

Making a Difference: The Touchpoints for Growth at GCC

A Strategic Plan Ongoing in Development

September 10, 2015 Draft

Goal

2% growth in 2015-16 - 300 Full Time Equivalent Students

2% growth in 2016-17 - 306 Full Time Equivalent Students

Challenges

1. Population of district
2. Public transportation to campuses from service area within and beyond the City of Glendale
3. Decreasing projected high school graduation numbers
4. Facilities at GCC - classrooms and labs available
5. Number of other community colleges choices for potential students

Key Areas to Address to Achieve the Goal

Public Awareness

1. Knowing who are our prospective students

Questions to guide discussion:

- A. What are the education and training needs of our service area
- B. What are projected graduation rates for high schools
- C. What are the needs of universities in the area
- D. Where are there education and training needs gaps to be filled
- E. What is the college going rate of the service area
- F. Who have been our students and where are we seeing decreasing numbers
- G. Where have there been decreasing numbers and what are the reasons
- H. What populations have been identified in the Student Equity Plan as access gaps
- I. What groups should be the priority for focused efforts to increase growth

Immediate Action

- Make data available to help guide decisions for outreach, marketing, and program development

Long term action ideas to consider

- Set specific enrollment (FTES) goals for recruiting from specific high schools, geographic areas, age ranges, ethnicities, etc.

2. Providing information to prospective students about GCC, its programs and services

Questions to guide discussion:

- A. Are we using the best modes/platforms of communicating information to prospective students
- B. What are the messages we should give about the value of enrolling at GCC

- C. How do we track, monitor, and measure effective information dissemination to prospective students for best results
- D. Do we monitor students' progress to actual enrollment (i.e. prospective students to admitted students, FAFSA submission, to being assessed to orientation and advisement, to registration, and actual enrollment and census)
- E. Do we seek feedback about the type and adequacy of information received
- F. Are we creating enough interest and awareness about various GCC programs and services to the communities we serve
- G. How can we highlight the high quality of our courses and programs
- H. What is the level of resources the college is willing to commit to marketing

Immediate Action

- Fully implement the marketing and outreach plan developed for the year and increase marketing budget

Long term action ideas to consider

- Go through the internal governance processes to establish, and hire, a new position of Director of Communications and Community Relations (Lead: David Viar)
 - Allocate more of the college's budget to address marketing and advertising needs.
 - Create a thematic marketing campaign with taglines, commercials, etc. Example could be utilizing the slogan: "We're not an option...We're a priority."
 - Brand GCC as culturally sensitive, inclusive, welcoming, etc. college in Sothern California.
 - Publicize the advantages of attending GCC (over our competitors).
 - Increase local and regional (west coast) marketing.
 - Access and recruit in non-traditional communities.
 - Use testimonials by credit students to noncredit students about the benefits of enrolling in credit programs and courses.
 - Ask everyone at GCC including students to recommend GCC to at least one person
 - Hold a college community fair (tours, acceptance of applications, meetings with counselors and faculty, etc.)
 - Expand outreach and continue partnerships with the community via displays/tables setup at the Americana and Glendale Galleria and go to Glendale organizations to promote classes and information about registration.
 - Place electronic sign at the corner of Garfield Ave. and Adams Street to advertise GCC courses and programs.
 - Expand outreach efforts to middle schools and high schools.
 - Improve online technology regarding our services.
 - Encourage businesses to inform employees of short and targeted skill-building courses that would improve their employees' skills and earning potential.
3. Providing useful and easily found information about the college, its programs, and services to prospective students who are exploring admission to the college and enrolling in classes

Questions to guide discussion:

- A. What are neighboring colleges doing
- B. What are the gaps at GCC compared to the neighboring colleges
- C. What are the most effective ways to make contact with potential students
- D. Is our website navigable and information easy to find for prospective students

Immediate Action

- Add web chat and popup options and integrate a Help Desk with the GCC website and social media
 - Live web chat technology will be investigated, obtained and incorporated with GCC website
 - Space will be identified and trained GCC Student Ambassadors will be employed
 - Hours of live service will be determined based on Google analytics as to when GCC website regularly used
- FAQs prepared by various programs, divisions, and departments will be obtained, integrated into one document to place on the website and in a brochure

Long term action ideas to consider

- Utilize Search Engine Optimization techniques to highlight and promote special programs, degrees, and uniqueness of GCC.
- Create identity graphics for individual departments/programs for use in marketing.

