

**Riverside Community College District  
Strategic Initiatives  
2005-2010**

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## **Introduction**

In response to recommendations made during the 2001 Accreditation process, the District has been engaged in improving and refining a strategic planning process. This process is now well defined and has been actualized. It begins on each campus and culminates at the System level. Equally important, a culture of planning has been developed that engages the faculty, staff and students in a process that maps the future of the District.

The District's Academic Master Plan, a document summarizing departments' academic plans for the next five years has been compiled and will be submitted to the Board in December 2005. This document, prepared by the District's Academic Planning Council, will guide academic planning for the next five years and is an important element of the self study process.

Program review and assessment, the cornerstone of academic planning, have been used by disciplines to improve student learning outcomes through curriculum and instructional improvement. To date, eleven disciplines have completed their reviews. In addition, 18 other disciplines are currently engaged in program review. This process, which is now institutionalized, will continue to evolve as the campuses and District embark on the self-study process in preparation for an accreditation visit in fall of 2007.

The planning process will continue to improve and mature as the District transitions to three separate colleges with independent status for Moreno Valley and Norco. It is expected that in the coming years, new processes will be developed and existing ones will be modified to reflect the need for new structures and improved procedures.

This is a critically important period in the history of the institution and an appropriate time for the District to develop its strategic plan for the next few years, defining goals and objectives for an emerging three-college system. The goals should focus on the student as a learner; thus, it is recommended that the District's strategic initiatives embrace the following concepts:

- ✓ Increase Student Access
- ✓ Increase Course Retention
- ✓ Increase Successful Course Completion
- ✓ Student Persistence
- ✓ Improve Student Learning Outcomes
- ✓ Increase the number of Awards, Certificates and Transfers
- ✓ Improve the Quality of the Student Experience
- ✓ Develop a Comprehensive Enrollment Management Program

### **Increase Student Access**

It is the goal of RCCD to serve all those who can benefit from its programs and services. As an open-access institution, the District is committed to serving all eligible students in its service area. The service area of the District includes students from the following unified school districts: Alvord, Corona-Norco, Jurupa, Moreno Valley, Riverside and Val Verde.

The District will set a goal of increasing the student population by 25% over the next five years. This number translates to an annual growth increase of approximately 5% a year. We recognize that while growth rate may vary from year to year, our goal is a total increase of 25% by 2010.

This goal has been set with the expectation that equalization funding will continue to bring additional funding to the District. Further, we recognize that there might be differences in growth rate among the three campuses during this period; however the district as a whole would grow by approximately 5% per year.

Traditionally, the district has enrolled 20% of the graduating high school students in its service area. This group of first-time recent high school graduates accounts for 8% of the fall student body (other first-time students account for 12%). The balance of the fall semester students is comprised of continuing, returning or transfer students. Since the count of first-time recent high school graduates is somewhat dependent on the pool of high school students, any substantial increase in this measure requires the District to increase its capture rate above the traditional 20% of graduating high schools per year. This may require new programs to address the needs of those who have not traditionally attended college immediately after graduation.

### **Increase Course Retention**

Currently, RCCD has an overall course retention or course completion rate of 87.5%. Completed course enrollments are those where enrollment results in a grade equal to an "A", "B", "C", "D", "F", "CR", "NC" or "I". The sum of these grades is divided by the total of all valid grades to calculate the course completion rate. Since this rate is already comparatively high, the goal will be to keep this rate at or above 87.5% for the next five years.

### **Increase Successful Course Completion**

Successful course completion builds upon the course completion measure by counting only students who received grades of "A", "B", "C", or "CR". The most recent (2003-2004) successful course completion rate is 66.9%. The goal is to increase this rate to 70% by 2010.

### **Increase Student Term-to-Term Persistence**

Persistence is defined as a student enrolling in consecutive terms at RCC. Starting in fall 2003, we have an overall persistence rate of 62% for 2 consecutive semesters, 31% for three consecutive semesters, and 17% for four consecutive semesters.

For first-time students in fall 2003, their persistence rates were 59% for two consecutive semesters, 36% for three consecutive semesters, and 25% for four consecutive semesters. (Students who received awards are deleted from analysis after the term when the award was granted.) Our goal is to increase each of these rates for each subgroup by 1 percent each year for the next five years.

