Chapter 3 Strategic Directions

Introduction
This Educational Plan is grounded in an analysis of current programs and services, the District’s position in the state, and campus and community members’ perceptions and vision for the future. The analysis presented in the previous chapter identified four primary challenges:

1. How to meet the needs of a community that is projected to grow by 1.7% by 2020
2. How to support students’ goals of completing a degree or certificate
3. How to eliminate barriers that decrease underrepresented students’ degree and certificate completion
4. How to expand and reinforce partnerships in the community

The District’s strategic directions have been developed as a response to these challenges. These are intended to serve as a guide for the District’s decision-making and use of resources for the next ten years. The five District Strategic Directions are:

**NOCCC CD Strategic Direction 1**
NOCCC CD will increase by 5% annually the rates of completion for degrees, certificates, diplomas, transfers and transfer-readiness.

**NOCCC CD Strategic Direction 2**
NOCCC CD will decrease the documented achievement gap by increasing within each racial/ethnic student cohort the rates of completion for degrees, certificates, diplomas, transfers and transfer-readiness.

**NOCCC CD Strategic Direction 3**
NOCCC CD will increase by 2% annually the success rate for students moving into:
- College-level courses in mathematics, English and English as a Second Language from credit or noncredit basic skills instruction in these disciplines and
- The next higher course in the sequence of credit or noncredit basic skills courses in mathematics, English and English as Second Language.

**NOCCC CD Strategic Direction 4**
NOCCC CD will implement best practices related to planning including transparent decision-making processes, support of strategic and comprehensive planning activities at campus
and district levels, and the allocation of resources to fund planning priorities.

**NOCCCD Strategic Direction 5**

NOCCCD will develop and sustain collaborative projects and partnerships with the community’s educational institutions, civic organizations and businesses.

The NOCCCD Strategic Directions are intentionally broad enough to cover the ten-year term of this Comprehensive Master Plan. The next step in the District’s integrated planning process is to develop a strategic plan which will include specific objectives and action steps that will be taken to make progress toward these Strategic Directions. In addition to the development of a strategic plan, an integrated planning manual will be developed in the coming year to describe the ongoing and systematic cycle of evaluation, integrated planning, resource allocation, implementation, and re-evaluation including methods for assessing progress on the Strategic Directions.

The remainder of this chapter presents the rationale for each Strategic Direction.

**Strategic Directions**

**NOCCCD Strategic Direction 1:** NOCCCD will increase by 5% annually the rates of completion for degrees, certificates, diplomas, transfers and transfer-readiness.

The low number of students who complete degrees and certificates is a top concern at state and national levels. President Obama’s call for an increase of 5 million degrees and certificates by 2020 is in response to a decline in levels of higher education attainment in the United States compared to other large, industrialized nations. Applying this targeted increase to California community colleges, the American Graduation Initiative challenges all community colleges to triple the number of degrees and certificates awarded by 2020. To meet this challenge, each college would need to increase the number of degrees and certificates awarded by 12% per year for each of the next 10 years.

Recommendations from the *Report on the Commission on the Future* related to this Strategic Direction that will be considered in the development of objectives are:

**Leadership and Accountability**

- System and institutional research should focus more directly on core issues of teaching, learning and student success; and the creation of new reporting and accountability requirements should directly correlate with student success.
• **Student success should be the focus of a reinvented professional development effort for community college trustees, administrators, faculty and staff.**

**Intense Student Support**

• **Students should be required to participate in integrated student support, assessment, counseling and orientation, and enroll in courses according to well publicized and strictly-enforced registration deadlines.**

• **Through a statewide initiative, relay clear community college expectations early in each student’s educational career regarding requirements for any community college, including the importance of going directly to college after high school.**

**Teaching & Learning**

• **Schedule classes in an inter-departmental manner with the goal of meeting the needs of first-time entering students, promoting full-time enrollment, and enhancing program completion.**

Sources:

- American Graduation Initiative
- Report on the Commission on the Future

**NOCCCD Strategic Direction 2:** NOCCCD will decrease the documented achievement gap by increasing within each racial/ethnic student cohort the rates of completion for degrees, certificates, diplomas, transfers and transfer-readiness.

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). Proportionately twice as many white students transfer to a four-year university than Latino students. This achievement gap is a significant ethical, social, and economic issue for California.

In addition to the student support objectives that will be developed for Strategic Direction 1, a recommendation from the Report on the Commission on the Future related to this Strategic Direction that will be considered in the development of objectives is:

**Leadership and Accountability**
• The system should regularly gather, report, and use disaggregated student access and achievement data to monitor student progress across achievement milestones to evaluate institutional and program effectiveness.

Sources:
- American Graduation Initiative
- Report on the Commission on the Future
- California Leadership Alliance for Student Success Summer Institute, July 2010

**NOCCCD Strategic Direction 3:** NOCCCD will increase by 2% annually the success rate for students moving into:
- College-level courses in mathematics, English and English as a Second Language from credit or noncredit basic skills instruction in these disciplines and
- The next higher course in the sequence of credit or noncredit basic skills courses in mathematics, English and English as Second Language.

Underprepared students do not have the skills to complete an associate degree. Through this Strategic Direction the District is articulating its collective commitment to develop and implement strategies that will result in quantifiable gains in student achievement at all levels.

The recommendations from the Report on the Commission on the Future associated with Strategic Directions 1 and 2 also relate to this Strategic Direction and will be considered in the development of corresponding objectives.

Source:
- Report on the Commission on the Future
- California Leadership Alliance for Student Success Summer Institute, July 2010

**NOCCCD Strategic Direction 4:** NOCCCD will implement best practices related to planning including transparent decision-making processes, support of strategic and comprehensive planning activities at campus and district levels, and the allocation of resources to fund planning priorities.

NOCCCD is at the beginning of a significant cultural shift to incorporate District-wide planning into the existing planning structures at the two Colleges. Through this Strategic Direction, the District is prioritizing the development and implementation of a data-driven integrated planning cycle to fully comply with accreditation standards as well as to provide a more visible
link between resource allocation and planning priorities. Each component in that planning process will include the use of data to assess results and inform decisions. To ensure that these processes are transparent and to increase institutional trust, the steps and timelines of planning processes, such as strategic planning and the allocation of resources, will be documented in an integrated planning manual.

Source:
- ACCJC Standards and Recommendations

**NOCCCD Strategic Direction 5: NOCCCD will develop and sustain collaborative projects and partnerships with the community’s educational institutions, civic organizations and businesses.**

In this Strategic Direction goal, NOCCCD is making a commitment to renew and expand its partnerships with
- K-12 to improve students’ preparedness for college-level studies,
- Civic organizations to be an effective partner in restoring the service area to economic health, and
- Business and industry to improve employment rates in the service area.

Sources:
- NOCCCD Community Survey
- Themes from Summer 2011 NOCCCD Interviews