

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF THE STRATEGIC PLANNING  
ADVISORY COMMITTEE, FORMERLY FUTURES  
2006-2007

CHAIR: Betty Hufford

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Renee Barstack  
Fernando Camou  
Charles Jeffery

COLLEGE DATA

Chair Matt Ashcraft  
James Waugh

AT LARGE MEMBERS

Alberto Sanchez  
Jeffrey Pommerville

## **THE PROCESS**

This summary distills the research and discussion of six Strategic Planning Advisory Committee (SPAC, formerly Futures) subcommittees. Each subcommittee examined its focus area by monitoring trends from last year, identifying new trends, projecting how trends may play out for the next 3-10 years, and analyzing the implications for the college—the challenges and opportunities. The full texts of the subcommittee reports are available at College Research Services (Administration Building) and online at <http://www.gc.maricopa.edu2058/ie/Budget/PlanningBudgeting.htm>

## **2006-2007 OVERVIEW**

Glendale's first priority has always been to provide quality education for the community. SPAC is charged with tracking trends that could affect, positively or negatively, the college's ability to provide this education. Accordingly, this executive summary of the committee's work has been organized around our current strategic directions.

## **ASPECTS OF ACCESS**

Two trends identified in previous executive summaries have continued and may be interpreted as indicators of improved access. First, in fall 2006 Hispanic students comprised 23% of the total student population as compared to 18% in fall 2002. Second, the number of online classes that Glendale offers continues to increase. During the same period, 2002-2006, the number of students in online/hybrid courses rose from 699 to 2753 (College Research). Online/hybrid courses may be particularly attractive to students with transportation, childcare, or mobility issues. Together these trends suggest that GCC is doing a better job at providing access to under-represented populations. Our expansion of the north site and our future site in Surprise also indicate improved outreach. Work remains to be done, however. Currently the main campus's service area is estimated to be about 35% Hispanic (Claritas) and our enrollment of Hispanics, though steadily increasing, does not mirror this statistic.

Another aspect of access is ease of registration. An external force, the passage of Proposition 300, has mitigated the advantage of online and telephone registration.

Finally, it is becoming increasingly clear that access must be coupled with support to enhance student success. A study of a community college district in California reported "barriers to access" have been low, but "barriers to completion" need attention (Shulock and Moore). First-generation-college students generally may require more advisement. Online students, in particular, must be aware that self-motivation and self-discipline are essential to successful completion. Access without comparable emphasis on success does not serve our community. More individualized advising for all students is necessary.

## **DYNAMIC LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS**

### **TECHNOLOGY**

One component of both access and dynamic learning is technology. Last year's executive summary called for a campus online program with standard operating procedures (SOPS). It also faulted the reliability of GCC's technology. In response a faculty member was given release time to direct online and hybrid learning, and the President's Technology Advisory Team (PTAT) was formed to implement changes recommended by both an outside consultant and an internal advisory assessment committee. The first "black box" classroom was created in HU-111. This is a flexible, dynamic environment where human interaction and/or computer interaction can take place. Finally, our campus has been increasing wireless access: approximately two thirds of the buildings and their grounds are wireless, with more locations to come (Daugherty).

Perhaps the newest dynamic learning environment is immersive worlds or simulations, academe's effective application of the popular gaming interface. These computer worlds can enable virtual study abroad or virtual experiences in other time periods. They enhance distance learning by providing a complete learning context including locale. At least one faculty member is developing an immersive world to teach Spanish

by exploring a Mexican house, and the Innovation Center has recently purchased an island in Second Life, a software platform that will enable further simulations.

Teaching with or about technology demands knowledgeable instructors; “it is no longer acceptable for educators to be technology illiterate” (Turner). Students report that if instructors use technology effectively, it is an asset. But if used improperly, it is an obstacle to learning (Kravik; Roberts). Currently GCC, and perhaps the rest of America, is experiencing an aging workforce. Although most age groups show a decline in workforce participation, one group shows an increase: 55 years and older (Mosisa & Hippie). Many of these seasoned employees have kept abreast of technology; others have not. Moreover, some new employees lack technological expertise. Faculty will need extensive and readily available training to develop quality online and/or face-to-face courses, using appropriate technology. Likewise, staff will need training to keep up with workplace demands, like the current Time and Labor training.

