

Section 7: Summary of Evolving Directions

This section derives from the information and assessments that have been identified in earlier sections into a summation of how the CR intends to serve its community through the year 2020. In determining the district's future, CR understands that transitioning demographics and economies are a factor in its evolutionary development. Repositioning services and programs will be a significant challenge for the district as it meets new demands while simultaneously closing identified gaps in existing expectation-to-outcome issues. Why the district should grow and how growth will be monitored to preserve the quality of its programs is also provided. The reader should find that this section is a guide for describing the impetus behind the strategic initiatives that will begin the drive toward successful implementation of its Education Master Plan—2020.

Unique District Characteristics

CR is a district serving more than a quarter million residents and operates in a unique service area. The district includes a large geographical area that encompasses two counties (Del Norte and Humboldt) and parts of coastal Mendocino and western Trinity counties. To create a perspective of distance, it takes more than five and one-half hours to drive from the district's northern boundary (Oregon border) served by the Del Norte Education Center in Crescent City to the southern (Point Arena) boundary that is served by the Mendocino Coast Education Center located in Fort Bragg. Not easily reflected by the statistical data shared in this report, but relevant to the district's vision and mission, are the unique cultures of the connected but also diverse populations and economies of the northwest California region. For instance, the needs and interests of the rural eastern Humboldt County and Del Norte County residents, a population comprised of nearly 50 percent Native Americans, are not always the same as the residents of the coastal regions. This cultural, social, gender, economic, and ethnic diversity was noted in Section 5 when statistics relevant to student retention, male-female participation rates, high school-to-college enrollment "yields," zip code penetration rates, and college transfer vs. career/technology needs were assessed. The challenges facing CR as a district will be to reduce the relative differences in outcomes such that all communities, regardless of size or location, receive the same level of high quality services and instruction.

Changing Demographics

In addition to the above factors that are anticipated to influence how CR will evolve into the year 2020, there also are trends and shifts in the district's population base that will impact CR's strategic initiatives. For example, the projected decline in high-school population supports the need to change student recruitment strategies. A stronger outreach effort is a logical next step to minimize the projected decline in high-school graduates.

The district must also establish stronger alliances with working adults (age 25+) and "seniors" (age 50+). As the "Baby-boomer" generation enters retirement age, the remaining workplace supervisors will be unable to keep up with the training and educational demands of the emerging (Gen "X" and "Y") workforce. Formal educational programs will be provided by the college and will become increasingly important to the community. As life-long learners, the anticipated

baby-boomer retirements will also create a new market for higher education. CR will enrich its programs and thus become the adult learner's choice for obtaining new work skills, discovering potential "hobby" professions, and receiving training to work at new and personally creative pursuits. It will be paramount that CR successfully evolve its instructional programs and services to address the needs of a transitioning student population.

Growth Opportunities

Another factor that is reflective of the district's evolution includes the community's economic transition from a predominantly resource extraction economy (fishing and forestry) to a surprisingly more diversified job market. As noted in Section 4: Profile of the College and Community, the Humboldt County Workforce Investment Board examined employment data covering the five county North Coast economy and subsequently identified the six job market growth areas.

CR is using this information to assess existing programs and determine what new programs and courses are needed. The district will be able to assist the community's workforce to make a successful transition from relatively low education oriented professions to a service and professional job market that requires higher academic/career training. The disparity in gender enrollment rates at the campuses and sites indicates that the district has not completed this transition.

Using FTES as a "Target"

The EMP has used FTES as the primary target to drive the strategic initiatives required to move the district forward. The need to use FTES as an evolving target was based on three premises.

1. There was more than a 20 percent drop (1,000 FTES) in enrollment and related funding beginning in 2004-05 that must be reinstated by the end of 2009-10 to recover the lost \$5 million in annual revenue, as prescribed by the state funding formula. A delay beyond 2009-10 will result in forfeiture of the district's right to recover financially.
2. Despite a severe reduction in full-time faculty positions resulting from the decline in enrollments since 2004-05, the district continues to employ 12 more full-time faculty than required per standards imposed by the state Chancellor's Office. Maintaining status quo cannot be accomplished without "right-sizing" the institutions programs and full-time faculty.
3. The use of FTES is a measurement of how well the CR is reaching into its communities. FTES is a valid measurement of access—how well the district is making its programs available to the general population.

The success of the district's operational activities and programs, as measured by attainment of FTES targets, requires the implementation of multiple strategic initiatives—e.g., outreach, recruitment, retention, facility management, class scheduling, instructional pedagogies, financial aid, etc. Using FTES as a target indicator helps the institution to define success. Establishing "driver" indicators helps the organization measure how well each critical component is functioning towards achievement of the target—e.g., high school yield rates; penetration rates by zip code; participation rates by age, ethnicity, gender; and retention rates by program, etc.

Using the FTES “target” indicator as well as the “driver” indicators will help to assess CR’s commitment to student access and quality programs.

Maintaining Program Quality

With the anticipated widening base of future students both from the high school and the adult population, the need to strengthen the district’s remedial and developmental programs will be critical. Basic skills courses and programs need to be increased and be relevant to the needs of the students and applicable to the college courses the students are preparing to take. Traditional methods to provide assistance to “at-risk” students will not suffice. A more proactive approach to identifying and assisting at-risk students before they get into academic trouble will become a critical measure of success at CR. While the Accountability Report for Community Colleges indicators reflect that the CR has strong retention results for its students overall, much work will be needed to improve student persistence (first-to-second semester) rates. It is anticipated that CR will establish strong first-year program and counseling/advising programs to reach this desired goal.

