Our Vision, Our Mission, Our Future
2010-2011
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Who Are We?
As the 2009-10 academic year draws to a close and I begin the traditional end-of-the-year reflection, a recurring thought continues to surface during my internal deliberations. The only way I can encapsulate this perspective is to describe it as follows: seize our destiny rather than have our destiny be determined for us.

The dire fiscal circumstances at the state and local levels have necessitated that West Valley College respond quickly and perhaps in a bit of a reactionary manner to budget reductions. For example, the 09-10 state budget included language which forced colleges to dramatically reduce course offerings in this academic year through the difficult process of workload reduction. The immediacy of the fiscal realities facing the California community college system caused workload reduction to be implemented in a relatively hasty manner. West Valley College was forced to react rather than having the luxury of time to plan for gradual reshaping of our course offerings and academic programs. Further, dramatic funding reductions to the categorical student support programs caused a similar, immediate cost-containment reaction. Additionally, at the local level, the process of program discontinuance, while carried out in a thoughtful and careful manner, has long-term implications for the nature of our institution. One Senator articulately conveyed this viewpoint repeatedly during this process: every decision the Senate makes regarding program discontinuance defines who we are well into the future. We know we can’t fiscally continue to be all things to all people. At West Valley College, we need to focus our broad mission (as the state has already begun doing for us) and recognize that we simply can’t sustain both quantity and quality across a wide spectrum of programs and services.

Let’s seize the moment to define who West Valley College is into the future. Our 2009 Educational and Facilities Master Plan incorporates a set of educational initiatives but within this list, what are our priorities as we move into a future of permanently reduced funding? Who do we want to be? What do we wish to focus on? Let’s be strategic about defining ourselves so that we have some degree of control over the allocation of our limited resources.

College Council’s Charge

Oversee the “Our Vision, Our Mission, Our Future Initiative” in 2010-11 to accomplish two specific things: (1) define and prioritize our focus into the future; and (2) recraft our mission statement to capture the essence of West Valley College.

Timeline

April 1: College Council adoption of white paper outlining our vision, our mission, and our future

May 1: College Council adoption of recrafted mission statement
Getting Started

To prime the pump, what would we prioritize as important to us from the list of 2009 educational initiatives in the Educational and Facilities Master Plan? Or would we want to select and prioritize perhaps a handful of programs/ideas from the following list to emphasize over the next five years? Would we be willing and eager to put resources toward selected and prioritized areas in order to create high quality and sustainable programs in these areas? While this list isn’t meant to be exhaustive, it is meant to spur us to think about who we want to be and what we want to be known for.

- Liberal arts and sciences/transfer preparation
- STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math)
- Distance education
- Gateway programs in math, English, reading, and ESL (aka – basic skills)
- University Center for upper division coursework (e.g., leading to a baccalaureate degree in Business and/or Human Services)
- Focused but robust student support services
- Cultural nexus for the communities we serve
- Global education
- Creating a vibrant Campbell Center serving the educational needs of an underserved region in our service area
- Faculty and staff development
- Developing new credit programs in emerging areas (e.g., green or health care)

I would also like to see us grapple with an all important issue: ensuring and maintaining academic quality in the face of pressure for greater productivity. We must be able to find a long-term, sustainable balance between academic quality and fiscal efficiency. Further, how do we foster and promote a campus culture which encourages faculty and staff risk-taking and experimentation within our academic programs, the teaching/learning process, and our student support areas given the pressures for greater efficiency? I am convinced that experimenting and trying new things (even if we fail) leads to greatness.

White Paper

Our Vision, Our Mission, Our Future: Listening Sessions
April 2011

Background:

College Council’s Charge (retreat, 10/15/10):
Oversee the “Our Vision, Our Mission, Our Future Initiative” in 2010-11 to accomplish two specific things: (1) define and prioritize our focus into the future; and (2) recraft our mission statement to capture the essence of West Valley College.

Listening Sessions - Process:

Gatherings of key stakeholders to solicit their input regarding:

- What are our priorities as we move into a future of permanently reduced funding?
- What do we wish to focus on?
- Who do we want to be?
- We can’t continue to be all things to all people.

Participants:

- Conducted 10 listening sessions, with more than 115 participants
- Participants from: College Council, Classified Senate, Marketing Committee, Academic Senate, Division Chairs Council, Student Services Council, Board of Trustees, Associated Students, Community Leaders, Associate Faculty
- Also conducted open-item student survey linked from college website with more than 60 responses

Methods:

- Facilitated discussions, feedback recorded
- Response frequencies tabulated
- Data and impressions analyzed by team from WVC and Design2Market
- Themes identified, refined, prioritized
Listening Sessions - Findings:

- **Who We Are:**
  - Caring, welcoming institution
    - Personal attention
    - Not just a number
  - Beautiful campus
    - Serene
    - Sanctuary
  - Excellent faculty, staff, and administration
    - Academic qualifications, professional awards
    - Personal connections with students

- **Focus On:**
  - Student success
    - Academic rigor
    - Equity
    - Clear pathways from entry to goal
  - Environment that fuels the mind
    - A safe place for students to learn
    - Innovative new facilities (Fox Center, Campus Center, Science & Math)
  - Continued focus on *Who We Are* (above)

- **Who We Can Become:**
  - A regional leader in transfer
    - See clear pathways, above
    - Strengthen relationships with UCs and CSUs
    - Continue to focus on and strengthen our core transfer programs
  - Entrepreneurship resource
    - Small business start-up and management
    - Green technologies
    - Emphasize and refine current vocational programs
  - Global education leader
    - Define what this concept looks like at WVC
    - Infuse existing curriculum rather than creating new program
  - SMD: Science, Math, and Design
    - Build on strong science and math reputations
    - Enhance with growing design field
Next Steps:

- College Council adopts white paper
- With white paper as foundation, College Council crafts new mission statement