Non-Enrolling Applicant Scan

A major measure of marketing success is the number of inquiries a college receives. After the inquiry, the college initiates a process by which they persuade the inquiry to apply and finally to enroll. Conversion of inquiries into students at a college is another measure of success and when enrollments are in decline, one of the easiest ways to increase enrollments is to increase the conversion of applicants into enrollees. Examining the Fall 2008 semester for West Valley-Mission Community College District, there were 9,591 applicants and 5,610 students actually enrolled, resulting in a 58 percent conversion. In other words, 42 percent of those potential students who filled out an application did not follow through and enroll at West Valley-Mission Community College District. At Mission College, 4,754 students applied for the Fall 2008 semester. Of those, 53 percent of the applicants (2,508) followed through and enrolled at Mission College, and 47 percent of the applicants did not enroll at Mission College in Fall 2008. West Valley College had the highest conversion of applicants in Fall 2008 – 64 percent (3,102) of the 4,837 applicants at West Valley College followed through and enrolled at the College in Fall 2008.

In order to better understand why those prospects were not following through and enrolling at West Valley-Mission Community College District, 100 focused in-depth interviews were conducted by telephone from January 12 to 21, 2009 with the non-enrolling applicants in the targeted age groups (Generation Y and X) and enrollment status (first-time and transfer) that did not follow through and enroll.

The results of the Non-Enrolling Applicant Scan had implications for the District, as well as specific implications for Mission College and West Valley College. Given that several of the recommendations address common issues to address for both Colleges, there is a set of District recommendations. In addition, since the two Colleges have different markets and procedures, recommendations have also been made for each of the Colleges individually.

West Valley-Mission Community College District

Communication Systems. As evidenced in the Non-Enrolling Applicant Scan, the current communication systems at Mission College and West Valley College are almost non-existent when communicating with inquiries and applicants. Neither College has a systematic communication system in place that allows them to communicate with inquiries to bring them to applicant status, with applicants to bring them to enrollment, nor with current students to encourage retention and re-enrollment. Many colleges are successfully using e-mail to communicate with students but Mission College and West Valley College have apparently been hacked and black-listed among e-mail providers. Examples were provided from applicants and even College personnel of not receiving communication that provided a registration PIN number – thus the applicants never knew the application had been received and did not follow through and register. In discussions with student services personnel at the Colleges, the personnel infer that the technology does not allow them to accurately communicate with applicants and students and that information technology limits their ability to communicate. Information technology indicates that the offices have not utilized the technology that currently exists. However, neither College provided a communications plan to the consultant that specified what communications would take place with a student in the entire inquiry to applicants to enrollment process. If a communication plan is not developed for each College, the District should not consider spending additional marketing dollars to generate inquiries and applicants unless the Colleges can follow up on the results.

- **Develop a communication plan for each College that would utilize direct mail and e-mail to communicate with inquiries.** A communication plan needs to be developed for each College that specifies regular communication, the method (mail, e-mail, other), the timing (week 1,
Bring up Datatel Communications Module to allow for tracking inquiries and applicants and automating the process of communicating with students. It is recommended that staff from both Colleges work together in a retreat setting for two or three days to lay out the processes and procedures.

Provide college e-mail addresses for the applicants as soon as they apply to the College to assist in communicating with them. These can be in conjunction with a third party vendor and do not have to be maintained by the Colleges themselves.

Solve the e-mail communication problem at the Colleges. Currently, staff has to batch e-mails to communicate with students. Examine using the third party vendor Constant Contact to develop and deliver e-mail messages to inquiries and applicants. This would entail the College developing e-mail databases to most effectively use the Constant Contact program.

Solve the IT query delays in generating lists of applicants for follow-up to allow for communicating with applicants in a timely manner. Develop a list of dates and student groups that need to be pulled for each College every semester – for example, the applicants who applied and have not enrolled by 30 days prior to the semester start. IT will automatically run this query and provide a database containing names, addresses, and e-mail addresses to the Student Services and Outreach Offices at the Colleges for follow-up with the inquiries and applicants.

Marketing and Student Services need to jointly develop a formal communication series of letters, postcards, and e-mails to pull a student through the inquiry and applicant phases to enrollment at each College. Mission College is farther ahead with a series of letters and postcards developed for high school students. These can provide a basis for both Colleges. The communications plan can be very similar for the two Colleges, but the messaging needs to be targeted specifically for each College in the series developed. These communications would then be loaded into the Communications Module of Datatel.

West Valley-Mission Community College District needs to develop an electronic “Request Information” form for each College using the same technology, so that it will capture a web inquiry in a database and provide a customized response to the inquiry. Prospective students can then be directed to the web site to gain information during after-hours messages. The College needs to develop an information request form on their web site immediately and then upgrade it to an e-brochure. A “Request Information” button should be located prominently on every page in the navigation header and it should get a response – either direct mail or e-mail or both. The “Request Information” form would capture detailed information about the prospective students, as well as being specific about the nature of their request. After the person relays initial information about themselves, such as age and gender, and notes what information is needed, an electronic brochure is immediately created based on a template format and customized for the individual based on the information requested. The pdf of the brochure is immediately sent to the person’s e-mail address and the brochure is then printed and mailed as a backup. After three days, College personnel call and ask the inquiry if they need additional information. On the “Request Information” form, the links are present so that if a person wants immediate information, they can click the link and it will take them to the information they need on the web site. An example of an electronic brochure being used by Rhodes State College is presented on the following page:
The data from the “Request Information” form would then feed into the prospect database that has been developed. The Colleges can then send the new materials created to the inquiry on the schedule created. This will allow the College to begin the creation of a formal contact management system for prospects. College personnel can log requests for information as the telephone calls are received by using this “Request Information” form as well. The inquiries can then be held in the database and a tracking system will result to assess how many inquiries turn into applicants and then into enrollees.

- **Paper applications should trigger a different communications plan and provide for more hands-on contact with the applicants.** The Colleges should develop a communications plan that encourages telephone calls and invitations to campus for one-on-one admission sessions with the students who apply with paper applications. In the Non-Enrolling Applicant Scan, applicants who applied with paper applications noted they needed the help and did not want to be moved to a computer at the College to apply – they could have done that at home – they wanted to talk to someone. Typically, English is also a barrier for those who submitted paper applications and the Colleges need to develop a flag for communicating with an applicant who turns in a paper application.

- **Create and implement a direct marketing campaign to students who applied and did not follow through and enroll for the first semester.** The majority of the first-time non-enrolling applicants who did not follow through and enroll did not go to another college – life stopped their enrollment. Develop a direct mail campaign, as simple as an oversized postcard, to mail at the beginning of the next registration period to the students who applied for the previous semester and did not follow through and enroll. Follow this mailing with a schedule of classes about a week after the postcard. If possible, develop a “Quick Enrollment Process” for these students so that the information in their original application can be made valid and they do not have to re-apply to the College. This may entail issuing a new PIN number or activating the old PIN number. This will also speed their registration process. A special event could also be held one day on campus to test and register these students.
• **Create a virtual “Information Center” to assist new students, as well as current students with questions by phone, e-mail, instant messaging, and Facebook.** As evidenced by the information in the Non-Enrolling Applicant Scan, many students utilize the Internet to gain information. The District should consider the development of a virtual “Information Center” that could answer questions online for both Mission College and West Valley College. Staff from both Colleges could rotate through the week to respond to inquiries, check on the questions and postings on Mission College’s and West Valley College’s Facebook and MySpace pages, and answer any e-mails about applying to the College.

  o Another feature that could be added to the virtual “Information Center” is a chat button on the Colleges’ web sites that pulls up a live chat if a person has a question about either of the Colleges. This would be the type of technology seen on commercial web sites that brings up a live customer service representative if a consumer has a question about an order.

**Web Site Issues.** The majority of the inquiries who become applicants at a college get their information from the college’s web site. The non-enrolling applicants surveyed in this study noted that the web site was a key place for information for them in gathering information prior to attending. An examination was made of Mission College’s, West Valley College’s, and De Anza College’s web sites (since so many students chose De Anza College). Based on that examination, and coupled with the educational goals of the students as reported in the Non-Enrolling Applicant Scan as to why they look at a college and what they want from a college, the following recommendations are made for the Colleges’ web sites.

• **Update and streamline the information about transfer on the Colleges’ web sites.** Transfer is the educational goal for the majority of the first-time applicants to the Colleges (slightly more so for West Valley College than Mission College), and transfer is also a goal for half of the non-enrolling applicants who are transfer students. Examining Mission College’s web site, West Valley College’s web site, and De Anza College’s web site, it was very simple to see why De Anza College may be a choice – the transfer information was clear, simple, easy to find, and answered all questions with two clicks of a mouse – and De Anza College “guaranteed” transfer as a key message in the market with the TAG’s. Conversely, Mission College has virtually nothing about transfer on their web site and although West Valley College has an entire section on the Transfer Center, the agreements are not simply laid out and pdf’s are not available like the competitive web site.

  o West Valley College needs to place their TAG agreements on their web site with a direct link from the home page. The agreements need to be in a pdf format and easy to download. On this page, a matrix of the major transfer colleges and agreements summarized would be very helpful.

  o Mission College needs to develop a transfer page for their web site, talk about the ease of transferring to the four-year colleges (name them), and provide student testimonials about transfer successes on the transfer page.

• **Develop a login for a ListServe for students and parents to allow for updates about the semester and registration, news, and events at each College.** Since many students first look to the Colleges’ web sites to gain information, the Colleges may never know the potential applicant is looking at their information. Develop a ListServe that would allow parents and students to login and provide contact information and grant permission to the Colleges to send updated information about applying, enrolling, deadlines, news, and events. The marketing departments at the two Colleges should be responsible for writing the updates, and the Student Services offices should be responsible for providing the content and sending the updates. This ListServe could also be used for marketing to those interested in the College, such as new programs, events, etc.
Mission College

• **Engage faculty in a recruitment response to the inquiries who note a specific program area of interest.** The non-enrolling applicants at Mission College were more likely to have an interest in specific program areas – more so than the students at West Valley College. Ask for commitments from faculty to contact the inquiries who list a program area of interest on their application and follow up with the inquiry. This presupposes that the Recruitment Module is working so that the inquiries can be sent to the faculty by area of interest. National research has proven that the more active faculty are in visiting with students in a common area of interest, the more likely the students are to attend the College.

• **Create a virtual online campus tour of Mission College.** Although Mission College is not a large campus, it is very useful to provide an online tour of the campus that allows a potential student to know where certain offices are located, where to enter the building, and where to park. The online tour should be an aerial map of campus that as the mouse goes over a building or location, the list of services is shown (offices, etc.) and where to park most conveniently for that location.
  - Provide for an online sign-up for campus tours. Allow potential students to login on the College’s web site and request a tour for a specific day and time.

• **Develop a direct marketing information piece that explains all the options for financing your education at Mission College and send to applicants as soon as they have applied.** Money appears to be more of an issue for students at Mission College – financial issues were a reason that some of the applicants did not follow through and apply. The financial aid brochure should detail the ways that a student can seek assistance for education and the “Three? Easy Steps” to apply for financial aid. The call to action for this information piece should be to call for an appointment with a financial aid counselor or to attend a financial aid information session.
  - Explore the feasibility of short-term book loans at the beginning of the semester for students who were unable to secure financial aid.
  - Re-examine the payment plans, especially since students at Mission College are likely to pay in cash.

• **Update the phone tree at Mission College to assist students in getting to the correct offices quickly and easily.** In the Student Scan, the main telephone system was one of the lowest rated components for Mission College. The Student Scan provided very low ratings for the telephone system in terms of getting information, accuracy of information, and reaching personnel at the campus. The College needs to re-evaluate their current phone tree and provide a system that students, especially new students who want information, can easily navigate and reach the office or person they are trying to reach. In addition, each department’s messages need to be standardized to reflect the office and each of those department’s phone trees should be evaluated for relevancy as well.

