

Implications for Planning

The purpose of this section is to distill the key elements most relevant to educational planning drawn from the information presented in the first two chapters of the *RSCCD Comprehensive Master Plan*. These elements describe both opportunities and challenges for the RSCCD's planning for the next decade.

BACKGROUND

1. The Rancho Santiago County Community College District (RSCCD) in Orange County encompasses approximately 193 square miles.
2. This densely populated district of a little over one million residents includes the six cities of Anaheim, Garden Grove, Orange, Santa Ana, Tustin, and Villa Park. The population within RSCCD is projected to increase 6% between 2010 and 2020. The two largest cities in RSCCD are Anaheim and Santa Ana and population in these cities is projected to increase 10% and 4% respectively.
3. RSCCD is surrounded by five other community college districts within reasonable easy driving distance. Given this proximity, students have multiple community college choices and there is considerable free flow of students among these six districts.
4. RSCCD is one of the largest community college districts in California, serving 27,910 credit students and 16,222 non-credit students in fall 2012. RSCCD includes two colleges, one of the state's oldest community colleges, Santa Ana College, and one of its newest, Santiago Canyon College. Each college offers a full range of credit instruction and student services as well as non-credit offerings through off-campus sites. In addition, Santa Ana College offers regional career technical education programs for law enforcement, fire technology, and digital media.
5. Due to the economic recession, unemployment in the state and the region is high and the state continues to grapple with significant deficits that have resulted in reductions for higher education funding. This coupling of high unemployment with reduced revenue has been keenly felt at community colleges where student demand for services has increased at the same time that state funding has been reduced. Economists predict that the economic recovery will be slow but steady in the coming decade, including an increase in job growth in Orange County.
6. In addition to these economic realities, community colleges have also been in the spotlight due to both a national and state urgency regarding the low level of students' completion of degrees and certificates and the documented racial/ethnic disparities in achievement. For all racial/ethnic groups, California ranks lower than many other states on the higher education achievements of its residents. Among the black and Latino students who attend community colleges, proportionately fewer black and Latino students (26% and 22% respectively) completed a degree or certificate within six years compared to White and Asian Pacific Islanders (37% and 35% respectively).

7. The graduation rates must double in the coming decade to meet projected workforce requirements. Three recent initiatives to direct the energies of the California community college system toward improvement in degree and certificate completion rates are:
- The *Report on the Commission on the Future* studied the influences on student success and developed a set of recommendations for California and its colleges;
 - The Student Success Task Force studied best practices and proposed initiatives that promise to improve students' successful completion of degrees and certificates; based on their findings, recent legislation (SB1456) requires colleges to implement some of those best practices, such as providing intensive orientation to help new students establish their educational goals; and
 - The Student Transfer Achievement Reform Act (SB 1440) is intended to improve California's degree completion rates by removing barriers and clarifying the path to transfer to state public universities.

REGIONAL POPULATION TRENDS AND CHARACTERISTICS

8. The current population within RSCCCD (1,048,961) is projected to increase by a little over 65,939 additional residents (4%) by 2020. The two largest cities in RSCCD are Anaheim and Santa Ana and the population of these cities is projected to increase 10% and 4% respectively.
9. Overall in Orange County, the population is projected to increase for all ages except the 15-19 and 40-49 cohorts; these cohorts are projected to decline 11% and 10% respectively. Residents in the 60 and older age cohort in Orange County are projected to increase the most in this decade (34%). In five of the six cities within RSCCD boundaries, the proportion of residents in each age cohort is similar: about a quarter of the population is younger than 14 years old; the 15 to 19 age cohort represents the lowest proportion of the population; and the remainder of the population is distributed almost evenly across the other age cohorts. In Villa Park the highest proportion of residents is age 60 or older and lowest proportion of residents is between the ages of 30 to 39.
10. There is not a majority race/ethnic cohort in Orange County in 2010. The proportion of White residents is the highest (44%) followed by Hispanic (34%) and Asian (18%). The county's population is projected to be made up of the same three race/ethnicity cohorts in the same order in 2020, although the proportions will shift with White residents the highest at 39%, followed by Hispanic at 35% and Asian at 22%.
11. The race/ethnicity pattern of residents who live within RSCCD boundaries is comparable to the pattern in Orange County as a whole with two exceptions: there is a significantly higher proportion of Hispanic residents within RSCCD boundaries (55%) than in the total county (34%) and a significantly lower proportion of White residents within RSCCD boundaries (24%) than in the total county (44%). Based on a fall 2010 comparison of RSCCD credit student population with the general population living with RSCCD boundaries, the race/ethnicity of the RSCCD credit student population

approximates the community population with three minor differences: a higher proportion of both Asian and Hispanic residents compared to the student population (Asian: 17% versus 11%; Hispanic: 55% versus 53%); and a slightly lower proportion of residents selecting the “Other” category of race/ethnicity compared to the student population (2% versus 4%).

