

Study of Growth

INTRODUCTION

One of the most important tasks necessary for the completion of this Master Plan was the prediction of the future growth or enrollment potential of the District. All San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG) growth projections indicate that San Diego County will continue to grow throughout the next 20 years. This growth will create an increasing demand for a more well-educated and skilled workforce especially in north San Diego County. The Palomar Community College District will be a major source for the training and education of this workforce. During the next 20 years the population of the Palomar Community College District will approach one million. Three quarters of those residents will be adults and therefore potential students at Palomar. Because of the increased demand for education, and the increased population there will be a significant increase in enrollment at the Palomar Community College District.

Short-term enrollment growth can be influenced by several different factors, local internal factors, local external factors, state-wide factors, and global factors. Some of the local internal factors that affect growth are: the quality of the instructional program, the quality of the faculty/staff, the quality of student services, the number of class sections offered, the diversity of course offerings, the availability of degree/certificate programs, availability of classrooms/facilities, number of distance learning classes, variety of offerings at centers and other college sites, outreach efforts, marketing and parking. Local external factors that affect growth include: adult population growth, the number of high school graduates, demographic diversity, participation rates, inter-district free flow, the local economy/employment opportunities, and traffic patterns. A few of the state-wide factors that affect enrollment growth are: the California state general fund budget surplus/deficit including funding for unrestricted general fund programs and services as well

as restricted fund programs and services, the state economy/employment opportunities, miscellaneous state-wide social and economic initiatives, and state mandated fee increases. And even global factors such as the world economy, international crises, and war can influence enrollment.

It is possible for the District to control most of the local internal factors and, over time, many of the external factors seem to even out. But in general, the enrollment trend always seems to be up. Therefore it is important for planning purposes to be able to accurately predict the extent of this long-term increase. To this end, a study of growth was undertaken to answer three basic questions; 1) What will be the potential enrollment in 2022?, 2) what will be the differential growth in the differing geographical areas within the District?, and 3) where should the District locate new facilities to best serve this expected increase in enrollment? To answer these questions the Task Force studied four different factors that are available for predicting future enrollment; past District enrollment trends, adult population projections, participation rates, and student free-flow.

PAST ENROLLMENT TRENDS

As mentioned in the Introduction, in the short-term there are many factors that influence enrollment. Some of those factors can be controlled by the District, some are controlled by local and state governments, and some might as well be considered as random. But long-term trends are easier to see, and are a much better base for the prediction of future enrollments. As indicated in the adjoining graph, the total enrollment for the entire Palomar Community College District has continued to increase over time.

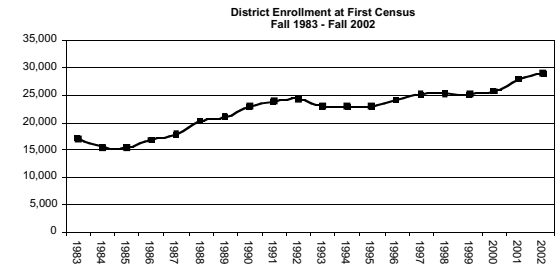


Chart 3.1

In the recent period from 1998 to the year 2002 the District has experienced a fifteen percent increase in enrollment.

ADULT POPULATION PROJECTIONS

SANDAG estimates that the total population within the Palomar Community College District has increased from 586,731 in 1990 to 726,063 in the year 2000. (See the Graph below.) This is an increase of 23.7%. Over these years the south and south east areas of the District have experienced the highest rate of growth, 28%. The adult population has paralleled the total population growth with a 22% increase.

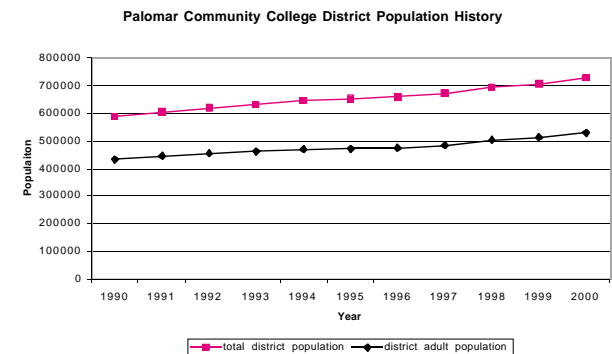


Chart 3.2

SANDAG projects that the total population within the District will reach almost 1 million by 2020 resulting in an adult population of approximately 750,000. This is a 40% increase in the adult population within the next 20 years. (See the Graph below)