• **Create a “Five Easy Steps” to enrolling at Mission College.** The Future Students page simply needs to be more user-friendly and links need to be provided for every step for additional information. Although the College has seven steps now, it should be condensed to five and be visually engaging. The “Five Easy Steps” should also be developed as an e-mail, a printed piece, and a pdf. As soon as a student applies, an e-mail outlining the “Five Easy Steps” should be sent and a pdf attached, as well as a sheet mailed to the student.
  - Mission College needs to create the “Five Easy Steps” in multiple languages for their student populations.
West Valley College

- **Create a formal acceptance letter to be sent to every student who applies to West Valley College.** A major issue for the non-enrolling applicants was that they applied to multiple colleges to “make sure” they would get accepted at a college. Those applicants who applied to multiple colleges were generally looking at four-year colleges and transfer if they applied to a community college. Since a common practice among the four-year colleges is to send a letter of acceptance, West Valley College should mirror the practice among all applicants. This should be a very formal letter from the President welcoming the student and emphasizing the “value of small class size, close relationships between students and teachers, and a sense of community at the beautiful campus of West Valley College.”

- **Create a virtual online campus tour of West Valley College.** The current virtual tour on West Valley College’s web site is a slide show of photos of buildings with no information – there is nothing virtual about it. The virtual online tour should be an aerial map of campus that as the mouse goes over a building or location, the list of services is shown (offices, etc.) and where to park most conveniently for that location. In addition, the College could also create short video tours of each building that would load as the applicant tours each building.
  - Provide for an online sign-up for campus tours. Allow potential students to login on the College’s web site and request a tour for a specific day and time.

- **Create a “Five Easy Steps” to enrolling at West Valley College.** The Future Students page on the West Valley College web site is extremely difficult to navigate. A visitor to the page expects to be able to click on the picture of the future student like them, for example high school, and then get to a “how to” section. Instead, there are multiple links at the bottom of each page that send the visitor to the admissions page for tons of small print and information that may or may not be relevant to the “future student” type. The College needs to develop “Five Easy Steps” to enrolling at West Valley College and define them for the three main student types. One page should encompass all the pertinent information in the multiple links now provided on the “Future Students” page. After developing the “Five Easy Steps,” it should also be developed as an e-mail, a printed piece, and a pdf. As soon as a student applies, an e-mail outlining the “Five Easy Steps” should be sent and a pdf attached, as well as a sheet mailed to the student.
The customer service audit, the *Student Scan*, was administered online for West Valley-Mission Community College District from March 20 to June 16, 2009. Fourteen hundred ninety-one questionnaires were completed by current students (771 West Valley College students, 624 Mission College students, 65 students attending both West Valley College and Mission College, and 31 students who did not indicate which college they attended). The ratings of the West Valley College and Mission College and the group of students that attended both colleges were averaged and statistically compared to the ratings of the community college students at the other 44 community colleges in the normative sample. The following provides a summary of the areas in which the colleges were rated significantly higher than the other 44 colleges (*Areas Of Excellence*) and those areas rated significantly lower than the other 44 colleges (*Areas For Improvement*). The ratings of the other areas in the survey not listed below were equivalent to the other community colleges’ students’ ratings in the normative data, or were at par.

### Mission College Areas Of Excellence

#### ADMISSIONS
- Knowledge and competence of staff
- Simplicity of forms to be completed
- Easy-to-understand materials
- Response time to concerns/ questions
- Availability of information before enrolling
- Value of orientation program

#### REGISTRATION
- Friendliness and courtesy of staff
- Knowledge and competence of staff
- Simplicity of forms to be completed
- Easy-to-understand registration materials
- Response time to concerns/ questions
- Ease/ convenience of registering
- Easy-to-understand class schedule
- Dropping and adding policy
- Ease in getting transcript
- Classes offered when needed

#### TUITION/ FEES
- Cost of tuition
- Cost of fees
- Cost of room and board

#### FINANCIAL AID OFFICE
- Friendliness and courtesy of staff
- Knowledge and competence of staff
- Convenience of hours open
- Timing of financial aid awards
- Simplicity of forms to be completed
- Accuracy of financial aid information
- Response time to concerns/ questions
- Availability of information before enrolling

#### CASHIER’S OFFICE
- Convenience of payment options (check, credit card, etc.)
- Timing of billing
- Ease of understanding billing
- Ease of making payments (in person, mail, telephone, online)

#### CLASSROOM INSTRUCTION
- Quality of instruction
- Course content relative to career
- Use of current textbooks

#### COUNSELING
- Friendliness and courtesy of staff
- Knowledge and competence of staff
- Convenience of hours open
- Accuracy of information received
- Knowledge of classes required for transfer
- Knowledge of classes required for degree

#### CAREER/ TRANSFER CENTER
- Friendliness and courtesy of staff
- Knowledge and competence of staff
- Convenience of hours open
- Availability of career clarification services

#### BOOKSTORE
- Friendliness and courtesy of staff
- Knowledge and competence of staff
- Convenience of hours open
- Availability of needed textbooks
- Availability of other materials

#### LIBRARY
- Friendliness and courtesy of staff
- Knowledge and competence of staff
- Availability of resources in-house
- Automation
- Current materials
- Internet access
MISSION COLLEGE AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

ADMISSIONS
Convenience of hours open

REGISTRATION
Convenience of hours open

LIBRARY
Convenience of hours open

MAIN TELEPHONE NUMBER/SWITCHBOARD
Response time
Accuracy of information received
Ease of reaching requested campus office
Ease of reaching campus staff members

FOOD SERVICE
Friendliness and courtesy of staff
Knowledge and competence of staff
Convenience of serving hours
Temperature of food

COMPUTER LABS
Friendliness and courtesy of staff
Knowledge and competence of staff
Up-to-date hardware (computers)
Up-to-date software (programs)
Availability of computers
Availability of staff assistance

TESTING AND ASSESSMENT CENTER
Friendliness and courtesy of staff
Knowledge and competence of staff
Easy-to-understand materials
Availability of information before enrolling

ATHLETICS
Friendliness and courtesy of staff
Knowledge and competence of staff
Variety of programs
Opportunity to participate
Quality of athletic facilities

CHILD CARE CENTER
Cleanliness of facility

OVERALL CAMPUS
Parking availability
Signage on campus
Student handbook
Maintenance of campus
Student Center/Union

TECHNOLOGY ACCESS
Availability of access to wireless Internet
Ease of use of wireless Internet on campus
Availability of online student registration
Ease of use of online student registration
Availability of college information system
weekends and evenings
West Valley College Areas Of Excellence

ADMISSIONS
- Friendliness and courtesy of staff
- Knowledge and competence of staff
- Convenience of hours open
- Simplicity of forms to be completed
- Easy-to-understand materials
- Response time to concerns/questions
- Availability of information before enrolling
- Value of orientation program

REGISTRATION
- Friendliness and courtesy of staff
- Knowledge and competence of staff
- Convenience of hours open
- Simplicity of forms to be completed
- Easy-to-understand registration materials
- Response time to concerns/questions
- Ease/convenience of registering
- Easy-to-understand class schedule
- Dropping and adding policy
- Ease in getting transcript
- Variety of classes offered
- Convenience of class times
- Classes offered when needed

TUITION/ FEES
- Cost of tuition
- Cost of fees
- Cost of room and board

FINANCIAL AID OFFICE
- Friendliness and courtesy of staff
- Knowledge and competence of staff
- Convenience of hours open
- Timing of financial aid awards
- Simplicity of forms to be completed
- Accuracy of financial aid information
- Response time to concerns/questions
- Availability of information before enrolling
- Availability of work-study positions

CASHIER’S OFFICE
- Friendliness and courtesy of staff
- Knowledge and competence of staff
- Convenience of hours open
- Convenience of payment options (check, credit card, etc.)
- Timing of billing
- Ease of understanding billing
- Ease of making payments (in person, mail, telephone, online)

CLASSROOM INSTRUCTION
- Quality of instruction
- Course content relative to career
- Class size
- Use of current textbooks
- Convenience of class times offered
- Variety of classes
- Challenge of courses
- Availability of instructor outside of class
- Up-to-date shop facilities
- Availability of internships

COUNSELING
- Friendliness and courtesy of staff
- Convenience of hours open
- Knowledge of classes required for transfer

CAREER/ TRANSFER CENTER
- Friendliness and courtesy of staff
- Knowledge and competence of staff
- Convenience of hours open
- Availability of career clarification services

BOOKSTORE
- Friendliness and courtesy of staff
- Knowledge and competence of staff
- Convenience of hours open
- Availability of needed textbooks
- Availability of other materials

LIBRARY
- Friendliness and courtesy of staff
- Knowledge and competence of staff
- Availability of resources in-house
- Automation
- Current materials
- Internet access

FOOD SERVICE
- Friendliness and courtesy of staff
- Knowledge and competence of staff
- Convenience of serving hours
- Quality of food
- Selections available
- Temperature of food
- Meal plans available

COMPUTER LABS
- Friendliness and courtesy of staff
- Knowledge and competence of staff
- Availability of computers
- Availability of staff assistance
TESTING AND ASSESSMENT CENTER
Friendliness and courtesy of staff
Knowledge and competence of staff
Easy-to-understand materials
Availability of information before enrolling
Availability of tutoring
Quality of tutoring

STUDENT ACTIVITIES
Friendliness and courtesy of staff
Knowledge and competence of staff
Variety of programs/activities
Availability of programs/activities
Opportunity to participate

ATHLETICS
Friendliness and courtesy of staff
Knowledge and competence of staff
Variety of programs
Opportunity to participate
Quality of athletic facilities
Convenience of hours open

CHILD CARE CENTER
Friendliness and courtesy of staff
Knowledge and competence of staff
Convenience of hours open
Quality of child care
Cleanliness of facility
Variety of activities
Ease of placing child in center

MAIN TELEPHONE NUMBER/SWITCHBOARD
Friendliness and courtesy of operator
Accuracy of information received

OVERALL CAMPUS
Parking availability
Signage on campus
Student handbook
Student Center/Union

TECHNOLOGY ACCESS
Availability of online student registration
Ease of use of online student registration
Availability of college information system weekends and evenings

*West Valley College Areas For Improvement*

BOOKSTORE
Cost of textbooks

COMPUTER LABS
Convenience of hours open

OVERALL CAMPUS
Vending machines
High School Scan - High School Market Segments

When evaluating the high school market, three distinct groups are examined – the Special Admit students (those attending high school and college simultaneously), high school graduates 19 years of age and younger, and those students 20 to 24 years of age. All of these age groups are within Generation Y. Generation Y represents the high school market of today and young adults that colleges are trying to attract to classes. The widespread use of personal computers and the Internet is an event shared by the majority of Generation Y. Most members of this generation spent at least part of their youth with a home computer and Internet access, and members of this generation use the Internet as a tool for socialization more so than previous generations.

As seen in the chart above, the greatest growth in enrollments at West Valley-Mission Community College District has been in the full-time markets in Generation Y. All of the full-time segments – concurrent enrollment (Special Admit), 19 and younger, and the 20 to 24 age groups – increased from Fall 2005 to Fall 2008. The greatest enrollment growth during this time frame in Generation Y was among the full-time 20 to 24 year old market with a 24 percent increase. The 19 and younger full-time segment increased 11 percent and the concurrent enrollment increased six percent. Slight increases were seen in the 19 and younger part-time age group (eight percent) and the 20 to 24 part-time age group (less than one percent). The only segment in Generation Y which declined from Fall 2005 to 2008 was the part-time concurrent enrollment and that segment declined 42 percent – from 383 enrollments to 222 enrollments.