12. Four of the six communities within RSCCD boundaries have a lower proportion of residents who speak only English at home (40%, 34%, 17%, and 49%) compared to the county and the state proportions (56% and 57% respectively). These four communities make up 87% of the total population within RSCCD boundaries.
13. The communities within RSCCD significantly differ from one another in the socio-economic measure of median household income. The median household income for Anaheim, Garden Grove, and Santa Ana are below or slightly above the state median household income of \$60,883 (\$57,807, \$54,877 to \$61,026 respectively). Orange and Tustin are above the state median household income at \$76,742 and \$73,170 respectively. The median household income for Villa Park is more than double the state median household income at \$146,776.
14. The proportion of adults who have not attended college at all is significantly higher in Anaheim, Garden Grove, and Santa Ana compared to the state and the county proportions (48%, 51%, and 69% respectively).

LOCAL ECONOMIC TRENDS

15. Although the number of jobs and total nonfarm payroll are below the pre-recession rates in most employment sectors, economists project that job growth in Orange County will increase in the coming year. Are there data on the educational requirements needed for the jobs?

SANTA ANA COLLEGE DATA

16. Due to state-imposed reductions in the number of students funded, the number of sections of credit and non-credit courses has been reduced over the past five years. This reduction in the number of sections consequently reduced student headcount and the number of full-time equivalent students.
17. Comparing fall 2011 and fall 2012, there was a 5% restoration in the number of on-campus credit sections, but the number of non-credit offerings were reduced an additional 9% in fall 2012.
18. The majority of Santa Ana College students credit students are Hispanic (63% in fall 2012). The next largest racial/ethnic groups in the credit student population are White and Asian at 15% and 12% respectively. This distribution of the population by racial/ethnic categories reflects the distribution of residents who live in Anaheim and Santa Ana.
19. The proportion of students in traditional college-going ages (ages 18 – 25) has increased each year from 2008 to 2012. Mirroring this age trend, the proportion of students seeking an associate degree

or transfer without a degree has increased each year from 40% in 2008 to 64% in 2012 and the number of first-time college freshman between the ages of 17 and 19 has increased each fall since 2008.

20. For fall 2011, the rate of successful course completion for Santa Ana College students in credit courses at 71% was slightly higher than the statewide average of 69% and the student retention rate at 84% was slightly lower than the statewide average of 85%. Comparing the college on the same benchmark rates for distance education credit courses, the rates for Santa Ana College students match the statewide average for successful completion of distance education courses (both are 58%) and are below the statewide average on retention in distance education courses (73% compared to 78%). Both of these measures are lower for distance education courses than for more traditionally taught courses.
21. In the Accountability Reporting for Community Colleges measures, Santa Ana College is above the peer group average on the Student Progress and Achievement Rate but below the peer group average on all other metrics: percentage of students who earned at least 30 units; fall-to-fall persistence; successful course completion rates for credit vocational courses and credit basic skills courses; and improvement rates for credit ESL courses and credit basic skills courses.
22. A little over 1,500 associate degrees and almost 1,300 credit certificates were awarded by Santa Ana College in 2011 – 2012. The race/ethnicity of these degree-earners is proportional to the representation of those race/ethnicity groups in the total student population.
23. The number of Santa Ana College students who transfer to universities has increased dramatically from 1,394 in 2006- 2007 to 2,229 in 2011 – 2012.
24. Based on fall 2012 data, student demographics at the Santa Ana College School of Continuing Education show that the predominate racial/ethnic group is Hispanic (86%); there are slightly more female students (56%); and the largest proportions of students are between ages 30 and 64.
25. The ratings of Santa Ana College is largely positive:
 - 89% of the 626 students taking credit courses in 2012 reported satisfaction with their overall experience;
 - 89% of the 869 students taking non-credit courses in 2012 reported satisfaction with their overall experience; and
 - 55% of the 400 community members who responded to a survey in 2012 rated the quality of education provided by Santa Ana College as “excellent” or “good.”