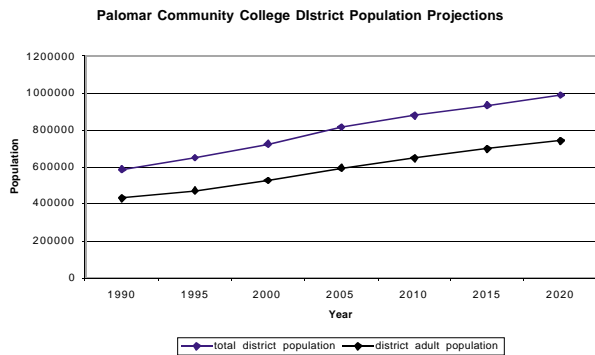


Chart 3.3

As might be expected, this rapid increase in population will not be uniform throughout the District. The areas of the District that are projected to grow the most are: Valley Center (102%), Rancho Bernardo East (115%), Bonsall (98%), Pauma Valley (54%), and Ramona (48%). Most of these communities are located in the north and east and are relatively small and sparsely populated at this time. But Rancho Bernardo, located on Interstate 15 in the center of the District could reach an estimated 54,260 residents by the year 2020. As areas nearer to the City of San Diego and the Coast build out, more and more people will be forced to move to the north or east in order to find land for affordable housing.

PARTICIPATION RATES

Enrollment is not driven by the number of adults in the population alone. Enrollment is dependent on how many, or what percentage, of those adults choose to attend the Palomar Community College District. CPEC defines a participation rate as “enrollment divid-

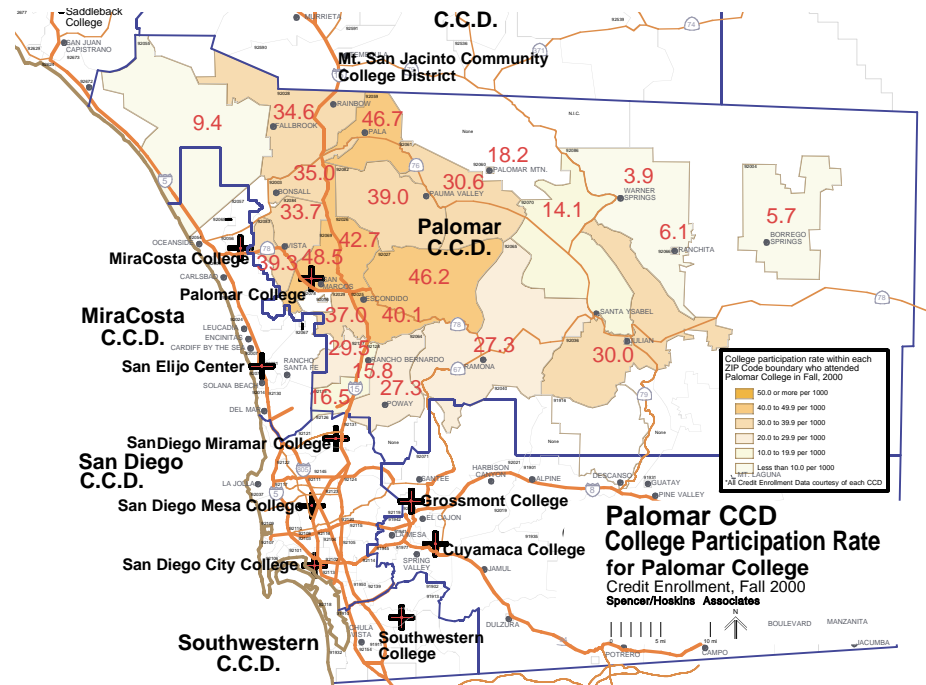
ed by [adult] population multiplied by 1,000.” Basically, this number tells how many students enroll at the district per 1,000 adults in the local population. The participation rate is useful in comparing differing areas of the district to determine whether or not they are being adequately served. A lower participation rate indicates that fewer adults are attending college and it also indicates areas where the population might be better served by the district.

There are two basic, but slightly different, ways to compute a participation rate.

- The Zip Code Method: This method uses the number of students enrolled in any college in any individual Zip Code and compares that number to the total adult population in that Zip Code.
- The California Community College Chancellor’s Office Method: This method uses the District credit enrollment, regardless where the students originate, and compares that number to the total

adult population in the District.

The Zip Code Method is most useful when trying to determine which parts of the District are well served and which parts are underserved. But the California Community College Chancellor’s Office Method is most useful when trying to predict overall student enrollment in the District. The current credit participation for the entire Palomar Community College District is 47 students per 1,000 adult population. The map below shows participation rates for areas throughout the District. As noted on the map, areas near the San Marcos Campus and those areas on the southern border of the District near Miramar College have the highest participation rates. Those areas in the more rural areas of the District have the lowest participation rates.