Examining the changes in enrollment in the chart above for Generation Y from Fall 2005 to Fall 2008 at Mission College, the same pattern as the District is seen in the enrollment trends. All of the market segments in Generation Y increased from Fall 2005 to Fall 2008 except for the part-time concurrent enrollment which declined two percent – from 175 to 172 students. The full-time concurrent enrollment increased 27 percent from Fall 2005 to Fall 2008, but that increase only accounted for four students. The full-time 19 and younger
segment increased 17 percent and the part-time segment in this age group increased 18 percent. The largest increase in the Generation Y segments from Fall 2005 to Fall 2008 was in the full-time 20 to 24 age group, which increased 33 percent, and part-time also increased 12 percent among this segment.

At West Valley College, enrollments were both increasing and decreasing among the Generation Y age groups, as seen in the chart above. The largest decline in enrollments in Generation Y at West Valley College from Fall 2005 to Fall 2008 was in the concurrent enrollment – both full-time and part-time. Full-time concurrent enrollment declined 300 percent (from three students to none), and enrollments in the part-time market declined 76 percent (from 208 students to 50 students). Increases were seen in both of the full-time segments in the 19 and younger (nine percent) and the 20 to 24 age group (20 percent) from Fall 2005 to Fall 2008. The 19 and younger part-time age segment increased four percent during that time frame and the 20 to 24 year age segment enrollments declined nine percent from Fall 2005 to Fall 2008.

After the graduating classes of 2009, West Valley-Mission Community College District may begin to see a slight decline in the number of high school graduates across the market area (see the chart above with high school forecasts for Santa Clara County). Graduates are expected to drop from 23,000 to slightly below 22,000 until 2015, when the forecasts are anticipating an increase in high school graduates. The question facing West Valley-Mission Community College District is how much additional market share is available in the market area for Mission College and West Valley College and what do the Colleges need to do to increase high school market share.
While the campuses of Mission College and West Valley College and their competitors in the market may seem quite full today, the future is not looking very comfortable. High schools are shrinking and the “boom” that is being experienced on college campuses will reach a peak in 2009 or 2010. After that, class sizes will be declining and the competition for college students will become tougher. West Valley-Mission Community College District has undertaken a major marketing research study to understand the high school students in their market as well as their perceived image with the high school students. This information will position the Colleges in the District for the future and provide a strategic roadmap to position the Colleges for the forecasted decline in high school students.

A major issue facing the Colleges in the West Valley-Mission Community College District is that they have low unaided recall and familiarity among the high school students in the District. If a student is not familiar with a college, in other words if it is not even on their radar screen, it is very difficult for the high school student to suddenly choose that college. In addition, Mission College and West Valley College are not even the most familiar college with the high school students in their own service areas. Examining the unaided recall (a college is mentioned first) and the familiarity (if a college is mentioned at all as one in the area) in the service areas of Mission College and West Valley College, the Colleges have a major awareness issue in their own service areas.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>College</th>
<th>Unaided Recall</th>
<th>Familiarity</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mission College Service Area</td>
<td>West Valley College Service Area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mission College</td>
<td>2.1%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Valley College</td>
<td>2.1%</td>
<td>10.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>De Anza College</td>
<td>29.8%</td>
<td>12.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>San Jose City College</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>2.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foothill College</td>
<td>2.1%</td>
<td>0.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As seen in the chart above, in the Mission College service area, only 8.5 percent of the high school students listed Mission College as a college in their area, but 45 percent listed De Anza College and 26 percent listed Foothill College. In the West Valley College service area, 29 percent are familiar with West Valley College, but 38 percent are familiar with De Anza College.

Coupled with low awareness and familiarity of Mission College and West Valley College is the fact that the market does not have a clear competitive definition of the Colleges in the market – in other words, a community college is a community college – what makes West Valley College and Mission College distinctive and unique in the Silicon Valley market, especially from the other community college competitors? It has been recognized by the Colleges that there is a need for the two Colleges in the District to be able to focus on unique positions in the market – making them distinctive from each other and their competitors in the market.

After a lengthy examination of the web sites of Mission College, West Valley College, and De Anza College in which the internal planning reports and strategic planning documents were explored, the following market positions are suggested for the Colleges of the West Valley-Mission Community College District:

- **Competitive Market Position For Mission College: The College With The Spirit Of Silicon Valley.** The spirit of the Silicon Valley as described by the Silicon Valley Economic Development Alliance on their web page: “Silicon Valley’s long list of innovations is a byproduct of our greatest assets—the bright people and the smart ideas that call the Valley home. Our region boasts a remarkable concentration of entrepreneurial savvy, innovative thinking, free-wheeling technical creativity, cultural diversity, and intellectual energy, all of which make it the right place for visionary people and forward-looking companies to locate.” The keywords – entrepreneurial savvy, innovative thinking, free-wheeling technical creativity, cultural diversity, and intellectual energy –
can also be used to describe Mission College. Students who look to Mission College to enroll can be described as “visionary” and “forward-looking.”

The question for the College is whether they can live up to these strong adjectives and provide evidence to support these claims. As the President of Mission College noted in the message from the President on the College’s web page, “Even as we celebrate our past, we are planning for your future. We have recently renovated the third floor of the main building. In the coming months, we will complete plans for new facilities that will provide space for laboratories, classrooms, the performing arts, and student services. As a result, our students will benefit from learning environments that are state-of-the-art.”

- **Competitive Market Position For West Valley College: Experience A Liberal Arts Education.** A liberal arts education is defined as small class size, close relationships between students and teachers, and a sense of community. Liberal arts colleges are often innovative in their programs: 4-1-4 semesters where students take four classes in the Fall semester, one in-depth class in the month of January, and four classes in the Spring semester. At some colleges, students get to design their own programs. Faculty-student relationships are the backbone of the liberal arts education. Personal attention, life advice, and academic guidance are just a few of the perks of small classes. Faculty at liberal arts colleges want to talk with their students and get to know about them and their lives.

As expressed in the mission statement for West Valley College, “West Valley College is a community of learners open to those seeking advanced educational opportunities. Our faculty, staff, and students have a passionate commitment to learning, fueled by the spirit of inquiry. The College embraces innovation and change characterized by trust, confidence, and accountability. Through open communication, support and acceptance for one another, shared decision making through collaboration and teamwork, and a respect for diversity, West Valley College affirms its commitment to people.”

In the service area of West Valley College, more of the adults and the parents have higher educational levels (bachelor’s and graduate degrees) and more will understand and potentially even prefer a liberal arts education. Transfer is very important to the West Valley College market and transfer would play a key role in the positioning. In addition, examining the web site of De Anza College, the average class size is quoted at 35. If West Valley College can truthfully claim an average class size of 25, then they can competitively own the personal attention niche in the market.

The results of the High School Scan had implications for the District, as well as specific implications for Mission College and West Valley College. Given that several of the recommendations address common issues to address for both Colleges, there is a set of District recommendations. In addition, since the two Colleges have different markets and procedures, recommendations have also been made for each of the Colleges individually.

**West Valley-Mission Community College District**

- **Create a high school advisory board to meet with marketing and student services of West Valley-Mission Community College District.** A key way to gain information about what high school students are thinking and what other colleges are communicating with them about is to develop a High School Advisory Board. Ask guidance counselors at each high school in the service areas of the Colleges to nominate a male and a female student (preferably juniors) for the upcoming year for the High School Advisory Board. The High School Advisory Board would meet once each semester – once at West Valley College and once at Mission College. The goal of the High School Advisory Board would be to provide input into recruitment and marketing strategies at the two Colleges – much like a long focus group. This also provides an opportunity for the personnel at the Colleges to ask questions of the high school students to understand how they are being recruited and
what colleges they are considering and why. As an incentive for the students, offer a tuition waiver at the Colleges for the first semester after graduation.

- **Comprehensive outreach strategy developed for high school students.** Neither Mission College nor West Valley College has a comprehensive outreach strategy, but rather bits and pieces of outreach strategies. In contrast, during the 2007-2008 academic year, De Anza College (a major market competitor) committed $300,000 for an Institutional Outreach Initiative as described in the Opening Day Presentation: *Strategic Planning 2007-2008: Funding, Implementation and the Future*. The issue facing West Valley-Mission Community College District in the high school market is that Mission College and West Valley College have low awareness and low familiarity with the high school market – the Colleges are not even the first choice among community colleges in their service areas.

As seen in the results of the High School Scan, the keys in recruiting high school students include: (1) have the degree or program area of interest available to them, (2) offer financial aid and scholarships, and (3) provide excellent customer service – staff are willing to help. The key sources of information that the high school students use when choosing a college include campus visits, college web site, brochures about the college, advice from friends, class schedule, college catalog, and brochures on programs. The high school students are likely to request information from a college by going to a college fair, examining a college web site, Googling for information, and visiting a college. Research from the High School Scan also indicated that high school students are getting college information earlier than ever before (during junior high and middle school), counselors and teachers are important sources of information, and parents are very important influencers in the college decision. Therefore, a comprehensive outreach strategy needs to be individualized for Mission College and West Valley College. The following components should be included in each plan:

  - **Develop a recruitment direct mail campaign to increase awareness of the Colleges.** The direct marketing campaign could be developed as a recruitment campaign for the entire District, utilizing messages developed in a brand platform. Postcards would be sent to all high school freshmen to seniors in the service area. A list of names can be purchased from a vendor such as [www.studentmarketing.net](http://www.studentmarketing.net). Development of an oversized postcard using the same campaign theme can be used for both Colleges with the specifics about the students customized for each College. The example on the following page is an overall recruitment campaign for Northwest Iowa Community College using the theme “Walk A Day In My Shoes.” This is an example of what could be the first postcard in an eight postcard series which introduces the concept.
Next, a series of postcards can be developed for each College using the same theme and customized with the students at each College, as shown below. In the example below, it may be a female student at Mission College enrolled in nursing or a female at West Valley College enrolled in interior design. The call to action on the postcard would be to check out the College's web site and a specific address would be listed to match the campaign.

A final postcard in the series would also be a call to action by inviting a campus visit, as seen in the postcard on the following page.
Supplement the direct mail campaign with radio ads that will run in the 6am to 8am drive time to support the direct mail campaign.

The campaign should be focused on the areas that would be most likely to enroll in Mission College or West Valley College. The following maps summarize the interest in attending Mission College or West Valley College or both in the market area. A detailed description of the interest in attending by the zip codes in the market is presented in Appendix A.
Finally, develop a high school landing page on each of the College’s web sites to measure the success of the campaign and provide an opportunity for high school students to request information. The high school landing page should have all the links needed to answer any high school question about attending college and supporting the brand of the College but be graphically appealing to a high school market. The landing page can also carry the theme of the recruitment campaign in color and design. An example of a high school landing page for Harper College follows:
Develop a video to market the concept of college to middle and junior high school students. The results of the High School Scan indicate that many of the high school students did receive information about attending college – the importance of college, what classes to take in high school to prepare, and career options and choices – when they were in middle school or junior high. West Valley-Mission Community College District should develop a video that covers the importance of college, how to prepare in high school, and career options for the future. This video would be provided to all middle school and junior high teachers, as well as high school teachers, in the service area. The video should be about 15 to 20 minutes and incorporate West Valley-Mission Community College District current students to discuss the issues. For example, a current West Valley-Mission Community College District student from X high school may discuss how they would have done things differently in high school if they had known what it would take to succeed in college. Collateral materials can also be developed and provided as a learning tool with the video.

Increase the on-campus events to encourage high school students to visit the Colleges. Mission College and West Valley College should develop additional program days on their campus and invite high school students in the service area (and even those outside the service area for unique program areas) to visit. For example, another College in California has a health professions day and another has a technology day. For each event, the marketing offices of the Colleges should videotape the event and post the video on YouTube, inform the high school students that the video will be posted, and encourage them to post comments on the video and look for themselves. Parents are also likely to see the video as well. The key leaders in development of the on-campus visit days should be the faculty at the Colleges. Support for the events should come from marketing and outreach (student services).

