

## BACKGROUND / ANALYSIS

### OVERVIEW

College of the Canyons has served more than **180,000** individual students since it opened in 1969. This year, more than **29,000** individual students signed up for classes at the college. They come in all ages, from all walks of life, and with varied educational backgrounds and educational goals. They trust College of the Canyons to meet their needs. Many of the students go on to four-year colleges and universities; others go directly into the workforce in a wide variety of careers: from nursing, to child development, to manufacturing technology, to computer networking, to multi-media, to film and entertainment, to public safety, to teaching and more. Others look to us to help them change careers or re-start higher education after an absence from the workforce. And, over a thousand high school students attend College of the Canyons each semester to get a head start on college. Our challenge and our obligation is to meet the need, and this has been our commitment for close to 37 years.

When the COC campus opened in 1971, the facilities were master planned to serve 5,000 students. Our enrollment has long since surpassed that number with last **spring 2006's enrollment at 18,429 and a projected fall 2006 enrollment approaching 19,000 students.**

While we have added facilities, and made the most of state and local funding, there is still severe overcrowding, and the need still exists to meet future demand so that the current and future students of the Santa Clarita Valley can meet their goals.

### BACKGROUND

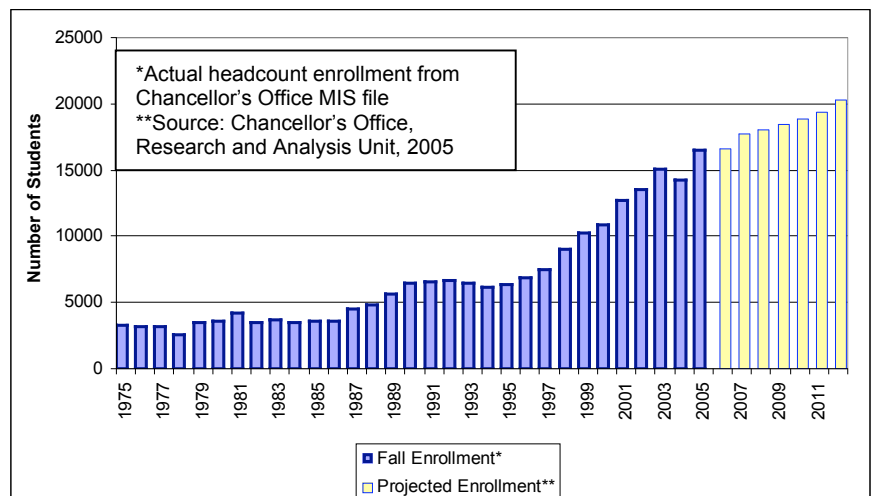
The District is projected to grow from 18,000+ students each semester to nearly 21,000 students in 2011.

However, as can be seen from the chart, we have already surpassed the states enrollment projections for 2009. This unusually rapid growth in enrollment is generated by a

combination of several factors.

- A large group of students known as the "baby boom echo," is currently making its way through the local elementary and secondary school districts that feed the Santa Clarita Community College District.
- The Santa Clarita Valley region is experiencing, and is likely to continue to experience, growth in terms of both population and employment. Growth has been most pronounced in the central and northern and eastern parts of the District, but other areas will also generate many students in coming years.
- Because of the 200+ training partnerships we have formed with many industry partners in our area, the Santa Clarita Community College District serves a greater percentage of adults than the average community college.
- Older working students are returning to community colleges in increasingly greater numbers for ongoing training and education.

Because of the high cost of higher education, more people are relying on community colleges for all or some of their education. Now, more than ever, we must invest in high quality, affordable, local college education.



Job market projections indicate that as we go forward, thousands of the jobs in L.A. County will require more education than a high school diploma, but not necessarily a bachelor's degree. That means the demand for access to community colleges will continue to increase.