### **Improve Student Learning Outcomes**

Riverside Community College has been an accredited institution throughout its history. Student learning and excellence in teaching have been cornerstones for all academic plans and processes. During the next two years, accreditation will be a major focus as the campuses in Moreno Valley and Norco conduct their self studies independently from the Riverside campus. Although shadow accreditations were conducted in 2001, this will be the first time in the District's history that Riverside, Moreno Valley and Norco will produce independent self study review documents.

The next accreditation process differs sharply from the previous ones. Before 2002, accreditation, a process for insuring quality in the delivery of education, relied on a set of inputs such as human resources, financial, technology, library resources and student records as indicators of quality. The current accreditation relies on attainment of desired learning outcomes by students as an indicator and guarantor of quality. It is the output rather than the input which is now examined and evaluated. In this context, defining student learning outcomes and assessment at the course, program, and degree level are the focus of the institutional effectiveness of the District's programs.

During the last three years, the District has been engaged through collegial process in developing assessment tools for evaluating the effectiveness of the curriculum and student learning outcomes. The District's Assessment Committee has been working on defining learning outcomes for the general education component of the AA/AS degrees. In addition, in such disciplines as English, the faculty defined student learning outcomes for composition courses and implemented procedures for assessing outcomes in selected courses on a regular basis.

The goal for 2005-2010 is to define institutional outcomes at the degree, program and course level. Furthermore, the goal is to monitor the student learning and work toward improving the learning outcomes.

### **Increase Awards, Certificates and Transfer Readiness**

During the 2003-04 academic year, RCC granted 2,542 awards and certificates, and facilitated the transfer readiness of 2,203 students. (Transfer prepared is defined as the net number of students system wide who earned, within a six-year period, 56 transferable units with a minimum GPA of 2.00.)

The number of certificates and degrees awarded during academic years 2001-02 through 2003-04, has increased from 7.7% to 8.1% of the respective fall enrollments during those years. This rate of certificates and degrees awarded should increase by 1% over the next five year. This translates to an average annual growth rate of 0.2% a year through

through 2010, when the count of certificates and degrees for academic year 2010-2011 should be 9.5% of the fall 2010 student enrollment.

Likewise, the number of transfer-prepared students during academic years 2001-02 through 2003-04, increased from 5.6% to 7.1% of the fall enrollments for those years. This rate of transfer preparedness should increase by 0.7% every year through 2010, when the number of transfer-prepared students for academic year 2010-2011 should be 12.0% of the fall 2010 student enrollment.

### **Improve the Quality of Student Experience at RCC**

The Community Colleges Student Experiences Questionnaire (CCSEQ) was administered in the spring 2004 semester to a representative sample of 1,200 enrolled students. This questionnaire has a scale in which students evaluate their total student experience at RCCD. When the scores from the 25 items were summed and averaged, the score was 2.5. The strategic plan calls for improving this indicator which is reflective of the total operations of the System. When this test is re-administered, it is the District's goal that the average would improve by (0.1) for each year, with the goal of attaining 3.0 by the year 2010.

### **Developing a Comprehensive Enrollment Management Plan**

Given the District's commitment to increasing access, retention and success it is imperative that the District develop a comprehensive enrollment management program aimed at increasing enrollment, improving retention, increasing student learning outcomes, and assisting students achieve their academic and professional objectives. Currently, a District-wide task force is examining enrollment management issues and will be making recommendations to the Chancellor's Executive Cabinet by January 2006. These recommendations will be the impetus for the development of an enrollment management plan. Such a plan should address issues such as:

- Access and retention
- Best practices on registration processes
- Strategic recruitment of potential students
- The delivery and location of services
- The use of appropriate technology related to access and retention
- Identification of new segments of the population that can benefit from RCCD's programs and services
- Development of a marketing plan for student recruitment

This plan, like the Strategic Plan of 2003-2004, is organized around the mission of the District. It reflects the intent of the District to respond to its environment and community. The goals are intended to provide a framework around which to build action plans. These action plans and the accreditation self-study framework will support and guide the District's efforts to support teaching excellence and student learning.

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