Create a parent direct marketing campaign. The goal of the parent marketing campaign is twofold: (1) increase image and awareness of Mission College and West Valley College, and (2) to educate parents of prospective students on the educational and economic value of Mission College and West Valley College. Again, this direct mail campaign can be done by the District with messages about why choosing Mission College or West Valley College is a good choice. Messages to the parents may include:
- Success of transfer students into four-year programs – will do better than those who start at a four-year college (academic success)
- Transfer guarantee with TAG’s
- Colleges are like Silicon Valley – diverse in student populations and offerings
- Personalized learning experience – will not be just a student ID in a class
- University environment with campus life, clubs, etc.
- Cost savings and success

Another component of the marketing to parents can also be the benefits of the concurrent enrollment programs offered at the Colleges. This may also be a focus of the direct mail campaign.
• **Utilize technology communication with high school students and college students via social networking.** A major issue for college marketers today is trying to navigate the new technology and understand how to communicate with potential students. As found in the High School Scan, the high school students utilize social networks, are less likely to reply to promotional e-mails, and are even less likely to communicate with a college via text messaging. National research indicates that the majority of the high school students visit a social networking site daily – like Facebook or MySpace. The challenge for the community college is how to best connect with the high school students and current students via social networks – with limited time and fewer resources. West Valley-Mission Community College District should examine a software program like Intelliworks. Software like Intelliworks coordinates with social networks, such as Facebook, to allow college personnel to:
  - Track all communications between admissions and enrollment staff, and prospective students
  - Manage direct mail to prospects, current students, and alumni
  - Create e-mail templates in HTML editor for consistent communications
  - Build campaigns based on previous contact
  - Upload current recruitment databases into a single system
  - Ensure message deliverability through SPAM checks
  - Manage opt-outs and subscriptions to newsletters
  - Import and export data through Excel, Access, or CSV

• **Re-develop the program pages for each College.** Program information is a key reason that high school students consider attending a college. The current program pages at Mission College and West Valley College need to be updated from a marketing perspective. Pages for each program at the Colleges, from the AA transfer to Wellness and Human Performance, need to be updated. The following graphic is an example of Colorado Mountain College’s program information for the AA transfer degree. As seen in the left navigation column, all programs at the College are done in the same way. The information provided for each program includes an intro page, the CURRICULUM on the page as well as a pdf that prints out, CAREERS that can be attained in the program areas, profiles of GRADUATES, profiles of FACULTY, a page on GETTING STARTED which includes how to apply and get information, and REQUEST INFORMATION button on the bottom of the page.
**Create and maintain an online job bank for students in the District.** The results of the High School Scan indicated that more than 65 percent of the high school students plan on working part-time while attending college. West Valley-Mission Community College District should develop an online job bank that allows the students the ability to see the part-time and even full-time jobs available. This would also provide a connection to the employers in the market and provide them an additional place to post jobs – especially part-time jobs. The online job bank would be accessible to current students and alumni at Mission College and West Valley College.

**Increase summer enrollments among current high school students and guest students.** Develop a master class schedule in October for the Summer session – a guaranteed set of courses that will be offered with no times or days. Create a maximum 11 x 17 bi-fold publication that outlines the “guaranteed” summer courses and send the publication to all households in the service area – a separate publication for each College. Mail the publication to households in each College’s service area to arrive during the week of Thanksgiving. Provide a web page on each College’s web site to login and request information about the schedule. Utilize the ListServe to send additional information via e-mail when the schedule is filled in with classes and times and when registration opens.

**Mission College**

**Develop parent web pages on the College’s web site.** Parents are an important part of the decision process for many high school students. Currently, the Mission College web site has no information directed to parents. Focus the information much like the information to be contained in the parent marketing campaign noted previously in the District recommendations.

**Create an online enrollment form for concurrent students.** Examining the main competitor for concurrent enrollees, an online application is provided for concurrent enrollees to simply download and sign. This will make the enrollment process even easier for the high school students and parents.

**Move a link for scholarships to the home page and create online forms for application.** Scholarships are a very important factor in choosing and attending a college. Currently, the scholarship link is almost hidden since it is under financial aid and financial aid is in a box to the left and not a main navigation link. The scholarship information was only found after searching for scholarships and then following the link below back to the financial aid page: [http://www.missioncollege.org/student_services/financial_aid/documents/2009-2010MissionCollegeScholarshipApplication.pdf](http://www.missioncollege.org/student_services/financial_aid/documents/2009-2010MissionCollegeScholarshipApplication.pdf). Create an online application for scholarships rather than a pdf version. In addition, rather than informing students the deadline has passed for scholarships, there should be a list of the scholarships at all times the students can apply for, and provide the dates that students can apply.

**Mission College should examine the feasibility of adding additional sports and student clubs.** One of the criticisms of Mission College was that it is not considered a real college – a real college has a lot of sports, clubs, and student activities. Explore if there are any additional sports that can be added to the curriculum and supported by current funding. Conduct an inventory of high school clubs and organizations in the high schools in the service area of Mission College. For any clubs that the College does not have, explore the feasibility of adding a collegiate club in that area of interest. Faculty members will be key in providing the advising for the new clubs. The new collegiate clubs can then “mentor” the high school clubs, providing a direct recruiting link to the high school students.

**Activate live chat in admissions with current and prospective students.** If Mission College is to position itself as the “College of Silicon Valley,” technological advances such as live chat with admission personnel will add to the high-tech image.
• **Continue to purchase Google ads for primary program areas of interest.** High school students are most likely to Google a program area to find what colleges have the program. Continue to purchase Google advertising for the unique programs at Mission College.

**West Valley College**

• **Develop dual admission agreements with the top four-year UC and CSU colleges in the region.** Transfer is very important to the students in the West Valley College service area and the majority who would not consider attending a community college are intent on attending a four-year college. By creating a dual admission agreement, West Valley College benefits from the perceived “quality” rating of the four-year college and provides residents a perception that through West Valley College is indeed a path to the four-year of their choice.

• **Completely revamp the parent web page on the West Valley College web site.** Although West Valley College has a link on their web site for parents, the site is not built for parents, but more for a potential student. The information to be provided on the web site as to why attend West Valley College should mirror the information presented previously in the District recommendation for the parent strategy. The parent web site needs to talk to parents – not students. The pages following the main page should also be revamped to walk parents through how they can help their daughter or son enroll at West Valley College.

• **Post the TAG’s (Transfer Agreement Guarantees) on the West Valley College web site.** The Transfer Center is an excellent marketing tool, as are the TAG’s. West Valley College has transfer agreement with 13 colleges, but the agreements are not posted on the web site for download and nowhere on the web site are the participating colleges listed. Since transfer is such an important issue, then the agreements need to be prominent on the web site (like De Anza College).

• **Reinstate the admission teams who take one-stop to the high schools.** Apparently, West Valley College used to conduct an early admission program at 16 high schools – teams were sent out to do assessment, orientation, etc. at the high schools. Reinstate these teams to register and enroll students.

• **Update the concurrent enrollment information and link it to the parent page.** Currently, the concurrent enrollment information is hidden under admissions and is not user-friendly. Make the enrollment form an online form and have only the form that needs signatures be a pdf that can be printed.

• **Update the Scholarship Information on the web page.** The scholarship information is hidden in Financial Aid, and then the student gets to a list of pdf’s or Word documents. The scholarship information should be in an html list that can be searched – for type, qualifications, new student, returning, etc. The scholarship application form should be an online form as well to allow for online application. Allow for the letters of reference to be submitted electronically or mailed in.
Guidance Counselor Scan

The high school guidance counselors in the service area of West Valley-Mission Community College District do have an impact on the decisions high school students make about attending college and where to attend college. It is extremely important for West Valley-Mission Community College District to understand the attitudes, opinions, and needs of the guidance counselors as the Colleges shape their messages to the high school market and especially those who can influence the high school market – the local high school guidance counselors. Focused in-depth interviews were conducted with 40 high schools identified by Mission College and West Valley College, representative of the schools in each College’s service area. The focused interviews were conducted from March 31 to April 27, 2009.

Guidance counselors, and apparently their students, simply do not have high awareness levels of the Colleges in the West Valley-Mission Community College District. Even though the counselors do interact with the Colleges, the majority of the interaction is not frequent. The guidance counselors across the service area want more interaction with the recruitment personnel at Colleges – they want the personnel to be at their schools more and assist their students in applying to college, registering, and testing. The guidance counselors also noted that the best way to reach the high school students was to be at the campus more.

Almost all of the guidance counselors surveyed have students participating in concurrent enrollment with colleges in the area, Mission College and West Valley College included. The overwhelming majority of the guidance counselors believe that there are more students in their high schools who would benefit from participating in concurrent enrollment. When asked how to entice students to enroll in concurrent enrollment, the guidance counselors indicated that the students (and potentially parents) need more information about what is offered in concurrent enrollment.

The results of the Guidance Counselor Scan also indicated that the high school students’ use of college web sites is increasing as a way to gain information about colleges and that the guidance counselors are also increasing their usage of the Colleges’ web sites to get information. The guidance counselors are using the Mission College and West Valley College web sites but are reporting some difficulty in using the West Valley College web site and getting the information needed. The guidance counselors also noted that although the Colleges’ recruitment personnel responded in a timely manner, it was difficult to reach personnel at times and some information was not sent in a timely manner. It is clear that the Colleges need to update their web sites and develop a quick and responsive solution to providing information about Mission College and West Valley College. The guidance counselors also reported a need for key printed materials to assist in providing information to their high school students. Even though the guidance counselors note that communication has been sufficient with Mission College and West Valley College, with their lack of knowledge about the Colleges’ programs and services, the communication with them apparently has not been sufficient.

Therefore, based on the results of the Guidance Counselor Scan, the following recommendations are made for West Valley-Mission Community College District:

West Valley-Mission Community College District

- **Continue implementation of the K-16 Bridge program at Mission College and start implementation at West Valley College.** The guidance counselors believed the K-16 Bridge program would be very beneficial to a majority of their students. The program would also provide more direct contact with the high school guidance counselors and the students – a key recommendation from the counselors – spend more time at the high schools.

- **Develop a guidance counselor landing page on the Mission College and West Valley College web sites that will provide instant communication with each of the College’s recruitment personnel and put key information at the fingertips of the guidance counselors.** The usage of the Colleges’ web sites as a source of information about Mission College and West Valley College is increasing for both students and counselors alike. To ensure that the information needed by the guidance counselors is readily available and to improve communication,
develop a guidance counselor landing page on each College’s web site (URL such as www.missioncollege.org/counselor and www.westvalley.edu/counselor) where the counselors can sign up for materials needed (which staff deliver personally to the counselors). Links would be provided for the key financial, admissions, and program information on each College’s web site that the counselors would access on a regular basis, making the site fast and efficient for them to use when counseling students. Provide key contact information and phone numbers for College staff at their fingertips; create a ListServe and e-mail regular updates on admission information, program updates, and deadlines to the counselors, or consider developing a counselor blog.

In addition, the landing page or web site for the high school guidance counselors should have a communication function that allows the counselors to login and request information, ask questions, etc., and guarantee no less than a 24 hour response. Interactivity is the key to the new pages and they should provide for the counselors to interact with Mission College and West Valley College staff with instant messaging, instant chat, and other options. The Colleges can use a guidance counselors’ breakfast event as the launch for the new guidance counselors’ web sites and can teach the guidance counselors at the breakfast how to access information on the new site.

**Create a direct marketing campaign to introduce guidance counselors, parents, and high school students to the benefits of enrolling in concurrent enrollment classes during high school.** The high school guidance counselors in the service area noted that they believed there was a possibility of expansion of the present concurrent enrollment program for the students but not knowing about the specifics of the program was one of the barriers. A direct mail campaign can be developed and targeted at high school students and their parents in the service area for both Colleges. The benefits of taking concurrent enrollment classes should be noted, as well as providing a list of four-year colleges in the area that will take the credits. Provide a landing page on the Mission College and West Valley College web sites for the concurrent enrollment program, for example www.missioncollege.org/concurrent and www.westvalley.edu/concurrent. Provide an opportunity on the web site for the high school students or parents to login and instant message with a representative of the College about the benefits. Conduct the campaign in the early Spring of the year when the high school students are planning courses for their senior year.