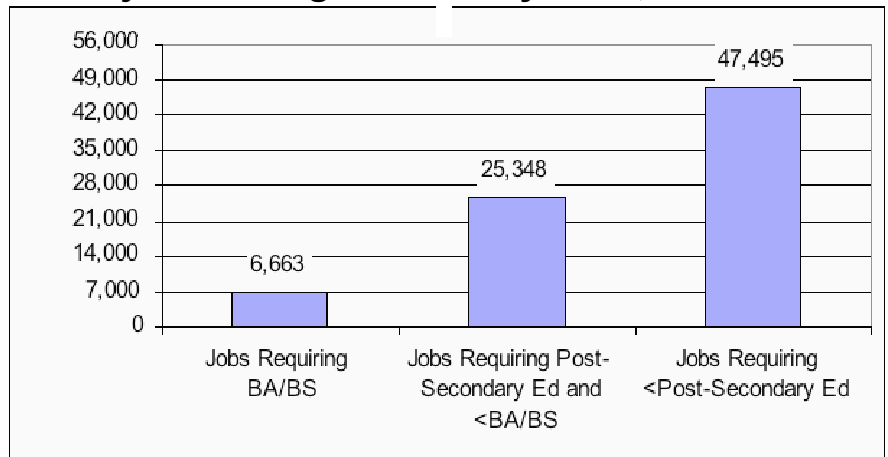
### How Does College of the Canyons Serve our Local Communities

College of the Canyons is an outstanding investment for this community's residents. As it strives to meet this

community's need for access to transfer education, job training, workforce preparation, and never-ending opportunities for improvement and progress, the college infuses millions of dollars into the local economy every year. The college listens to the community's requests, works flexibly with local businesses to meet their needs, and is dedicated to assisting every local student in meeting his or her goals.

- College of the Canyons leads all two-year colleges in LA County in preparing students for transfer to 4-year universities,
- More than a thousand high school students attend each year to get a head start on their college careers.
- It provides students with the skills needed to get jobs in well-paying career fields.
- Today, 60 percent of Wm. S. Hart HS district graduates attend COC upon graduation from high school.
- It provides top quality, local higher education at a fraction of the cost of CU or CSU systems, saving tax dollars and tuition funds.
- COC trains nurses, firefighters and law enforcement officers, who protect our community.
- The college boosts the local economy, providing employers with well-trained professionals.
- The College is a leader in bringing the arts and culture to the community
- The College serves specific population groups through special classes for seniors, local industry, and law enforcement personnel.
- In recent surveys, the community gives the college very high ratings in meeting community needs for higher education.

### Major Los Angeles County Jobs, 2002-12



### The Need for a GO Bond

The impact of growth is not new to the Santa Clarita Valley and College of the Canyons. With expected SCV population reaching nearly 280,000 by 2015 and a conservative estimate of student population of 21,000 in the same year, the College must continue to develop academic and professional programs to support the development of the local workforce and the transfer of our students to university level courses. The District's existing college facilities and interim centers are currently at capacity and cannot accommodate any additional students. A significant number of current students are already being served in temporary and leased facilities.

Due to the demand for access and tremendous increase in the student population, the College has already outgrown the master plan established in 2002. Hence, in the fall of 2005, the College and its various departments began a process to update that master plan and develop special recommendations to add/modify and modernize space to meet curriculum, access, and partnership demands to the year 2011 and beyond. The space needs have been identified with extensive input from the faculty of College of the Canyons. This updated Education and Facilities Master Plan, expected to be published in December 2006, identifies curriculum, programs, and services that will be expanded, added, and updated to further develop the College's mission of being a comprehensive community college designed

to enhance the transfer preparedness of our students and provide training for existing and emerging occupations.

