

Closing the Loop

While headcount and FTSE losses noted in previous reports have continued in fall and spring semesters, the pace of decline slowed from spring 2006 to spring 2007 and fall 2006 to fall 2007.

Student demographic shifts noted in the 2006 report have continued: the student body is getting younger and more diverse.

Service area trends noted in the 2006 report have continued: the core service area is more diverse, with continued growth in the western and northern most portions of the service area.

Current Trends

Headcount/FTSE Trends- Source: IRDW

GCC 45th day student headcount decreased 1.7% in the spring semesters and decreased 6.7% in the fall semesters, over the last seven years. However, from the all time spring semester high of 19,734 in 2004, headcount declined 11.2% to 17,533 in 2007. From the all time fall semester high of 20,692 in 2003, headcount declined 10.9% to 18,444 in 2007. Spring 2007 45th day headcount (17,533) decreased 2.6% from the previous spring (17,995). Fall 2007 45th day headcount decreased 3.6% from the prior fall, from 19,133 to 18,444.

GCC 45th day basic FTSE decreased 1.4% from fall 2006 to fall 2007. However, when comparing fall 2001 to fall 2007, 45th day basic FTSE increased 10.1%. FTSE declines in fall 2005, fall 2006 and fall 2007 contrast with the FTSE growth GCC experienced from fall 2001 to fall 2004. Similar patterns exist for spring semesters.

Student Trends- Source: IRDW

The biggest shifts in ethnic composition have occurred in the percentage of Hispanic students. Hispanic students comprised 22.3% of the total student population in the fall of 2007 compared to 18.4% in the fall of 2002. The share of Hispanic students increased from 17.1% to 22.1% from spring 2002 to spring 2007. White non-Hispanic student fall proportions declined (62.2% to 57.1%) and black student fall proportions increased from 4.9% to 6.0% while other racial/ethnic groups remained relatively stable.

The share of students indicating transfer as their primary reason for attending decreased from 39.8% to 31.4% from fall 2002-2007 while the share of students indicating a career-related intent increased from 30.6% to 39.9%. All other intents remained stable.

There has been an increase in the percentages of students in both the 15 – 19 and 20 – 24 age groups; combined age group share equaling 55.9% in fall 2002 (28.8%, 15 – 19 and 27.1%, 20 – 24) and 62.6% in fall 2007 (33.4%, 15 – 19 and 29.2%, 20 – 24).

Student retention rates (within a term) have remained stable over the last five fall and spring terms, fluctuating between 79% and 80%. Accordingly, student attrition rates have remained stable, fluctuating between 18% and 21%. New (fall to spring) student persistence rates (term to term attendance) have declined over the last five years, from 78% to 76% for full-time and from 42% to 37% for part-time students.

Service Area Trends-

Demographic projections obtained from Claritas, a marketing research firm, indicate that the percentage of Hispanic or Latino population in the service area population will continue to grow. Hispanic or Latino ethnicity is estimated to represent 36% of the 2007 service area population

compared to 30% in 2000, with the expectation it will grow to 41% by 2012. In the core GCC service area, the Hispanic or Latino population is projected to grow from 25% to 29% from 2007 to 2012. The 25 – 44 age group is expected to grow more than any other age group in the service area by 2011.

In 2007, GCC's entire service area population was estimated at 1,865,867; in 2012 it is projected to grow to 2,133,922 or 14%. GCC's core service area population is projected to grow 15% from 2007 to 2012 compared to 24% projected population growth of the western and northern portions of the service area.

Projections

FTSE declines in 2006 and 2007 contrast with the FTSE growth GCC experienced from 2002 to 2005. If the spring and fall of 2007 are a leading indicator and previous trends (1992-1994) hold, decreases in FTSE will slow and eventually recover.

GCC 45th day student headcount decreased 1.7% in the spring semesters and decreased 6.7% in the fall semesters, over the last seven years. However, from the all-time spring semester high of 19,734 in 2004, headcount declined 11.2% to 17,533 in 2007. From the all-time fall semester high of 20,692 in 2003, headcount declined 10.9% to 18,444 in 2007. If spring and fall 2007 are leading indicators, and previous trends hold (1992-1994), decreases in headcount will slow and eventually recover. The demographic shifts noted previously will likely continue, creating a larger minority student presence on campus. The shift in student intent may continue as well, creating a larger concentration of "occupational students."

The service area population growth projections noted above are expected to continue.

Implications for GCC

Growth provides the opportunity to provide quality education and training to many more students than ever before at GCC. The potential trend of diminishing enrollment growth presents a challenge and will require a focused, cohesive, and creative enrollment management plan possibly including consideration of class size, class scheduling, staff/student ratios, the increased offering of online classes, increased off-site classes and other creative approaches.

The demographic shift that GCC has seen over the past five years provides the opportunity to meet the needs of an increasing minority student body. As the percentage of Hispanic students increases, the College must prepare to seek the Title V designation of Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI).

The challenges and opportunities associated with the service area trends run parallel to those discussed in the enrollment and demographic trends. GCC must build on the foundation it has established as a partner with the community and find new ways to meet the changing education and training needs in the communities it serves. An increased presence in the western and northern portions of our service area will be paramount for revitalizing enrollment growth into the future.

Bibliography

MCCD Institutional Research Data Warehouse (IRDW)
Claritas marketing information resources company:
<http://www.gc.maricopa.edu:2058/ie/ServiceArea/ServiceAreaDetail.htm>