Representatives of Mission College and West Valley College should also personally visit all the high school administrations in the service area to ensure that there is administrative buy-in for the concurrent enrollment classes, and to gather information from the high schools about the types of concurrent classes that need to be offered.

**Develop a program matrix for all programs (degrees and certificates) offered at Mission College and West Valley College collectively and mark the programs as to locations.** The guidance counselors repeatedly requested a summary sheet (one page) of all the programs offered at the Colleges so they could share it with students as they are visiting about the students’ program areas of interest. The one-page sheet should have contact information for both Colleges on the sheet as well as the program matrix. It should be loaded on the Colleges’ web sites as a pdf and printed copies delivered to high schools across the service areas.

### Mission College

**Mission College needs to develop a transfer “guide” aimed at the guidance counselors which addresses the TAG’s and how successful Mission College students are when they transfer.** The guidance counselors in the service area think about Mission College and think programs – not transfer like West Valley College. Develop a transfer “guide” that will provide the guidance counselors a summary of the TAG’s as well as emphasizing the successful transfers of Mission College students to four-year colleges in the market. Utilize testimonials of the students and outcomes from graduates. Counselors from Mission College can then hand deliver the “guides” to the guidance counselors and answer any questions they may have. In addition, this will provide the guidance counselors a “face” to contact about transfer.
Community Scan – Adult Market Segments

Four age groups represent the adult market segments for West Valley-Mission Community College District, which correlate to three adult generations – 25 to 34 years of age and 35 to 44 years of age (Generation X), 45 to 60 years of age (Baby Boomers), and 61 years of age and older (Matures). Generation X is typically the parents of Generation Y’ers. Generation X is the working adult market for colleges today. Generation X is generally marked by its lack of optimism for the future, cynicism, and lack of beliefs and trust in traditional values. During the early 1990’s, the media portrayed Generation X as a group of flannel-wearing, alienated, overeducated, underachieving slackers with body piercings, who drank franchise-store coffee and had to work at low-level jobs like McDonald’s. The employment of Generation X is volatile. The Gen X’ers grew up in a rapidly de-industrializing Western World, experienced the economic recession of the early 1990’s and 2000’s, saw the traditional permanent job contracts disappearing and becoming unsecure short-term contracts. They experienced off-shoring and outsourcing and often experienced years of unemployment or working at jobs that they had in their youth. They no longer take any employment for granted, as their Baby Boomer parents did, nor do they consider unemployment a stigmatizing catastrophe. They have become excellent parents, preferring to spend time with family rather than work.

Baby Boomers, born after World War II between 1946 and 1965, are the parents of Generation X and are characterized by strong work ethics and high levels of interest in education. Baby Boomers believed that hard work led to greater economic gains and increasing levels of education was the way to get ahead. The Baby Boomers were the first group to be raised on television. The Baby Boomers found that their music was another expression of their generational identity. Rock and roll drove their parents crazy. Aging Boomers today strive to stay young – they are living longer and want to enjoy it. They believe in education and want products and services to keep them young and in touch.

Finally, the Matures, born before World War II, grew up as the suffocated children of war and depression. They came of age too late to be war heroes in World War I and remember the Depression as children and they remember food shortages. The Matures became the risk-averse, worked hard and were very conservative. They saved to assure themselves the shortages of the Depression would never happen to them again. The Matures expect respect for all they have accomplished and achieved. Typically, the Matures will look to education for entertainment.

Given that Generation X and the Baby Boomers are more likely to be credit enrollees, those two market segments will be the focus of the segment changes for West Valley-Mission Community College District. The age groups have been changed slightly to represent the enrollments as they are reported to the California Chancellor’s office. The three age groups examined for the adult market include those enrollees 25 to 34 years of age, 35 to 49 years of age, and those 50 years of age and over. The two younger age groups represent Generation X and the 50 and over age groups represent the Baby Boomers.

![Segment Changes For Generation X And Baby Boomer Market](source: WVMCCD Information Services, 2009)
As seen in the chart on the preceding page, the greatest growth in enrollments at West Valley-Mission Community College District in the adult market has been in the part-time segments. All of the part-time segments – 25 to 34, 35 to 49, and 50 and over – increased from Fall 2005 to Fall 2008. The greatest enrollment growth during this time frame in the adult segments was among the part-time 50 and over market, with a 31 percent increase. The 35 to 49 year old part-time segment increased 16 percent and the 25 to 34 year old part-time segment increased 15 percent. The only full-time segment in the adult market to increase from Fall 2005 to 2008 was the 25 to 34 year old segment and it grew by 36 percent. The 35 to 49 year old full-time segment declined over the last three years by 10 percent and the 50 and over full-time segment declined by two percent.

Examining the changes in enrollment in the chart above for the adult segments from Fall 2005 to Fall 2008 at Mission College, basically the same pattern as the District is seen in the enrollment trends. All of the part-time adult market segments increased from Fall 2005 to Fall 2008. The part-time 25 to 34 year old segment increased 12 percent from Fall 2005 to Fall 2008. The part-time 35 to 49 segment increased 12 percent and the part-time 50 and over segment increased 47 percent – though the increase only accounted for slightly less than 300 students. The largest increase in the adult full-time segments from Fall 2005 to Fall 2008 was in the full-time 25 to 34 age group, which increased 47 percent. The full-time segment in the 35 to 49 age groups from Fall 2005 to Fall 2008 showed a decline of 13 percent and the 50 and over age segment was flat – no increase or decrease over the three-year period.

At West Valley College, the enrollments from Fall 2005 to Fall 2008 also mirror the changes at the District – in other words, the same trends are seen in the adult market for both West Valley College and Mission College. All of the adult part-time segments increased from Fall 2005 to Fall 2008 as seen in the chart above. The part-time 25 to 34 year old segment increased 16 percent over the last three years, while the part-time 35 to 49 year old segment and the 50 and over segment both increased 22 percent. The only full-time adult
segment at West Valley College that had an increase in enrollments from Fall 2005 to Fall 2008 was the 25 to 34 year old segment. The full-time 35 to 49 year old segment declined five percent over the last three years and the full-time 50 and over segment declined seven percent.

Crossover Attendance At West Valley-Mission Community College District, Fall 2008

![Crossover Attendance Chart]

Source: WVMCCD Information Services, 2009

It is important to understand how students are currently attending classes in the West Valley-Mission Community College District and to determine if there is crossover among the Colleges in the District. As seen in the chart above, more than 48 percent of the total students in the District are currently attending only Mission College and 49 percent are currently attending only West Valley College. Only three percent of the current students – 740 students – are currently attending Mission College and West Valley College at the same time.

Penetration Rates For Santa Clara County By Age Group, 2008

![Penetration Rates Chart]

Source: WVMCCD Information Services, 2009

The penetration in the 25 to 34 year old market segment (enrollees divided by population) is slightly lower than one would anticipate – less than one percent – but is highest in the 20 to 24 and 15 to 19 populations, as one would expect. However, the enrollment of West Valley-Mission Community College District in the penetration chart above is compared to the population of the entire Santa Clara County and not only the zip codes in the service areas.
The key question for West Valley-Mission Community College District in the adult market segments is to
determine what additional growth there is in the adult market segments at the Colleges and what
programming needs to be developed to exploit that potential. In order to better understand the working
adults, a community survey was conducted by telephone to assess the image of Mission College and West
Valley College and to assess the needs of the working adults in the market. Five hundred households in the
market area of West Valley-Mission Community College District were surveyed by telephone from February 2
to 18, 2009, resulting in a 95 percent reliability and a \( \pm 4.4 \) percent margin of error. The survey was stratified
to represent the market areas of Mission College, West Valley College, and the zip codes between the two
College’s service areas.

Based on the results of the Community Scan, the following is a summary of the main issues that need to be
addressed to increase the population of working adults. The results of the Community Scan had implications
for the District, as well as specific implications for Mission College and West Valley College. Given that
several of the recommendations address common issues to address for Both colleges, there is a set of District
recommendations. In addition, since the two Colleges have different markets and procedures,
recommendations have also been made for each of the Colleges individually.

### West Valley-Mission Community College District

Marketing for a community college has two primary goals — encouraging **advocacy** for a college and
**recruitment** of students. Both of these goals have to be included in any community college marketing plan.
The reason for encouraging advocacy is to provide continued community support for the college, for example,
if a college needs to pass a bond issue, the residents in the service area have to know the college exists
(familiarity), understand its value to them (image), and provide support for the college by a positive vote.
Regardless of the need for enrollments, marketing to support continued advocacy has to be consistent from
year to year. In addition to marketing for advocacy, community colleges also need to fund marketing for
increasing or supporting enrollments. These targeted recruitment campaigns are used to recruit target
populations to the College.

To accomplish these two goals, a consistent level of funding is needed for a college to accomplish the
advocacy and recruitment marketing needed. As noted in the Brain Trust report for West Valley-Mission
Community College District, Mission College and West Valley College have not had consistent funding for
marketing and advertising, making it very difficult to maintain the advocacy function of marketing in the
Colleges’ service areas.

Because of this inconsistency of funding and marketing, the Colleges in the West Valley-Mission Community
College District have low unaided recall among the adults in the District. If an adult is not familiar with a
college, in other words if it is not even on their radar screen, it is very difficult for the adults to think about
attending that college or even supporting that college when asked for assistance in a bond issue. De Anza
College has the highest top of the mind awareness among the community colleges in the Mission service area
with 22 percent while Mission College had a 10 percent unaided recall in their own service area (see chart
below). In the West Valley service area, 13.3 percent named West Valley College first in the test of unaided
recall and 13.9 percent named De Anza College first. The gap in unaided recall for West Valley College with
respect to De Anza College in its service area is not as large as the gap for Mission College in its service area.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>College</th>
<th>Unaided Recall</th>
<th>Familiarity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mission College Service Area</td>
<td>West Valley College Service Area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mission College</td>
<td>9.5%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Valley College</td>
<td>2.7%</td>
<td>13.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>De Anza College</td>
<td>21.6%</td>
<td>13.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>San Jose City College</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
<td>4.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foothill College</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
<td>1.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As seen in the chart on the preceding page, at least Mission College and West Valley College are almost equivalent in familiarity among their service areas with De Anza College. Examining the Mission College service area, 38 percent of the residents listed Mission College as a college in their area and 47 percent listed De Anza College as a college in their service area. In the West Valley College service area, 36 percent listed West Valley College as a college in their service area and 40 percent recalled De Anza College. Therefore, to maintain familiarity and advocacy in the service areas, West Valley-Mission Community College District should:

- **Establish a minimum, consistent marketing budget for Mission College and West Valley College.** Typical community college marketing budgets for advertising and marketing are $150,000, excluding salaries and major publications such as schedules and catalogs.

Advertising and marketing alone will not maximize familiarity and image; it takes consistent messaging. The results of the Community Scan found that while slightly less than half of the adults in the market area of Mission College and West Valley College are familiar with the Colleges, the other major issue is that the community members do not recall anything distinctive about the two Colleges. The messages being communicated, or not, are not effective nor distinctive. Examining the community colleges in the market area, the following taglines were found for the competitive colleges:

- San Jose City College: Inspiring Success One Student At A Time.
- Foothill College: Upgrade. Advance.
- Evergreen Valley College: Embrace. We’re Proud Of You.
- San Jose State University: Powering Silicon Valley.