Map 3.1

It is difficult to estimate how much the participation rates will change over the next twenty years. For planning purposes, the District has as its goal to raise the District participation rate from 47 per 1,000 adult population to 60 per 1,000 adult population. Even with current population figures, raising the participation rate to 60:1000 will increase student enrollment significantly. Coupled with the anticipated adult population growth, in twenty years the student population within the Palomar Community College District will increase by over 50%.

The key to increasing the participation rate is increasing the accessibility to campus and center locations. Due to the low population density, and limited resources it is difficult to significantly improve the participation rates of rural communities. In the face of these limitations the Palomar Community College District has developed eight centers and educational sites located throughout the District in an attempt to bring the college to these communities. Continuing to add more outreach sites at local high schools is really not a viable solution as these sites can only offer a limited program at night. Therefore, what is needed is to develop larger centers/campuses in close proximity to areas of the District that currently have low participation rates, but are expected to experience significant future population growth.

STUDENT FREE-FLOW

Free-flow is the phenomenon of students living within the boundaries of one District while attending a community college in another District. In the mid 1980's the restrictive policy requiring California residents to remain within their own district, or college was replaced by the current open enrollment policy. This policy allows residents to freely choose their community college regardless where they reside. This open enrollment policy has created a kind of "friendly" competition between adjacent community college districts resulting in student free-flow. Free-flow has had the effect of reshaping the district service areas while the legal district boundaries have remained unchanged.

This section will analyze free-flow as it relates to the Palomar Community College District and its neighboring districts.

Causes of Free-flow

Free-flow, particularly with districts similar to Palomar that are surrounded by other districts and subject to cross-flow of students, is very dynamic and can be susceptible to inside and to outside pressures. Between districts these pressures can include the quality of marketing, campus visibility, educational reputation, and the comprehensiveness and quality of programs, services and faculty. It can also include physical attributes such as the quality and attractiveness of facilities, adequacy of parking, availability of classes at desirable times, and ease of access via the local transportation system.

Comprehensiveness, the quality of programs, and driving times appear to have the most vital roles in shaping free-flow patterns between the Palomar Community College District and its neighbors. Palomar tends to have positive free-flow near the San Marcos Campus and to the north, while it tends to have negative free-flow in the areas in the south that are more distant from the San Marcos Campus.

Free-flow Methodology

To determine the student free-flow between districts it is necessary to query the outside districts as to how many of their students reside within Palomar Community College District Zip Codes. In this case eight adjacent colleges contributed data for this analysis: Mira Costa College, San Diego City College, San Diego Mesa College, San Diego Miramar College, Grossmont College, Cuyamaca College, Southwestern College, and Mt. San Jacinto College. The data for Fall 2000 received from these eight colleges was then compared to similar data from Palomar Community College District's own records to complete the picture of student free-flow into and out of the District.

Because student enrollment data is recorded by Zip Code, and some Zip Codes overlap district boundaries, each Zip Code must be assigned to only one district.

This assignment of overlapping Zip Codes causes a small amount of error when actually calculating the inter-district free-flow. Therefore the free-flow numbers always remain estimates.

The free-flow analysis for Fall 2000 credit enrollments only is presented in the table below:

Free-flow from Palomar Community College Fall 2000 Credit Enrollments			
District	In To Palomar	Out From Palomar	Net Gain (Loss)
Mira Costa CCD	4,467	1,957	2,510
Mt. San Jacinto CCD	1,126	44	1,082
Grossmont/ Cuyamaca CCI	191	640	-449
San Diego CCD	727	3,392	-2,665
Southwestern CCD	107	103	4
Total	6,618	6,136	482

Chart 3.4

The Palomar Community College District currently has a net gain of approximately 3500 students from the Mira Costa and Mt. San Jacinto CCD's. This is most likely the result of the proximity of the San Marcos Campus as well as the fact that the San Marcos Campus offers more programs and services than can be obtained from Mira Costa or, at this time, Mt. San Jacinto. In the south, the Palomar Community College District is losing approximately 3,000 students to the Grossmont/Cuyamaca and San Diego CCD's. Even though there are outreach sites at local high schools in the south, many students in Ramona and Poway choose to attend Miramar, Mesa, or Grossmont colleges because they are closer and they offer more comprehensive programs and services than does Palomar at our southern outreach sites. The current net effect of all this student free-flow is that the Palomar Community College District has a net gain of about 500 students. Because the free-flow phenomenon is by its nature unstable, it is very possible that the current gain of students could, in the future, turn out to be a loss if Palomar fails to provide more comprehensive programs and services in the northern and southern parts of the District.