#### GROWTH FIELDS

But another aspect of a dynamic learning is the subject matter itself. Are we preparing students for growth fields? Last year’s report noted the need for workers in biotechnology, teaching, and medicine. These trends continue, and Glendale is currently involved in each of these fields. A dedicated biotechnology lab has been built. The college has developed a 4-year teacher education program with NAU. Partnerships are at work for the nursing program. Another growth industry is nanotechnology, expected to grow at an annual rate of 19% for the next five years (McWilliams). Glendale could develop, at a low cost, an introductory nanotechnology course to encourage student awareness and knowledge regarding this industry. Perhaps we should explore the possibility in collaboration with local providers.

#### ACTIVE LEARNING

Dynamic learning also occurs through active learning techniques, which don’t necessarily require technology. Students need to analyze and apply content material, to engage in learning rather than merely listening. In a national poll employers wanted colleges to provide curriculum where students could apply “their learning to challenging questions and real-world problems (“College Learning”).

#### UNDERPREPARED STUDENTS

No matter how dynamic the learning environment, education is a two-way street. Quality education depends on prepared teachers AND students. Unfortunately not all students are prepared in terms of academics and life skills. About 17% of our students place below the 100 level in math, reading, and writing (College Research). This means that they are not yet ready to handle college level work. While GCC has developmental classes to remedy these deficiencies, students try to avoid them through waivers or multiple test-taking. Also most of our faculty, though content experts, have no training specific to instructing this population. Furthermore, developmental students in writing, math, and reading are co-enrolled in 100 level classes despite lower success rates. This is no doubt a consequence of needing a 12-hour schedule for full-time student status, but this practice goes against every criterion for student success. Even students who test into 100 level courses are not necessarily prepared. Instructors report that “students are inadequate writers, have trouble understanding difficult materials, fall short in knowledge of science and math, have poor study habits and lack motivation” (Sanoff). Remediation is difficult because students have a false sense of preparedness. In recent years some honors students (graduating in the upper 15% of their senior classes) have failed to place into 100 level classes. Some of the same behaviors of poor students result in poor employees; “we have a generation of needed employees who are not learning the fundamental work habits that keep them employed: getting out of bed, coming to work drug-free, on-time and dressed appropriately, speaking language that fits the employer’s culture (“Jobs Revolution”).

GCC programs like ACE Plus, the First Year Experience, and learning communities aid in student preparedness but reach a relatively small number of students. We also offer CPD 150, Strategies for College Success, but because it is not required, few students enroll. Currently, Glendale is monitoring the results of Paradise Valley Community College’s Student Success pilot program, which requires a study skills class, enrollment by the first day of class, and mandatory placement. If this program is successful, GCC plans to try it. Student retention is as important as student enrollment.

## **COLLABORATION IN THE FACE OF COMPETITION**

Glendale boasts some inter-department, intra-campus, intra-district, corporate, and community collaborations. The First Year Experience and learning communities are inter-departmental, student-serving programs. Perhaps GCC's newest venue for collaboration is the Faculty Connection Center where individuals and departments share problems and expertise. Instructional councils work within the district to advance new courses and refine competencies. Our automotive and nursing programs involve corporate collaborations, and the West Valley Regional Training Facility is a joint community/college project. This semester, in collaboration with NAU, Students began classes in a 2+2 program in Administration of Justice. A similar program in Fire Science will begin next spring.

Collaboration exists but is not consistent, encouraged, or streamlined. More work is needed to foster collaboration, especially inter-campus.

Finally, unlike the corporate model, Glendale has also collaborated with its main competitor, ASU. Since 1997 GCC has participated in ASU West Partnership and more recently the district initiative MCCCDC-ASU Alliance. Unfortunately the GCC FTSE generated at ASU, the west campus, has declined dramatically from a high of 230 in spring 2001 to the current 50, spring 2007. The benefits and costs of ASU collaboration should be analyzed to determine whether they are worthy of further effort beyond cooperation for student transfer.

## **RESOURCES FOR GROWTH**

Funding uncertainty is a continuing trend that has reemerged with new slants.