No specific taglines could be found for Mission College or West Valley College. In addition, the Brain Trust also noted the lack of messaging for the District and the Colleges. The Brain Trust emphasized that the District needs its own messaging, while keeping the uniqueness of the individual Colleges in messaging. Thus, it is recommended:

- **Develop a brand platform for West Valley-Mission Community College District.** A key component of marketing that is missing at the Colleges and the District is comprehensive messaging. The brand platform should include:
  
  o Positioning statement, four or five key messages that will relate to all target markets, and a tagline for Mission College emphasizing the uniqueness of the College in the competitive market area.
  
  o Positioning statement, four or five key messages that will translate to all target markets, and a tagline for West Valley College emphasizing the uniqueness of the College in the market area.
  
  o Positioning statement and four or five key messages that encompass and blend the key messages (strengths) of Mission College and West Valley College and will relate to all constituents in the District to be used by the District Office. The District messaging should be directed at advocacy but tie the messages of the Colleges together – the messages for each College should relay the unique strengths and competitive market positions of the Colleges within their respective service areas.

- **Evaluate the current graphic treatment of the logos and graphic images being used for Mission College, West Valley College, and the District to ensure that they graphically reinforce the new positioning statements, messages, and taglines created in the Brand Platform.** The current logos and design styles for Mission College, West Valley College, and the District will need to be evaluated to make sure that the style of the logos and designs match the messaging. For example, if a college has a positioning statement emphasizing strength and depth of programming – for example, indicates a very strong college – and the logo is very flowing and not heavy and solid, the graphic does not match the position.
• **Launch a comprehensive marketing campaign to improve awareness and increase advocacy for Mission College, West Valley College, and West Valley-Mission Community College District.** A year-long, multi-media campaign should be developed to ensure a consistent presence in the primary market using cost-effective marketing media: radio, newspaper, web site, television, theatres, magazines, news releases, etc., and funded by the annual increased budgets.

• **Create an internal communications campaign for the entire District to promote successes and strengths, and institutionalize the new messaging.** Mobilizing faculty and staff across the District to become an army of brand champions is an important initial – and ongoing – strategy. This should become the property of marketing in partnership with human resources. Hosting a brand kickoff event at both Colleges and developing an ongoing internal recognition program for good stewards will reinforce the desire for a climate of collaboration, celebration, and recognition. Delivering to each employee a printed set of marketing messages and an item with the new tagline will serve as a reminder of each employee’s responsibility for acting as a brand ambassador as well as reinforce a District-wide sense of mission and purpose.

• **Develop a comprehensive public relations strategy for West Valley-Mission Community College District.** The primary newspaper being read in the market area by the adults is the San Jose Mercury News, as seen in the Community Scan. Examining the San Jose Mercury News website for August, few articles were included about West Valley College or Mission College. The District and the Colleges’ marketing staff need to work together to generate more stories to pitch to the newspaper. There needs to be more visibility of student success and achievements of faculty, the Colleges, and the District. Increased positive public relations are key in the forefront of a Bond Campaign.

  o Create a login page on the District website that will allow employees and staff to easily update the Marketing officers about newsworthy events.

  o Nominate the education reporter at the San Jose Mercury News for the NYU Journalism program on learning about community colleges. (A reporter from the Contra Costa Times attended the summer session.)

  o Purchase ads on the Road to College website section of the San Jose Mercury News.
Stop mass mailing the Colleges’ class schedules in their current form and redirect the money to the proposed marketing budget. More than 250,000 schedules (133,000 for Mission College and 135,000 for West Valley College) are being mailed twice a year to service area zip codes to ensure saturation – but less than 40 percent of the market does not even recall receiving a schedule in the last year. Examining the sections offered Fall 2009 at Mission College and West Valley College, few are open and many have wait lists as large as the class enrollment. In addition, the adults in the Community Scan noted that one-third preferred an online schedule, one-third preferred a printed schedule, and one-third did not have a preference. Students (and faculty) also complain that the schedule is out-of-date as soon as it is printed.

Adults in the market are interested in taking a credit class based on the results of the Community Scan. Rather than sending a massive publication to each household, each College should create an attractive, four-color publication that only provides a course title and description of the course for all key courses at the College. A coding system could also be used for each course that would indicate that it is offered online or at night, etc. This publication would not contain any times or days, but would direct the reader to the Colleges’ redesigned web pages for the schedules to find updated class times and open enrollments. To accomplish this strategy, the following items would need to be accomplished:
Develop a catalog of courses with descriptions and do not include any of the detailed information regarding student services for each College – or if possible, consider combining the publication and noting which College offers the course. Utilize the current Mission College format for the course layouts since the readability is better than the West Valley College schedule. The call to action is to go to the schedule web site – provide a direct link.

Create a new schedule landing page on each College’s web site – or develop a page on the West Valley-Mission Community College District web site. If a schedule page is created on the District web site, the web address should be changed to www.WVMCCD.edu rather than the current address. The class schedule home page link should go directly to a schedule landing page which would easily, with one click, bring up the online schedule – if possible, eliminate the additional click to get to the online schedule as a guest.

Target the zip codes which have the highest penetration of current students and the zip codes that have the highest level of interest in taking a college class for distributing the revamped course publication.

Postcards can also be sent to all current students and those who have enrolled in the last three years when the online schedule is posted to go and check out the schedule of classes on the web site – a call to action.

- **Conduct an inventory at each College of the office hours across all the service areas at the College and develop a strategy for providing one-stop services to students after 4pm.** In the survey of Current Students, students were asked to assess the services provided by the Colleges. In the majority of areas, Mission College and West Valley College were rated above the normative ratings of the other community college students – in other words, the customer service provided by the Colleges is better than other colleges in the nation completing the same survey. However, examining the ratings of the current students and comparing the full-time and part-time students’ ratings at Mission College and West Valley College, a trend is seen in service. The majority of the part-time students provided a lower rating on “convenience” of hours open for the majority of the service areas at Mission College and West Valley College. This typically indicates that the levels of service for part-time students are lower and it is more difficult for the part-time students to access services at the Colleges. This does not mean that every office has to stay open every night until 8pm or 10pm, but it does mean that the processes and procedures need to be examined to determine if there are unrealistic expectations placed on having part-time students interact with offices that may only be open during day hours.

A major growth area in enrollment has been in online classes for Mission College and West Valley College. Many part-time students are actually enrolled in online classes. While the Colleges are examining the office hours and services for part-time students, they should also:

- **Process map the application and enrollment process for an online student at each College and remove any barriers to enable complete online enrollment.**
• **Develop a set of first half and second half semester “accelerated courses” in high demand areas to allow students to take two classes during the same time slot during a semester.** A major issue confronting Mission College and West Valley College with respect to De Anza College is the quarter system. Students perceive it to be less expensive and faster.

  o **West Valley College.** Currently, West Valley College has a series of short courses but the start and end times are so varied that it is difficult to take courses within a semester except in a few key areas. West Valley College needs to define a first half 6 to 8 week session in which “accelerated courses” will be taught and a second half 6 to 8 week session for “accelerated courses.”

  • An example of potential course development in accelerated programming for West Valley College includes packaging a Math section the first half session and an English section the second session that would be offered the same time and day for the two sessions.

  • Another example for West Valley College is packaging a prerequisite, such as Math or English, the first half session and a course such as Digital Media that requires the Math the second session.

  • Finally, West Valley College needs to develop curriculum programming to lay out accelerated degrees in the new “accelerated format.” Preferred degree areas for the West Valley College service area included education, business, computer science, interior design, environmental studies, health management, marketing, photography, science, and communications. West Valley College should examine these areas to determine if they can offer these program areas – both transfer and terminal – in an accelerated format. Utilize the Multi-Semester Report in the ClassTracks software to assist in this analysis.

  • Marketing should develop a brochure about the “accelerated” degrees and an e-mail communication as well as a landing page for the accelerated programming. Direct mail can be used to inform the market about the programming.

  o **Mission College.** Create a first half 6 to 8 week session in which “accelerated courses” will be taught and a second half 6 to 8 week session for “accelerated courses.”

  • Examine current curriculum using the Multi-Semester Report in the ClassTracks software to target programs for accelerated delivery. Develop courses for the two sessions within the semester for the curriculum.

  • Marketing should develop a brochure about the “accelerated” degrees and an e-mail communication as well as a landing page for the accelerated programming. Direct mail can be used to inform the market about the programming.
- Create a direct mail campaign aimed at the adults in the market who have some college credits but have not completed an associate degree who want to complete a bachelor's degree.
  
  - Develop a publication that shows the AA to BA programming that will transfer to San Jose State University, Santa Clara University, and UC Santa Cruz and focus on the BA program areas, specifically education, business and social services.
  
  - Send the direct mail campaign to all targeted zip codes that have an interest in credit classes as per the following maps to the zip codes with a high interest in credit programming. See Appendix A for percentage of interest by zip code for credit classes.
Exhibit 1-B. Both Area – Interest In Credit Classes

Exhibit 1-C. West Valley College Area – Interest In Credit Classes
The Marketing Office at Mission College should continue their consistency. A major way to make a small budget go a long way is to be consistent in the logo, colors, and design style for a college. Mission College’s Marketing Office has done an excellent job of maintaining consistency. The logo is always the same color, colors used for various publications are consistent, and the design is excellent.

Define totally online degrees for a marketing campaign. Upon examining the sections offered by Mission College, many are online. However, the researcher could not find whether any programs at Mission College are offered completely online.

- Utilize the Multi-Semester Report in the ClassTracks software to determine what program areas can be offered totally online with a minimum of course additions.
- The program areas that should be targeted for completely online delivery based on examination of fill rates for the online course components compared to their comparable lecture classes include: Accounting, Business (Management, Marketing), and Child Development.

Package courses to provide skill set upgrades to employees in the industries in the Silicon Valley to allow them to retain their positions in the recession.

- In 2009, national experts continue to discuss how to stay employed and save a job during the recession that employees find themselves in at this time. Over and over again, the experts suggest that employees increase their skill sets to make them more valuable to a company. Since many of Mission College’s students are employed, the College should offer skill set upgrades to employees in the market to “make them more valuable” to their current employer. The main skill set upgrades that employers are looking for include Communication Skill Training, Leadership Skills, Enhancement of Creativity, Management Skills, Organizational Skills, Personal Development, Bilingual, and Business Writing and Report Communication.

- Mission College has the majority of the courses in place to offer these skill set upgrades. For example, by scheduling the courses as a learning community, the student would attend one night a week for the entire semester and be enrolled in three different courses which would be co-taught by the faculty, and the student would do some online assignments. This combines the hybrid course with the learning community. For example, the College could combine a leadership (supervision) course, with a Spanish course, and a Business Writing course. Another option is to work with a specific industry to define the skill sets needed, such as in manufacturing where a supervision course, an Excel course in manufacturing, and a lean manufacturing course would be co-taught. At the end of the semester, the students have accumulated nine credit hours and a skill set package.

- To market the skill sets packages, employers can be contacted and information would be provided to employees. Direct mail can be targeted to employed households in the service area and a landing page can be created for the skill set packaging.

Create a web page for ESL on the Mission College web site that can translate the information into multiple languages. Mission College has a healthy ESL enrollment and multiple languages are utilizing the ESL programming. On the homepage of the College’s web site, there should be an ESL button which would move the person interested in ESL to an ESL page that has several options for languages – Spanish, Vietnamese, Chinese, etc. The page should outline what a student needs to do to apply and enroll in ESL classes, and provide contact information and other pertinent information to assist in the enrollment process. At the top, all of the languages are present and a potential student can click to get the page translated into their language.
West Valley College

- **Budget for a marketing director responsible for public relations and marketing at West Valley College.** West Valley College has been without leadership in the marketing and public relations arena. The College has a talented design team that has had to work with committees for inspiration and direction. The current director of Information Technology has stepped in and filled a void, but over the long-term, direction is needed from a key management position reporting to the President of West Valley College.
  - It is important for the marketing team at West Valley College to provide a consistent look and feel to the marketing materials and publications at the College. There has not been a consistent use of color on the West Valley College materials, nor has the logo been consistently placed on publications. The logo color has been varied for different pieces, losing consistency, and even the typestyle for West Valley College changes from publication to publication. After the brand platform is developed, it will be imperative that the design and colors be consistent and that the brand messaging is used in all external communications.