Strengthen Existing Programs

The administration and faculty will work together to analyze programs and come to a conclusion about program vitality. This program improvement process will be accomplished through joint efforts by program faculty and administrators to pursue curricular enhancements based on competencies, alterations to class scheduling, creation of classes that more closely meet needs, and in hiring and professionally developing qualified full-time and part-time faculty.

The institution accepts the need to shift its program evaluation process from its current discipline oriented approach to a more program oriented focus. This will shift the emphasis from a more budget-oriented model to one where (student) outcomes will become a part of the evaluation process.

Potential New Programs

Developing new programs is neither easy nor inexpensive. The foregoing data and information in this EMP point to potential programs that CR will want to consider in the short term. It is beyond the scope of this plan, however, to recommend when and if these programs should be made available. All of these suggestions require further development and should be used only as a starting point in a rational process of program development. The college should also prepare for the introduction of future programs not in this plan but that may emerge as new opportunities occur. As the work of academic planning unfolds at the district, it is important that new program development be focused on several programs each year while attention is also given to strengthening or eliminating unproductive programs.

Workforce Development

Community leaders in Humboldt County believe that the college should become a major choice for training the present and future workforce. The college will play a key role in assisting business and industry in the county to create high paying jobs. Noncredit and contract education is one vehicle to accomplish this and there is more potential than is currently used in this area to increase service to the workforce.

Space Needs

The college is developing a facilities plan concurrent to the EMP. While the facilities plan will be driven by the conclusions of the EMP, it is appropriate that this plan comment on current and projected space needs as a precursor to a more elaborate facilities master plan document. The facilities plan will benefit from the programming recommendations in this plan.

The college is faced with pragmatic challenges to providing facilities for teaching its native courses and accommodating the space needs of the Academy of the Redwoods early college program. The facilities plan needs to provide for the growth in enrollment and the addition of academic programs as prioritized in the college, divisions, and strategic plan. It is not foreseeable that CR will build any additional buildings. The strategy for meeting growth targets will be through efficient use of facilities, via distance education, by revising the class schedule (using Friday/Saturday and evening scheduling), and strategically deciding on what types of classes and programs should be offered by the various campuses and instructional sites.

Staffing Plan

The EMP provides a framework for the college's full-time faculty staffing plan. The college understands that the role of faculty in student learning is central in the student learning experience. However, the role of staff in supporting the college's academic endeavor cannot be understated. The college is committed to providing the appropriate number of dedicated and qualified faculty and staff to support enrollment growth and deliver learning experiences that promote student success and achievement and reflect the demographics of the student and community populations.

Conclusion**Continuous Self-Assessment**

The district has evolved toward a planning process that is data driven. As noted in Section 5 (Plan for Educational Programs and Services) and Section 6 (Targets and Indicators used to Assess Plan Effectiveness), CR has formulated its planning based on target and driver indicators. The district will be monitored by the Board of Trustees using the indicators as a mechanism to evaluate the institution and its president. Using data-driven planning indicators to reach agreement on the course of action and expected outcomes is a new endeavor for the district. Holding the president, and through the president, the district accountable for performance is a critical new component in the history of the college. "Analysis paralysis" will not be an acceptable method of operation in the district. Measurable outcomes with responsibility shifting to operational leaders will become a new and critical factor in the future of the district.

College of the Redwoods—Year 2020

CR is creating a new vision for itself as it reaches forward into the year 2020. The district of the future will have the following characteristics:

- It will have established three colleges (Eureka, Del Norte, and Mendocino) with centers located in Arcata, Eureka, Hoopa and McKinleyville, and instructional sites located in Garberville and Leggett;
- With 20 percent of its courses technologically delivered via distance education, the entire region will be able to electronically access CR's programs making it possible for all residents to earn a Liberal Arts degree regardless of proximity to the colleges, centers, and sites;
- College of the Redwoods' distance education courses and programs will be considered superior and thus in demand outside the district, state, and country, creating increased faculty positions and a positive net revenue to the community;
- The adult learner (25+) will represent 70 percent of the learning population in the district with a strong emphasis on providing education and training for second careers and interest-based learning activities;
- Traditional sector definitions (K-12, community college, college and university) will become blurred as students enter college earlier and attend multiple institutions simultaneously;
- CR will provide basic skills and developmental/supplemental courses and programs to all students indicating an interest in attending college beginning in the ninth grade;
- The Eureka campus will utilize its campus to become a "College Park," inviting upper division and graduate-level programs from other colleges to reside on unused campus space;
- The Mendocino Coast campus will incorporate its regular semester programs into a world renowned summer conference center by completing its building program, including a residence-conference center;
- Del Norte college, with 1,500 FTES, will expand its programs into statewide corrections institutions and towards special populations, especially American-Indians, establishing a reputation for high quality, high retention, and successful graduation/placement rates;
- CR will perform in the upper ten percent of both state and peer group community colleges in all ARCC measurements related to student persistence and retention;
- While transferring CR graduating students to four-year colleges at a rate higher than the state average, the college will also be known as a college of first choice for career and technical training; and
- The district will have established the goal of maintaining a mature assessment process that reflects data driven measurements of performance and achievement.

The vision of the College of the Redwoods in the 21st century is that of a district that performs well above the norm. As the only community college in the region it serves, it is critical that the only higher education choice for its students is also the preferred choice. This education master plan reflects the path by which the College of the Redwoods will take to achieve this goal.