4. Having an attractive campus, easily navigable, and with welcoming faculty and staff

Questions to guide discussion:

- A. Are the campuses of GCC attractive and welcoming from an aesthetic perspective
- B. Is it easy to find your way around the campuses and find what you need
- C. Are employees welcoming, knowledgeable and prepared to assist
- D. How can we help prospective students better navigate and feel welcome on our campuses
- E. How can we better direct students to the buildings and rooms they need to go for completion of the application and enrollment process
- F. Are services/offices available (staffed, hours of operation, etc.) adequately to address needs
- G. Are the various department phone lines synchronized for callers wishing to speak to a live person (e.g. is there a phone-tree system for each department)
- H. Do we have adequate and attractive facilities for students to use when they are not in classes

Immediate Action

- Provide the resources and professional development to help faculty and staff be more welcoming to students and visitors – “Welcome to GCC.”
- Expand GCC Information Desk and PBX/switch board operation hours to serve evening and Saturday students and visitors.
 - Information/Help Desk in Administration Building hours of operation will be expanded to M – F, 9:00 am – 7:30 pm and Saturday, 9 am – 4:30 pm staffed by student workers and supervised by Admissions and Records staff and Instructional Services staff when A & R is not open.
 - Ten hours per week will be added to switchboard service.

Long term action ideas to consider

- Implement ongoing college-wide “How can I assist you” employee campaign – a culture of customer service to students.
- Ensure that we have sufficient staff coverage and service hours to facilitate student enrollment and support.
- Explore Customer Relations Management and Recruitment software packages.

- Develop team-building activities between departments to change the culture of the college from silos to one of collaboration.

Application, Admission, Enrollment and Registration Processes

5. Implementing a quick and easy application and enrollment process

Questions to guide discussion:

- A. How easy is it for a prospective student to quickly find the correct starting point for application whether on the web or on campus
- B. How many people start the application process but do not complete and what can be done to get them to complete and then move to registering for classes
- C. How do we monitor and engage interested students in the application process
- D. Are the various online forms for the various departments easily accessible
- E. Can we simplify the application steps and encourage persistence for interested students to complete the process
- F. Does a student who applies get an immediate notice of acceptance, a student ID number, and information on the next step to take for enrollment/registration
- G. What are neighboring colleges doing

Immediate Action

- Implement CCCApply statewide common application process and provide student ID numbers within 24 hours or less to enable students who apply to proceed quickly to enrollment process
- Contact students admitted but who did not register and students who previously enrolled but withdrew or were unsuccessful in completion of courses to gather information as to reasons why and to encourage and support their return.
 - Investigate and select a service to use live callers to survey students who have completed the application process but have not registered for fall semester classes. Conduct the survey in time to follow-up with those who can be helped to enroll in classes.
- Expand the space on the opening page of the GCC website for posting of enrollment information and include a direct link to the full process. (Lead: Paul Schlossman)
- Include on the web page in a visible way the specific classes and sections that remain open for enrollment and assure it is updated daily (Leads: Michelle Mora, Michael Ritterbrown, Paul Schlossman, Marc Drescher)
- Develop brief videos, animated and live action, for use on the website to answer questions prospective students have on application, enrollment, and financial aid processes.

Long term action ideas to consider

- Based on assessment of the live call surveys conducted by an outside service, begin development of a plan to administer the surveys using GCC staff and students.
- Use the information provided by students at the end of admission applications for follow-up contact to students from those in the programs students showed interest.
- Develop better collaboration among Counseling Department, Outreach, and Assessment Offices for an integrated enrollment model.
- Improve Webpage for more efficient access to application process and information access for our students.

6. Having an enrollment/registration process that can be completed in full while on campus and within one day

Questions to guide discussion:

- A. What are neighboring colleges doing
- B. What are some innovative ways to guide students to enroll/register for classes once they are admitted
- C. What are the barriers or disincentives to streamline the enrollment/registration process
- D. How many steps in the enrollment/registration process can new students realistically complete in one day
- E. How can the college communicate with a student who does not complete the enrollment/registration process in one day
- F. Before taking the assessment exams do students understand their importance and are they given resources that lead to optimal performance on the exams and once completed given direction on the next step of the enrollment/registration process
- G. Are students provided an interpretation of their assessment exam results as they relate to course enrollment/registration
- H. Can students discuss career and academic goals and complete their Student Education Plan in a timely manner prior to completion of the enrollment/registration process

Immediate Action

Long term action ideas to consider

- Provide registration assistance to students who are struggling with the system.
- Hire 1 or 2 staff members to respond to Facebook questions and other GCC social media platforms.

7. Assuring students have clear information about their fees, costs, financial aid options and a clear and simple process for paying their fees

Questions to guide discussion:

- A. Are the efforts of the involved services and offices coordinated to avoid possible gaps or confusion
- B. Are we educating students about financial aid processes (Federal, State and internal) as well as GCC fees policies and processes
- C. Are we soliciting feedback from students regarding continuous improvement of services in these areas

Immediate Action

- Two locations, the Business Services Window at Administration Building and the Pay Windows adjacent to the Veterans Resource Center, will be open to collect fees at the beginning of the semester

Long term action ideas to consider

- Improve GCC's website.