- **Completely redesign the home page and key navigation links for West Valley College's web site.** As seen in the following graphic, the home page of West Valley College is extremely busy and lacks focus. The home page should portray the brand of the College and entice the students and potential students to further engage with the site. The current site is a laundry list of every service available at the College. This makes it very difficult for a person to focus on the key issues.

As a potential student or current student attempts to navigate the current web site for West Valley College, each new page (as shown on the next page) consists of more lists of information. It takes many clicks to finally get information about a particular topic and the print sizes are very small for a multi-age market.
An example of a well-done home page and site is shown below for Miami Dade College. The home page clearly markets the College, constantly changing with new information. Information for various markets, such as current students or prospective students, is simple to find.

Bolder and larger graphics are used and the page is much simpler in design. These characteristics should be applied to the West Valley College web site.

- **Develop an online marketing campaign for the totally online degrees offered at West Valley College.** In the West Valley College 2007-2008 Distance Learning, Fiscal and Statistical Report, a survey of online students indicated that 81 percent who are taking an online course have previously taken a class on campus. Utilize an e-mail campaign to market the following completely online degrees to current students and those who have attended in the last three years. The degrees to target include certificate and associate degrees in Liberal Arts, Business Management, Office Technology, and Digital Media.
To support the e-mail campaign, purchase Google ads for search for online degrees in the market area (by zip codes) for the specific degree names and online degrees.

Develop a landing page on the West Valley College web site to direct those interested in the programming and provide links for students to apply and enroll in the online degrees completely from the landing page.

**Explore the delivery of credit programming to satisfy the West Valley College market for not for credit programming for personal interest and fun.** Based on the results of the Community Scan and examining the classes that fill for West Valley College and Mission College, it is clear that a market opportunity exists in the arts, culture, literature, dance, painting, etc. in the West Valley College market area.

- Given the College’s need for FTES, it is advisable at this time to promote the credit courses that will fill this niche and provide delivery of these classes at time frames that the adults are interested. For example, West Valley College offers an *Introduction to Holistic Medicine* that may be of interest to the not for credit market but the class is offered from 10:15am to 12:20pm – a time frame that the market cannot attend. Target credit courses that would have interest for the adult market for personal interest and offer the classes in the evening and in a lecture format a couple of times a week for 6 or 8 weeks.

- Utilize direct mail to households in the market area to inform the citizens of the availability of the courses and direct them to a landing page on the College’s web site for detailed information on time and registration.

- After the current FTES push is over to restore basis, examine the expansion of the not for credit programming in the West Valley College market area by offering many not for credit classes in locations in the service area.

**Workforce Development Scan**

Up until two years ago, the employers in the service area of West Valley-Mission Community College District would have comprised an excellent market segment for Mission College and West Valley College for both credit and noncredit programming (training). However over the last 18 months, drastic changes have taken place in the business environment in the Silicon Valley as well as the entire United States – businesses have closed, employees have been laid off, training budgets have been slashed, and tuition reimbursement plans have been put on hold. One employer surveyed in the Workforce Development Scan even noted that they have suspended contributions to their employees’ 401K plans in an effort to keep their current workforce employed. Evidence of these difficulties for employers was found in the Workforce Development Scan. A cross-section of 400 employers in the service area of West Valley-Mission Community College District were interviewed by telephone and personal interview from April 1 to May 20, 2009. These 400 employers represented 209,244 full-time employees and 56,185 part-time employees. Key findings from the Workforce Development Scan include:

- Unlike 18 months ago, the employers in the market area are not seeing a shortage of qualified job candidates. Employers even in low-skill industries noted that they have more applicants than ever before and the applicants are even more qualified than ever before. For example, one firm that employs direct care aides at slightly above minimum wage who had been having trouble getting applicants noted that applicants were coming with bachelor’s degrees and applying for jobs. During full employment, these firms would need people trained to fill the jobs with basic skills. This is not the case at this time.

- More than 80 percent of the employers surveyed conducted training for their employees in the last year and the majority expect to conduct training next year for their employees. However, the majority of the employers (more than 90 percent) have conducted the training in-house and less than 10 percent of the employers contract out for training. Many companies in today’s tight economic
environment are only conducting the mandated training – such as safety, CPR, first aid, food service training, forklift training, compliance, etc. – and others are simply training new employees on company products and machines (such as cash registers). Many of the employers who will not offer any employee training in the next year cited budget as the major consideration – training is curtailed when economic times are difficult. Given the economic conditions, few of the employers would consider outsourcing their current training. Typically, employer training is a major market niche for a community college, but in these recessionary times the market is not robust.

- Less than 10 percent of the employers had used Mission College or West Valley College as an educational or training resource for their employees. As with other markets, the Colleges and the District have limited familiarity and recognition among the employers in the market area. The major way that the employers noted interacting with the Colleges is having employees attend classes. However, the majority of the employers who have used Mission College or West Valley College were satisfied with the services provided.

- Almost 40 percent of the employers were in a hiring freeze and expected the freeze to continue to the end of 2009, and slightly more than 10 percent of the employers were laying off employees in the 2nd quarter of 2009 when the survey was conducted. One-third of the employers were planning on hiring new employees in six to 24 months. However, 28 percent of the new hires planned by the employers would require no education and 51 percent would require only high school, and for both the jobs would be a result of turnover and not new positions, specifically in retail and food service. Very few of the forecasted positions would require more than an associate degree.

- Tuition reimbursement has been an excellent way for employers to get employees trained and has provided an excellent market for community colleges. However, the recession has also impacted the number of employers who offer tuition reimbursement to their employees – slightly less than half of the employers in the market area are offering tuition reimbursement to their employees. A major issue for the employee is that three-fourths of the employers pay the reimbursement upon completion of the class and with the economic reality of this environment, many employees will not spend the money up front – it is needed for other necessities of life.

- One area that may offer enrollment potential to Mission College and West Valley College is continuing education required for licensing. Industries that require employees to do annual continuing education to keep licenses updated include engineering, education, health care, insurance, and accounting.

Given the economic reality for the employers in the market area of West Valley-Mission Community College District and the current high demand for classes by recent high school graduates and older adults, the employer market is not a primary target market for the Colleges at this time. As the economic conditions improve and employers begin to increase employee training, the Colleges should be poised to take advantage of the market opportunity. Creating partnerships and being more visible in the market during this time frame should position the College for the future. Thus, the following strategies are recommended for West Valley-Mission Community College District, Mission College, and West Valley College to position the Colleges for the economic turnaround.
West Valley-Mission Community College District

- Establish a Chancellor’s Economic and Employment Advisory Board comprised of key employers across the service areas of Mission College and West Valley College. West Valley-Mission Community College District should have more interaction and visibility with the key employers in the region. The Chancellor should invite key employers in the service area to serve on an Economic and Employment Advisory Board. It is envisioned that this Board would meet twice a year at a minimum and provide insight into employment needs and new program development for the District. A key goal for this Board is also to enlighten the employers as to the innovative programming at Mission College and West Valley College. The Presidents of Mission College and West Valley College would also serve on the board to provide more opportunities for them to create partnerships.

- West Valley-Mission Community College District should have representation in the Regional Workforce Initiative being sponsored by the Joint Venture Silicon Valley Network. “The Regional Workforce Initiative is aimed at developing workforce solutions in Silicon Valley to address the constantly shifting demand for new skills and abilities among employers as well as developing skilled, qualified individuals to replace the workers that are retiring. Ultimately we are striving to make our valley a better place to live, work, develop skills, and create or grow our businesses.” Examining the participants in the strategy groups which met June 2, 2009, De Anza College, Foothill College, San Jose – Evergreen Community College District and San Jose City College were represented but there was not any representation from West Valley-Mission Community College District or either College. On September 24, 2009 in San Jose, the stakeholders will meet to consider a draft of the regional workforce action plan. By October 2009, a revised regional workforce action plan will be presented to the region’s workforce stakeholders and all of Silicon Valley (contact Josh Williams: williams@jointventure.org).

- Advertise online in the San Jose Mercury News classified job ads and create a series of job clips for programs at Mission College and West Valley College. People who are searching the job ads are looking for a change. The San Jose Mercury News is the primary newspaper in the market area. A screen print of their jobs section follows. Explore purchasing a banner ad like National University in the screen print below or a box ad like Heald University for West Valley-Mission Community College District emphasizing both Colleges.
In addition, the San Jose Mercury News also offers an opportunity to market job clips (see screen print below). The job clips have a category listing of education. A short video is then played for the listings in the category. In the example below, WyoTech has created a job clip about plumbing. Create a series of job clips for programs at Mission College and West Valley College that would be of interest to the adult market.

- Develop a ListServe for employers in the market area to provide a quarterly update of classes of interest and provide a link to a landing page for employers on the District web site. Purchase a list containing the e-mail addresses of the employers in the market area. Develop a quarterly e-mail that is branded as a West Valley-Mission Community College District “Education Update” and target a course at Mission College and West Valley College for each e-mail. The course targeted would need to fit in with updating employees’ skills. The main skill set upgrades that employers are looking for include Communication Skills Training, Leadership Skills, Enhancement of Creativity, Management Skills, Organizational Skills, Personal Development, Bilingual, and Business Writing and Report Communication. The e-mail would provide a description of the courses that the Colleges have that may assist employees in leadership, for example, and provide the times the courses are offered. There would be a link to the West Valley-Mission Community College District web site for employers and there the employers could request more information about the course.

- Inventory the CEU’s required by the individuals in the market area and begin to develop programming to meet their needs for continuing education. An opportunity exists for additional development of professional education (continuing education) for employees who need certifications annually to keep licenses, for example, in health care, real estate, insurance, etc. Target the areas for CEU’s by inventorying all the certifications in the state and then drill down to the certifications held by individuals in the market area to develop a target list for continuing education. Lists of the individuals by certification area are then developed.
  - Define the programming that can be offered by Mission College and West Valley College to assist in meeting the certification update requirements. Target current programming potentially for online delivery and even develop new programming.
Develop industry web pages that employees, by industry type, can then be directed to for updates on program offerings. These web pages (or landing pages) could be named www.wvmccd.edu/healthcare or www.wvmccd.edu/realestate. These pages would contain all the information about actual academic programming offered at the Colleges as well as continuing education updates for licensing.

E-mail and direct mail could then be used to direct those with current licenses to the web page for continued updates.

A blog could also be created for each industry’s web page that would allow faculty to discuss recent updates and changes in licensing and new developments in the field and also allow for industry members to become engaged on the site. The site would then become an information exchange page rather than static information.

- **Offer GAP scholarships to employees with tuition reimbursement.** Half of the employers in the market offer tuition reimbursement to employees but the majority only reimburse the employees upon completion of the class. Working with the Foundation, develop GAP scholarships for employees. The GAP scholarship would in essence be a tuition waiver in effect until the class is completed and the tuition reimbursement is available to pay for the class. This would assist employees who want to attend but are concerned about having to pay for the class up-front, and in this economy, many have other more pressing monetary commitments. The GAP scholarships can be marketed through the employer ListServe.

- **Develop a Programs of Study Book for mass distribution rather than the college catalog.** From a marketing perspective, the most pertinent information in the catalog for students is the program information – the degrees offered, the courses needed, and the course descriptions. Many colleges have taken their catalog completely online and replaced it with a Programs of Study Book, which focuses on marketing the programs, and have updated their web sites to provide more program information. A sample from a Programs of Study Book from Kalamazoo Valley Community College is presented below.

![Programs of Study Book](image)

Other colleges have taken the same format as above and entitled the booklet a “Career Planner.” The goal is to provide the program information in a much more user-friendly format and to market the programs. These booklets are also less expensive than the cost of the college catalog and are perceived
to be a piece that would be “kept” rather than quickly thrown away. These could also be distributed to employers to share with their employees.

