in the percentage of WSCH generated (15.82%). The core programs have carried the College over its past; these programs will be the foundation for the College's future.

Basic Skills Support

The College will need to be prepared to offer an expanded program in Basic Skills education to support the population base within the ESA, particularly students who may be recruited to the College as first-time, postsecondary learners. The College can expect to see growth in the Basic Skill education courses.

CTE Relevance

Career and Technical Education should be reviewed for content and relevance. Based on the current programs and disciplines within the division, it is evident that there will be some programs that are assessed, revamped, or released. There will be opportunity for new programs to emerge that have more enhanced pathways to employment.

Keeping the College Funding Worthy

The District has done a very good job of adjusting the forecast data for the growth of WSCH to put the College in a funding worthy position with the state. The numbers in the Five-Year Capital Construction Plan show greater growth for WSCH into the future than the College will most likely be able to achieve. As an additional measure of keeping funding worthy, the College should consider a validation of its current space inventory with attention to the classification of space. Allowable changes in the classification of existing space could change the qualification for space, particularly in the academic areas.

Growth from Within

Because of the geographic location of the College, capturing "free flow" student enrollments (i.e. students coming from other community college districts or from further removed geographic areas) is not realistic. The College may have a particular CTE program that draws students from outside the ESA but this will be program specific, not a long-term trend. New enrollments for the College will have to come from the existing population base within the ESA. The strategy for enrollment growth, therefore, should be focused on how the College can draw more students from the population base that it presently serves.

Capitalizing on What Exists

The population base of the ESA offers good possibilities for attracting, new first-generation postsecondary learners – students who are less academically prepared and who might not consider a college education without some coaching.

Key Demographic Considerations

Demographic attributes, foreign born, language spoken at home, and education for Porterville, Tulare County, and California are provided in the table below. The percentage of residents age 25 or older who are high school graduates is much lower for Porterville and Tulare County than the state average. The same is true for residents who have a Bachelor's degree. The numbers of foreign born persons and those that speak a language other than English at home appears relatively consistent. This data would suggest that there is a large audience to which the college might appeal in providing educational services.

Foreign Born, Language & Education 2011-2015

	Porterville	Tulare County	California
Foreign born persons	21.10%	22.77%	27%
Language other than English spoken at home, percentage 5 yrs.+	54.80%	49.24%	43.90%
High school graduates, percent of persons age 25+	66.90%	68.06%	81.80%
Bachelor's degree or higher, percent of persons age 25+	11.00%	13.32%	31.40%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, State & County Quick Facts

Selective Recruiting of Students

As part of its strategy for growth, the College might consider targeting student athletes. Student athletes are required to take a minimum of a 12-credit load to participate in their chosen athletic endeavor. Foreign students offer a similar possibility for growth. Targeting first-generation, postsecondary students through state approved programs and local partnerships (e.g. Dual Enrollment Program) offer yet other possibilities to explore in the area of selective recruiting of students.

“Qualification” and “Adequacy”

Because space needs are interpreted via the Title V state guidelines, there is a tendency to use these guidelines as the bottom-line, absolute value for the need for space. The adequacy of the space that supports the College, however, is an equally important component of the need for space. As examples, most of the lecture rooms on campus are smaller in size (under 700 ASF), class offerings are presently scheduled throughout the campus wherever space can be found for a given hour of class time, some buildings spaces are not configured for the type of program being served and some spaces should be consolidated to provide better program support. While the cumulative space may reflect an adequate amount of capacity, the usefulness of the space may fall short of the need for the College. Accommodating growth for the future will involve adequacy as much as it will involve qualification. It may come in the way of replacement, repurposing or reconfiguring. The end focus, however, should be that space needs are adequate to support the delivery of the program of instruction.

Conclusion

There will be no one course of action to take in meeting the projected growth for enrollments, WSCH, the future program of instruction and the corresponding needs for space. The approach will be a multifaceted effort with many smaller components contributing to a plan of action that leads to a successful outcome. In today's world, the “build it and they will come” mentality is no longer sufficient. It will take a great deal of work by many to redirect the College from its current condition to a place of growth and expansion.