26. Due to state-imposed reductions in the number of students funded, the number of sections of credit and non-credit courses has been reduced over the past five years. This reduction in the number of sections consequently reduced student headcount and the number of full-time equivalent students.
27. Comparing fall 2011 to fall 2012, there was a 1% restoration in the number of both on-campus credit and non-credit courses.
28. The majority of Santiago Canyon College students credit students in fall 2012 are either Hispanic (41%) or White (39%). The next largest racial/ethnic group in the credit student population is Asian at 8%. This distribution of the population by racial/ethnic categories most closely resembles the distribution of residents who live in Orange and Tustin.
29. The proportion of students in traditional college-going ages (ages 18 – 25) increased from 2008 to 2012. Mirroring this age trend, the proportion of students seeking an associate degree or transfer without a degree has increased each year from 48% in 2008 to 66% in 2012 and the number of first-time college freshman between the ages of 17 and 19 has increased each fall since 2009.
30. For fall 2011, the rate of successful course completion for Santiago Canyon College students in credit courses at 70% was slightly higher than the statewide average of 69% and the student retention rate at 84% was slightly lower than the statewide average of 85%. Comparing the college on the same benchmarks rates for distance education credit courses, the rates for Santiago Canyon College students are higher than both the statewide average for successful completion of distance education courses (55% versus 52%) and the statewide average on retention in distance education courses (83% versus 71%). Both of these measures are lower for distance education courses than for more traditionally taught courses.
31. In the Accountability Reporting for Community Colleges measures, Santiago Canyon College is above the peer group average on three metrics:
 - Fall to fall persistence;
 - Successful course completion of credit vocational courses; and
 - Improvement rate for credit basic skills courses;and is below the peer group average on four metrics:
 - Student Progress and Achievement Rate;
 - Percentage of students who earned at least 30 units;
 - Successful course completion rates for credit basic skills courses; and
 - Improvement rates for credit ESL courses.
32. Santiago Canyon College awarded 858 associate degrees and 1,083 credit certificates in 2011 – 2012. The race/ethnicity of these degree-earners is proportional to the representation of those race/ethnicity groups in the total student population.

33. The number of Santiago Canyon College students who transfer to universities has increased slightly from 890 in 2006- 2007 to 915 in 2011 – 2012.
34. Based on fall 2012 data, student demographics at the Santiago Canyon College School of Continuing Education show that the predominate racial/ethnic group is Hispanic (70%); there are slightly more female students (53%); and the largest proportions of students are between ages 30 and 64.
35. The ratings of Santiago Canyon College is largely positive:
 - 90% of the 258 students taking credit courses in 2012 reported satisfaction with their overall experience;
 - 94% of the 1,224 students taking non-credit courses in 2012 reported satisfaction with their overall experience; and
 - 75% of the 400 community members who responded to a survey in 2012 rated the quality of education provided by Santa Ana College as “mostly positive.”

Summary of Implications for Planning

This profile of the RSCCCD community and its students highlights many benefits/successes and identifies specific challenges to be addressed in the RSCCD Goals.

RSCCCD benefits/successes include the following:

- A headcount of 27,910 students in credit courses and 16,222 students in non-credit courses in fall 2012.
- A service area population that is projected to grow by 6% in the coming decade.
- A need for the educational opportunities offered by colleges given the low level of adults' educational attainment within RSCCCD boundaries.
- Recent increases in student enrollment despite reductions in number of credit sections offered.
- Strong community outreach through a diverse range of noncredit programs.
- A youthful student population with the majority of students aged 29 or younger.
- Improving rates of students transferring to four-year institutions.
- High ranking of satisfaction with the colleges in surveys of credit students, non-credit students, and community members.

Based on data from internal and external scans, RSCCCD's challenges in the coming decade are:

1. How to develop and implement sound planning and fiscal practices

There is heightened concern about fiscal stability due to the national recession and the impact the recession has had on the local economy, such as high rates of unemployment. Although some recovery in the level state apportionment has begun and is likely to continue, there is pressure on community college districts to develop and implement

sustainable cost-saving practices and to base fiscal decisions on data-driven planning. These fiscal constraints pose several key challenges for RSCCD:

- Providing sufficient resources to maintain viable programs and services
- Acquiring and retaining qualified faculty and staff
- Maintaining and developing adequate facilities
- Acquiring and maintaining appropriate technology

2. How to support students' goals of completing a degree or certificate

Although the rates of transfer and awards of degrees and certificates in RSCCD have improved in recent years compared to statewide averages, overall the state rate is low compared to other states and compared to projected workforce needs. The graduation rates must double in the coming decade to meet projected workforce requirements.

Completion of degrees and certificates is a unique challenge within RSCCD because:

- About half of the residents who live with RSCCD boundaries do not speak English at home and
- The relatively low level of educational attainment of the residents who live within RSCCD boundaries make it less likely that there is at-home support for the pursuit of degree completion; and
- Do we want to add anything about students' preparedness for college work?

3. How to meet the needs of a community that is projected to grow by 6% by 2020

The two cities projected to experience the greatest amount of population growth (Anaheim and Santa Ana) are the cities with the lowest median household income and the lowest levels of educational attainment for adult residents.

4. How to expand and reinforce partnerships in the community

John: Obviously community partnerships are part of the solution and should be one of the RSCCD Goals. Are there any data, such as surveys, etc., that would point to the need for increased community partnerships?