The District could develop one Programs of Study Booklet and include information on all programs at Mission College and West Valley College and indicate where the program is offered. This would be an example of cross-marketing the programming at the Colleges. Each College could also create their own Programs of Study Booklet.

Mission College

- **Create a Leadership Institute at Mission College.** Leadership is a key skill set required for employees in today’s changing economic times. While supervision used to be the major push, leadership has evolved as the new supervision. Mission College should create a Leadership Institute aimed at middle management to update their leadership skills. Current issues that can be discussed may include how to handle Gen Y and Gen X employees. The College can take their current management and supervision curriculum, rename it, and revamp courses as needed to develop the Institute. A certificate can be developed in Leadership after a student takes the prescribed set of classes. This will provide the employee a tangible benefit to share with their employer – making them more valuable in their current job. Marketing for the Leadership Institute would include e-mails through the employer ListServe, direct mail to employers, and news releases about the “new” Leadership Institute.

- **Explore new programming in green and clean technology.** After searching the web sites of the key colleges in the market area, very little, if any, programming exists for green and clean technologies. The *Index of Silicon Valley 2009* noted that the Silicon Valley is a hotbed for green and clean technology – energy generation, energy management, recycling, and solar installation. Mission College should explore these areas to determine if new programming can be developed in these areas.

West Valley College

- **Develop online courses that can be marketed to employers for training current employees.** Many employers are moving to CBT (computer-based training) for employees – it fits their schedule and their employees’ schedules better. West Valley College should explore the current online courses that fit in the skills upgrades area for employees: Communication Skill Training, Leadership Skills, Enhancement of Creativity, Management Skills, Organizational Skills, Personal Development, Bilingual, and Business Writing and Report Communication. These courses can then be marketed to employers as training opportunities for employees via the employer ListServe.
Non-Returning Student Scan

Persistence is an important measure of the success of an institution – in other words, how long can the Colleges retain the students they recruit? For many educational institutions, it is much easier to retain a student for a length of time, especially if they have a degree as a goal, rather than always recruiting new students to boost enrollment. Given the changing educational landscape, and the push for higher graduation rates among community colleges by the current presidential administration, the issue of retention and persistence will become even more important to community colleges. During the Fall 2007 semester at West Valley-Mission Community College District, 3,247 first-time students enrolled during the semester, but of those students, 1,936 students (60 percent) did not return to West Valley-Mission Community College District by Fall 2008. Examining the 60 percent who did not return, 1,292 (or 67 percent) only completed Fall 2007 and did not return and 644 students (33 percent) completed Fall 2007 and Spring 2008 and did not continue. At Mission College, 63 percent of the first-time students in Fall 2007 did not return to the College by Fall 2008 and a majority of those non-returning students attended only one semester. At West Valley College, 56 percent of the first-time enrollees in Fall 2007 did not return by Fall 2008, the majority of which left after only one semester. For both Mission College and West Valley College, the majority of the non-returning students were enrolled part-time.

In order to better understand why those part-time students did not return to the College after a semester or two, a series of 101 focused, in-depth interviews were conducted by telephone on April 20 to April 27, 2009 with the students in Generation Y (age 24 and younger) and the students in Generation X (age 25 to 44) that did not return to the Colleges.

The part-time non-returning students at West Valley-Mission Community College District were likely to have been attending another college when they applied to Mission College or West Valley College. In a market where there are multiple college choices in close proximity, students will “swirl” or pick and choose a college that appears to be the most convenient to them at the moment, or if they dislike anything about a college, they will move to another college. The students who have not successfully completed at another institution, the “swirlers,” are not connecting with a college and are less likely to be retained at a college. In addition, if first-time enrollees at Mission College or West Valley College have attended another college prior to enrolling, it is an indicator that they are less likely to be retained.

Many of the part-time non-returning students at Mission College and West Valley College enrolled simply to take a class in an area of interest, but more than one-third of the part-time non-returning students actually enrolled to pursue a degree. One student reported that a counselor at a college discouraged her from trying to get a degree on a part-time basis since it would take so long. Not knowing both sides to the conversation, it is imperative that the part-time students at Mission College and West Valley College are embraced by staff and assisted in trying to reach their goals, even if it is attaining a part-time degree in the evening.

Nationally, the last students to apply (late applicants) are typically more likely to be the first to not be retained at a college. A majority of the part-time non-returning students who are working adults applied to Mission College or West Valley College a month or less prior to the start of classes – some only a few days prior to the start of the semester. It is very difficult for staff to provide all the necessary information to students who apply so late and these late applicants miss components of the system such as orientation and counseling sessions which are focused on making them successful and retaining them. Couple the late application with the lack of connections being made with anyone – staff, faculty, and other students – and the part-time non-returning students are at risk from the start of classes for not returning. These students literally run in for class and run out – and when they run out and do not connect, they are less likely to stay at the Colleges.

Life issues were the major reason that the part-time non-returning students left the Colleges – their personal lives simply got in the way of school. But the part-time non-returning students at West Valley College were slightly more likely to cite academic issues as a reason for leaving and those at Mission College were slightly
more likely to have financial issues for leaving. Both academic and financial issues are areas in which the Colleges can provide assistance to the part-time non-returning students.

A majority of the part-time non-returning students are still in the area – some attended another college and others are simply working. The majority of the non-returning students have a good association with Mission College and West Valley College and would consider attending the Colleges again in the future.

Based on the results from the Non-Returning Student Scan, the key issues that West Valley-Mission Community College District should address to increase the retention of part-time students at the Colleges include:

**West Valley-Mission Community College District**

- **Identify students who have earned 30 or more credits at Mission College and West Valley College and utilize direct mail to entice them to complete a degree.** Each year, audit the student records for those who have completed 30 or more hours at Mission College or West Valley College. Those students who have completed 30 credit hours may be eligible for a certificate. Utilize direct mail and e-mail to inform them of the completion of the certificate degree and ask them to schedule an appointment to discuss completion of an associate degree since they are halfway there. For the students who have completed more than 30 credits, for example 45 credits, utilize direct mail and e-mail to contact them and encourage them to take those last few courses to complete their associate degree. The preferred outcome from the contact should be an appointment with a counselor to enroll to complete those last few classes. The campaign theme can be something like, “It’s Closer Than You Think.”

  When examining the potential degree areas for completion, the lists of students can also be shared with the corresponding departments at each College, and faculty in those departments should make personal contact with these students to encourage them to complete their degrees.

  Given the recent push toward more degree completers in the community college system, this strategy should be institutionalized at both Colleges.

- **Develop a tracking and communication plan to follow the progress of the enrollees who apply to Mission College and West Valley College less than a month prior to the start of classes.** A majority of the non-returning students at West Valley-Mission Community College District applied to the Colleges one month or less prior to the start of the semester. For those students who apply late, flag their record and track their progress through the semester. Within two weeks after the start of the semester, a counselor should contact these students and encourage them to make a counseling appointment to discuss educational and career goals. Personal contacts should be made by student services staff midway through the semester to check on the students’ progress. These phone calls can be made by the Student Ambassadors, as well as e-mail and direct mail communications to reinforce the phone calls. This strategy should be easier to implement after the Recruitment and Communication module has been activated in Datatel.

- **Develop a communications plan for those first-time students who declare a degree program of interest.** Many of the non-returning students, even part-time, declared a program area and degree area of interest – they were not all Liberal Arts or Undecided. For those part-time non-returning students that have declared a specific degree program, faculty should be provided those names at the start of the semester along with the students’ contact information. Faculty should welcome the students into their program areas and communicate any other clubs and activities that the program area has to offer the student. Student services should contact these students mid-semester and encourage them to come in for an appointment and develop an educational plan for that program area based on many classes they can take in a semester. Faculty should make direct contact with the students during registration periods to ensure that the students are enrolling for the next semester. The incentive for faculty is healthy enrollments in their program areas. In addition, by faculty reaching out to the enrollees, a connection will be made as well.
• Conduct a phone-a-thon at each College to call currently enrolled students during the registration period who have not yet enrolled to see if there are any barriers to enrollment with which the College can assist. Encourage voluntary participation in the phone-a-thon of all employees – from office staff to landscape personnel. At one college, every employee committed to call 10 students during the registration period and it only took a few minutes of everyone’s time, plus it showed a true institutional commitment to retention. Set up a temporary bank of phones in a central location at each campus. IT runs target lists of currently enrolled students who have not yet enrolled for the upcoming semester with home and cell phone numbers. Students are contacted and employees use a script to remind them that registration is taking place and classes are filling fast. If students have questions specific to their enrollment, the call can be handed to an enrollment services specialist, or messages can be taken and the appropriate staff member calls the students back with answers. Many of the non-returning students register late – trying to move them to earlier action will benefit not only the Colleges but the students as well. For those students not reached, a follow-up direct mail can be sent saying “Sorry We Missed You” to remind them to register for next semester.

• Develop a high-impact direct mail marketing campaign (oversized postcards and e-mail support as well) aimed at the non-returning students for the last three years and encourage them to return. Utilize direct mail postcards with a landing page targeted for non-returning students, for example www.missioncollege.org/welcomeback or www.westvalley.edu/welcomeback, and create a checklist of things on the web site that a returning student needs to know to re-enroll. A large percentage of the non-returning students will still consider attending Mission College or West Valley College again. For many, the timing of their personal lives did not match the timing of Colleges.

Mission College

• Develop an early warning system to increase semester retention. Mission College needs to develop an early warning system to increase student retention. Typically, absences are a better indicator of retention than even grades since many students will not have a grade until midterm. A plan should be created that makes it easy for faculty to follow up or at least identify students who are not attending regularly or who are not completing work as assigned, and have student services follow up with the students. The system should be designed so that a personal contact is made with students that the faculty identify as at risk based on their attendance or work.

• Establish a faculty committee to develop ways to encourage connections between faculty – full-time and adjuncts – with the students in their classes. More than 80 percent of the non-returning students at Mission College did not have any connections with faculty outside of class. At other colleges, faculty invite students to meet with them over a brown bag lunch to explore topics outside of class, other faculty run study groups for students after class, and all faculty send an e-mail before the start of class welcoming their students for that semester. Explore ways that the faculty can better connect with their students. This has to be faculty-driven.

• Develop an internal marketing campaign aimed at the current students enrolled for their first semester who are not receiving financial aid. Students at Mission College were more likely to cite financial issues as a key reason they did not return to Mission College after a semester. Develop a targeted communication (direct mail and e-mail) urging them to contact the Financial Aid Office at Mission College and check out the funding available for them. This communication should occur within the first month after classes start for the semester. Since a majority of the non-returning students did not even apply for financial aid, this would be a way to encourage them to at least become involved in the process. The communication developed for them should also emphasize the other forms of aid available. For example, Mission College has several scholarships for returning students and this could be a major focus of the communication, as well as the book assistance and the short-term loans.
West Valley College

- **Expand the participation in the current early warning system.** West Valley College has an early warning system in place, but they do not have majority participation among the faculty at the College. If a faculty-based system does not have faculty participation, then the College really does not have an early warning system. Create a task force composed of faculty and student services personnel to find incentives for participation with the early warning system among full-time and part-time faculty at West Valley College. Discuss whether the system is easy to use and if it is not, develop new ways that faculty can alert student services to students who are at risk.

- **Create an internal marketing campaign aimed at the first-time students within one month of semester start to emphasize the services available (such as tutoring, math center, writing center, etc.) to assist them if they are having trouble academically with any class.** Non-returning students at West Valley College were more likely to cite an academic reason for not returning to the College. Use a variety of methods to market the services — feature in-class presentations of services available; have an all-College service fair in the Student Center; faculty and staff wear service buttons; and send direct mail and e-mail communications driving the students to a services landing page on the College’s web site that will detail the services. Do not wait until midterm for the marketing campaign.