### **DISTRICT FTSE-BASED ALLOCATION OF STATE/COUNTY FUNDING**

Glendale receives funding from the MCCCDC dependent on the amount of FTSE (fulltime student equivalent), it generates. FTSE declined in spring 2006 and 2007 after growing from 2002-2005 (College Research). Enrollment can be cyclical. That this spring's decline lessened may indicate eventual recovery. However, the college has yet to assess the impact of Prop 300. While the act does not prohibit non-residents from taking classes, they must pay out-of-state tuition. For students taking seven credits or more, this results in a 431% increase ([maricopa.edu/prop](http://maricopa.edu/prop)). Furthermore, non-citizens cannot receive financial aid or state-funded scholarships. These changes may have a depressing effect on enrollment, not just at Glendale but throughout the district.

On the other hand, if the percentage of full-time Hispanic students meeting the appropriate socio-economic criteria continues to rise as it has since 2002, GCC could be eligible to seek Title V designation as a Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI). This would make the college eligible for additional funding benefiting all students.

It is also unknown what effect recent Maricopa County law enforcement investigations into alleged misuse of funds and other allegations might have on enrollment. While the institution is keenly aware of the resultant negative publicity, potential students may or may not be.

What is certain is that there is no guarantee of the state allotment. State support as a percentage of the budget has declined steadily over the past ten years. Currently about 11% of the total MCCCDC budget comes from state funds—the lowest level ever. Recent negative publicity may provide legislators with a rationale for further reducing funding.

Given these factors and their uneven impact among the ten colleges, the district funding formula must change to promote sustainability of all colleges.

## **TUITION**

Tuition is another source of revenue which Maricopa increasingly relies upon, perhaps to the point of being overused. Since 2000-2001, MCCCDC tuition has risen 59% (MCCCDC Adopted Budgets). As Maricopa's tuition approaches 50% of ASU tuition (\$1,000 for a 15-credit semester) will the community colleges lose

their historical advantage of affordability or will students still see value in smaller classes with residential faculty?

#### **COURSE FEES**

Course fees cannot be standardized from discipline to discipline and further are not standardized within disciplines throughout the Maricopa County Community College District. Because of this, actual cost to enroll varies from college to college. Raising course fees raises a student's total educational cost.

#### **BONDS**

In 2004 voters overwhelmingly approved a general obligation bond for MCCCCD. Glendale received \$105 million dollars to remodel the main campus, expand the north site, and support informational technology and occupational programs. Further, a separate line from the bond proposal supported purchasing land for a Surprise site. Campus project management teams (core teams), with input from resource teams, manage each project to assure the money is well spent and educational specifications are met. For example, our student union remodel has been completed on budget and on time. Furthermore, the remodel is another example of a successful collaboration.

Bonds can create learning environments which require operational funds. Will funds expended on large-scale capital development outstrip what our operational budgets can support?

#### **UNFUNDED MANDATES**

Certainly effective fiscal management is incumbent upon GCC, but Prop 300 and other unfunded mandates will add additional costs of operation. Matt Ortega, director of government affairs for MCCCCD, says "we expect the costs and changes in how we do things to be significant" (Hebel).

All these factors may eventually result in the college making hard choices about what it does best, what holds the greatest potential for growth, and what it must leave to others.

#### **QUALIFIED AND DIVERSE WORKFORCE**

In Arizona, a survey conducted by the AARP indicated more than half of Arizona employers believe their organization will face a shortage of qualified workers in the next five years. Will this be the case for the college? GCC has a history of long tenures for its fulltime faculty; however, much of the business of the college is done by temporary staff or adjunct teachers. Because they receive no benefits and modest compensation, it is difficult to rehire/retain them.

Still as baby boomers reach retirement age, there should be career opportunities for both internal and external candidates. New employees at all levels should be made aware of career paths at Glendale. Some valued members of GCC's workforce began part-time as student workers. Training and degree-seeking should be encouraged. Retirements in the next few years should provide an opportunity to enhance diversity. However, future budget reductions due to FTSE loss may seriously affect our ability to hire new staff and faculty to refill those positions.

#### **IDENTITY**

Last year's report ended with the question of identity. Glendale has been all things to all people with classes ranging from special interest classes to biotechnology. In times of decreasing enrollment, promoting the college through every venue seems to be the strategy. Yet a recent email (Greenwalt, 27 Feb. 2007) indicated that some area high schools felt GCC's outreach efforts were duplicative.

Identity is not built solely on the amount of publicity; it is founded on good education. If by their experience at GCC, students are prepared to succeed at the university or on the job, they will remember Glendale and encourage others to attend.