Under current conditions many **students are unable** to pursue their academic and professional goals as planned. The following facts demonstrate the need for more space:

- 4,400 people applied to the college in 2005, but couldn't enroll. An additional 1,200 students are on waiting lists for required classes each semester. Some students are on waiting-lists for more than one class, so the waiting lists add up to more than 3,000 names. COC would need to add more than 300 class sections to serve these students, and there are no classroom spaces to do so.
- Closed courses are commonplace. Last semester 309 daytime and 75 nighttime classes completely filled during early registration, leaving no openings for new students.
- Sections cannot be added because there are no more rooms. In the last several years, course offerings in the evening have not increased because of shortage of space, preventing many students from getting the classes they need.
- The College is unable to offer enough gateway math and English courses because of lack of classrooms. We could fill at least a dozen more sections of these classes if space was available.
- With fewer-than-needed science labs, specific gateway courses such as anatomy and physiology, biology, and chemistry cannot be offered often enough. This creates a bottleneck for students pursuing nursing and science-based transfer programs, as well as for general education transfer students.
- Breadth of offerings is missing in many departments because of limited space. Departments must rotate classes, not offering them each term, which means many students need extra semesters to get all the courses they need.
- Many working adults are crowded out of night classes because more and more traditional college-age students fill those seats when they cannot find room to enroll in overcrowded daytime courses.
- Overall, 92 percent of students are enrolled in for-credit courses designed to prepare them to transfer to 4-year universities or obtain valuable professional skills.
- A GO bond will allow the College to develop the space, the facilities and the supporting infrastructure to add classes and create needed academic and professional programs.
- Despite the fact that COC has the highest transfer rate of any community college in Los Angeles County, without more classrooms, many of these students will continue to be on waiting lists for required courses.

## **Developing Facilities at College of the Canyons**

College of the Canyons has been very aggressive and persistent in accessing facilities funding from a variety of sources these past 18 years. Most of the funds that have been obtained were as a result of extensive planning, which enabled us to describe our specific space needs for running and developing new programs and housing new curricula. We have also been successful in accessing local funds to match state revenues and bringing money into our local community that would otherwise have been lost to other community college districts.

In order to meet the community's immediate and future needs, the District has established a history of diligent results-oriented planning. Our processes allow us to plan for the future and also to respond to and be as ready as we can for students when they come through our doors. As a result of this tradition of adhering to sound planning processes and our commitment to carry out our plans, the College District has exhibited responsible and responsive leadership in identifying and securing resources to meet our needs.

For many years, funding for college facilities has been provided through statewide resources, primarily statewide bond measures. But, state funding has not been able to keep up with the need, and there is

more than a billion dollar backlog in community college capital outlay requests at the State Chancellor's Office. The need to maintain fiscal stability, develop a long-term funding plan for equipment replacement, and develop a funding plan for building maintenance is a constant challenge.

College of the Canyons **has explored all options for funding facilities**. We have been aggressive, entrepreneurial, successful, and persistent. Our current campus exists because we have coupled state funding, local district funding partnerships, and local bond funds to get where we are today. Despite our progress, we are still behind and are using modular facilities to accommodate the ever-increasing numbers of students seeking access to our educational programs.

The District has carefully examined **every possible method to increase our space**, including the use of temporary or leased facilities, scheduling enhancements, technology-aided instruction and enhanced efficiency, but all of these approaches combined will still leave thousands of students un-served. In order to meet the District's mission of providing access to all interested students, additional resources will be required. The District has successfully pursued various options for increased funding such as private fundraising, partnerships and the passage in 2001 of our local bond Measure C.

Since that time, an analysis was completed to determine the current and future educational needs of the community and the related facilities projects that will be required to allow the District to continue providing excellent and affordable educational opportunities for our students and our community. Substantial additional funding will be required to complete the projects identified in the plan. Staff has consulted with experts in the areas of finance, bond options, and legal requirements to examine options to fund the Facilities Master Plan.

### **How the College Infrastructure and Local Residents will benefit from a Local Bond Measure**

The need for facilities described above is real and imminent. District staff believe that the November 2006 general election offers the best opportunity in the near future for passage of a bond. The District, with the assistance of its financial advisor, has prepared the documentation needed to initiate a Proposition 39 general obligation bond election. The Board's agenda materials include a resolution ordering an election that will enable us to expand our capacity:

- Making basic repairs such as plumbing, duct work, roofs, walls and floors will ensure that current facilities, many more than 30 years old, will be serviceable for quality programs long into the future.
- Many college buildings, classrooms and grounds must be improved to meet current earthquake, health, fire safety, security and disability access standards.
- The State under-funds basic maintenance and upkeep for wear and tear on classrooms and labs. Passage of a bond will make the college eligible for state maintenance funding. To get the state funds, the college must have money to provide a match.
- With a bond, College of the Canyons will qualify for millions of dollars in state matching funds for new construction. It is estimated that we could qualify for \$35 million from the state in the first 4 – 5 years of construction, and perhaps another \$35 million in later years, but only if local bond funds are available.
- COC needs more labs and improved technology to expand and add a variety of high-demand, well-paid, professional programs requiring technical expertise, such as advanced lab technicians, nursing, medical lab assistant, firefighting, paramedic, television and film, auto mechanic and science-related careers, as well, as needing the technology for English, math and basic academics.
- For the Canyon Country Educational Center to reach its potential and fully serve the needs of our community, permanent buildings must be constructed

### **Basic Bond Facts**

The following items describe the specifics of the bond measure, including those provisions that provide stringent accountability to the voters.

- It requires 55 percent voter approval
- The cost to property owners: \$9.86 annually per \$100,000 of assessed (not market) value
- It includes strict accountability provisions, with independent financial audits and a Citizens' Oversight Committee to ensure that every dollar is spent efficiently and only on identified projects
- No bond funds will be spent on administration
- All money will improve College of the Canyons—the state can't take a single dime
- All the money will be spent locally
- Local funds will enable us to secure \$35 to \$70 million at the state level

### **Summary**

The Santa Clarita Community College District needs to place a local bond measure on the ballot now. The evidence of need we currently are experiencing has been building for several years. More and more people of all ages are turning to College of the Canyons to meet their educational needs. And, with the costs of higher education rising everywhere except at community colleges (tuition will decrease in January 2007 from \$26 to \$20 per unit) demand for access will not decrease. Our track record of striving to develop, expand, and meet this community's needs is clear. And, the support for us doing so is there.

The bond measure includes only essential improvements/expansions/additions, and modernization. The plan presented is a frugal one designed to enhance the capacity to support instructional programs, support services, and expand access for local residents. There is no fat. While our need is \$\_\_\_\_\_, over \$\_\_\_\_\_ million, we are not proposing to ask for the maximum of \$25 per \$100,000 assessed valuation. Instead, we are recommending \$9.86 (estimated tax rate) per \$100,000 assessed valuation. That will generate \$160 million in local bond funds. We are confident that this level of revenue will enable us to leverage and secure additional state funds (Approximately \$70 million) to complete the build-out of the Valencia campus and make substantial progress (60% to finish) on the development of the Canyon Country Educational Center.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

**1. *It is recommended that the Santa Clarita Community College District Governing Board place a capital bond issue on the ballot.***

College of the Canyons has been a leader in seeking out and bringing resources to the College that are essential to providing the very best education possible. This is especially true where facilities are concerned. In addition to a variety of innovative projects funded by our existing budget, the College has been successful in securing State and Federal grants, foundation support, and funding from a variety of private sources to meet our growing facilities needs. As part of its plan to fund the College's Educational/Facility Master Plan, the Administration, staff and Governing Board have also been considering for several months the possibility of placing a bond measure on the ballot. The polling data indicates that College of the Canyons can pass a capital bond issue with a 55% majority.

**2. *It is recommended that the total maximum of bonds to be issued be set at \$160 million.***

This amount would allow the college to address many of the priority needs identified in its Educational/Facility Master Plan. **The funds can only be used to fund projects on the list and cannot be used for any other District purpose.** This level of bonding will result in an annual average tax rate during the life of the bonds of approximately \$9.86 (estimated tax rate) per \$100,000 of assessed valuation (not the market value).

**3. *It is recommended that the measure be placed on the November 7, 2006 ballot.***

Given the well documented and tremendous need for additional facilities already faced by the college and the projected demand for increased access over the next 10 years, it was concluded that time was of the essence to ensure that the demand for programs and services will continue to be met by seeking voter approval this November 7, 2006, of a College of the Canyons bond measure to fund these essential facilities improvements.