PROJECTED ENROLLMENT

Using SANDAG adult population projections, and assuming a participation rate of 60 per 1,000 adult population, the expected enrollment in 2020 is 44,614. Making adjustments to account for free-flow and projecting the growth to the final year of this plan, the Palomar Community College District should have a total enrollment of 47,500 students by the end of the 2022 academic year. As the graph below indicates, with the current total District enrollment just over 30,000 students, this will result in approximately 50% growth over the next 20 years.

Although the San Marcos Campus is currently experiencing significant growth, several factors will limit the enrollment at the San Marcos Campus to no more than 25,000 students by the year 2022. The Facilities Master Plan discusses this in more detail, but based on the amount of instructional space and the available parking the San Marcos Campus has already reached its theoretical capacity of around 20,000 students. The projects listed in the Facilities Master Plan for the San Marcos Campus will expand that capacity to 25,000 students, but that is only a 25% increase above the current capacity. Therefore, the most significant enrollment growth over the next 20 years will have to take place at the centers and at any future campuses the District is able to construct. This is demonstrated by the graph

below that depicts the projected Palomar Community College District growth over the next 20 years as compared to the projected growth at the San Marcos Campus.

The enrollment at the San Marcos Campus grows slowly up to 25,000, but the growth rate for other sites is much steeper. Therefore, most of the new growth within the Palomar Community College District will need to be accommodated at sites other than the San Marcos Campus. The Escondido Center plus the eight other outreach sites can accommodate some of this additional growth, but most of this new growth, by necessity, will have to be at either new centers, or at new campuses. Without the addition of at least two large centers, or one large center and a comprehensive campus it is unlikely that the Palomar Community College District will be able to accommodate more than 39,000 students, leaving a large number of potential students unserved.

Because of this necessity to develop new educational venues for the accommodation of up to 17,500 additional students by the year 2022 the Educational and Facilities Master Plan Task Force spent several months evaluating the need, and then the placement for new educational sites within the District. This process, and the recommendations that resulted from the process, is

discussed in the chapter titled The Selection of New Sites.

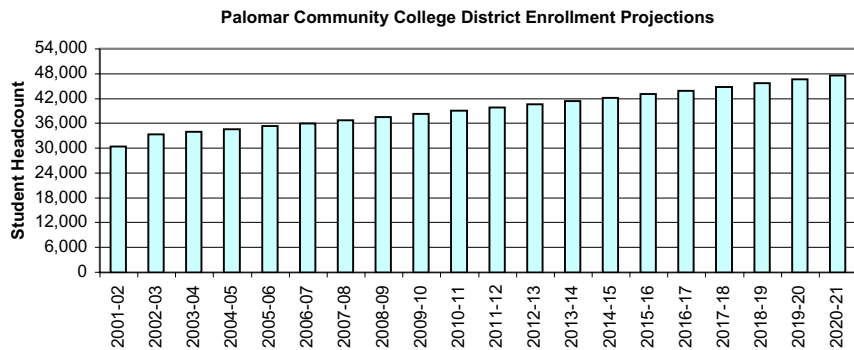
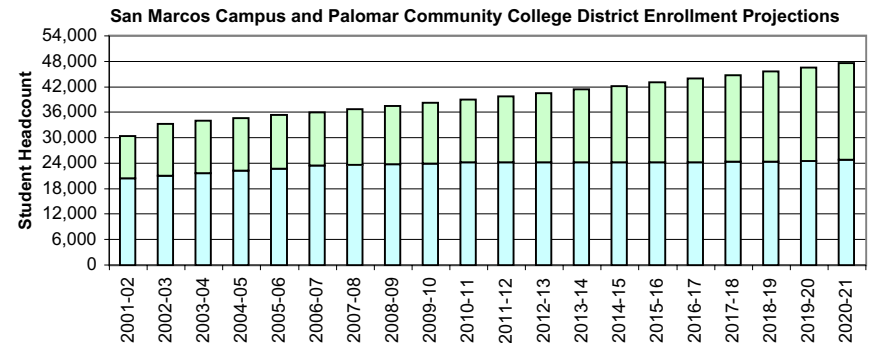


Chart 3.5



Projected Enrollments San Marcos Campus Projected Enrollments All Other Sites

Chart 3.6