Program and Course Offerings and Schedule

8. Developing a two-year academic calendar, course schedule, and array of on-line and on campus offerings that reflect the needs of the students and move them toward timely completion

Questions to guide discussion:

- A. What are neighboring colleges doing
- B. Is the academic calendar coordinated with feeder high schools and four-year universities for a smooth and seamless transition for our students
- C. Are course offerings evaluated and scheduled to meet the current needs of the students in fulfillment of the SEPs
- D. What sustainable opportunities are there for program expansion and development
- E. What programs are not performing to their potential, and how might we support or enhance these programs more effectively
- F. Is our use of physical space effective and efficient, and are we maximizing the use of that space in terms of student need
- G. What role can distance education play

Immediate Action

- Visit neighboring colleges with strong enrollment management practices and computer programs and learn what could be replicated at GCC
- Instructional Services work with Administrative services to establish clear growth targets
- Analyze external data to determine trends that may have an impact on enrollment

Long term action ideas to consider

- Develop more concurrent enrollment programs with high schools.
- Establish a 1 to 2 yr. academic calendar for class scheduling.
- Increase curriculum development and packaging of certificates, degrees, and transfers into fast-track programs.
- Develop, define and market programs with clear pathways to success.
- Survey students to determine course offerings, times, frequency, etc.
- Offer several 100% online degrees.
- Adjust class loads based on room assignments.
- Increase class encumbered capacity to maximum number.
- Improve data analysis for enrollment management and incorporate touchpoints for growth.
- Closely monitor waiting lists to offer more class sections where there is demand.
- Expand noncredit ESL courses to off-site locations in South Glendale and Montrose/La Crescenta area.
- Improve communication between Instruction and Student Services.
- Provide tools that allow for more sophisticated data analysis and projections regarding scheduling and enrollment patterns.
- Analyze SEPs, wait lists, and web traffic to closed classes to assist in determining student need.

Retention, Persistence, and Goal Completion

9. Focusing on the retention of students in their classes and persistence to next semester

Questions to guide discussion:

- A. Have we identified the major factors that lead to students withdrawing from classes or not succeeding in their courses
- B. What role does perceived lack of parking play in student retention
- C. Will implementation of the 3SP and Student Equity plans increase retention?
- D. Will the actions being implemented through those plans show results in sufficient time to help achieve the growth goals?
- E. Is there additional support needed to implement the plans in a timely way to improve the chances of increasing retention starting with the 2015-16 academic year
- F. What can be put in place to increase the likelihood an enrolled student will attend the first day of class
- G. Are we sufficiently communicating about the support services available to students to prevent and/or avoid early withdrawals or grade failures
- H. Are current instructional support programs effective
- I. Do we need additional instructional support programs
- J. Would more robust faculty development programs emphasizing effective learning methodologies increase retention

Immediate Action

- Send a welcome and acceptance letter from the Superintendent/President to students and highlight services available to assure success.
 - Letter from President will be e-mailed to all enrolled students by August 18 including invitation to attend August 28 Welcome Day at GCC
 - Welcome badges will be provided staff and ASGCC leaders to wear first two weeks of school.
 - Welcome to GCC information sheet with answers to commonly asked questions will be provided staff who will be walking the campus during the opening of school
- Disseminate more widely and visibly information about student success services available.
- Work with students on course wait lists to help them find alternative classes if they are not added to the roster on the first day of classes.
 - Students on wait lists will be contacted at least a week before start of school and provided information on alternative classes that can be taken
 - Counselors will be available to meet with wait listed students on the first day of class when the students learn they will not be added to the roster
- Provide electronic signs regarding parking areas availability, assign cadets/officers to ease traffic congestion, and send email blast to students about location of parking lots prior to start of the semester.

Long term action ideas to consider

- Fully implement the 3SP Plan and the Student Equity Plan
- Increase student services access and awareness for persistence and retention.

- Utilize the Student Equity Plan for student surveys in the fall semester regarding enrollment questions, as well as, persistence and retention and implementation of strategies based on the results of the survey study.
- Increase the number of students in programs such as Scholars, EOPS, Athletics, International Students, etc.
- Provide more robust professional development that is focused on effective teaching methods and student retention for faculty.
- Identify students enrolled in specific majors with only some level of completion and follow up with them to provide them assistance and guidance in realizing their educational goals.
- Develop a position responsible for student retention.
- Conduct focus groups with students who have dropped out to determine the reasons for their departure.

10. Maintaining student engagement activities so students want to stay at GCC through completion

Questions to guide discussion:

- A. What are the student engagement activities now in place
- B. How many students participate in the these activities
- C. How are students informed about student engagement opportunities
- D. How can the number of students participating be increased
- E. Do we offer adequate programs, courses, services, and support for returning students

Immediate Action

Long term action ideas to consider

- Improve student life on-campus by increasing space for students for socialization, engagement in outdoor activities, etc.

Assuring Implementation of the Actions Necessary

1. College employees' awareness and understanding of the issues and their importance
2. Overseeing and administering the efforts
3. Providing the financial and human resources