College of the Canyons

The *Call Center*

BUSINESS PLAN

"The *Call Center* -Answers -A Touch Tone Away"

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I. Executive Summary

"The *Call Center* - Answers - A Touch Tone Away"

Prior to the start of every new term, we receive countless phone inquiries daily. Many of those inquiries are frantic phone calls from students trying to figure out how to take care of business at College of the Canyons. During these peak times, chaos erupts, causing students to panic because they are unable to get their questions answered, which causes a high volume of student traffic to College of the Canyons where service hours to assist students have been reduced-the *Call Center* will have the answers.

Nature of the Project
The *Call Center* is being created to answer basic inquiries quickly. For those that need additional attention, the *Call Center* staff will refer those calls to the appropriate staff members on campus who can assist them. The *Call Center* will be staffed during heavy periods of phone traffic when average daily calls are at their peak, usually between 500 and 700 calls per day.

A resource manual and website will be created so that basic questions and answers will be available to all students, faculty, staff and community members, both at the *Call Center* and throughout both campuses. The manual will include a staff list to refer callers to someone with who can provide more detailed answers.

Target Market
Picture the majority of staff in student services and the switchboard operator working closely with students at entry counters throughout the campus during peak enrollment periods while the phones are "ringing off the hook" all around them. Imagine the frustration of those trying to call to get a quick answer to a simple question, only to be placed on hold or directed to someone who does not have the correct answer. The staff who answer phones often hear the same basic questions like: "What is my Student ID?" "How do I find my usemame and password?" "What time does Admissions & Records open?" "When and where do I pay my fees?"and "Where can I park my car when I get there?" This is our target market; callers with basic questions during peak enrollment periods.

Project Management
The *Call Center* will be staffed by one permanent staff member from Admissions & Records, whose job description already provides this task. This individual will have assistance from part-time staff during the peak calling times. Together they will answer basic inquiries and make appropriate referrals.

The *Call Center* staff will relieve other departments from constant phone calls, freeing them to concentrate on students' needs at their counters during the busiest times of the year. We expect this project could be implemented by fall 2010.

II. Mission and Vision

Mission Statement

The mission of the *Call Center* is to provide exceptional customer service by answering basic questions quickly and accurately for students, faculty, staff, and the community. The *Call Center* will disseminate the most current information available.

Vision Statement

The *Call Center* will operate year round providing a high level of customer service.

Objectives

Creating a *Call Center* would enable the college to function more effectively during peak registration periods and put callers in touch with a "live" person quickly.

The *Call Center* will complete the following objectives:

- **Objective One:** The *Call Center* will hire appropriate levels of staffing to answer callers' questions during the highest call volume periods when calls average 600 daily.

- **Objective Two:** A resource manual will be produced for all staff with the most frequently asked questions and answers from student services and the switchboard. The manual will be updated quarterly for *Call Center* staff to ensure the information is up to date and accurate.

- **Objective Three:** A staff referral list will be created so *Call Center* staff can refer more complex questions to appropriate student services staff across campus.

- **Objective Four:** A website will be created that includes the questions and answers from the resource manual. The website will be updated quarterly to ensure information is up to date and accurate.

Strengths

- Uses existing staff resources to coordinate the operation of the *Call Center*.

- Improves efficiency and increases customer service - the *Call Center* can help the college provide more accurate information faster.

- Reduces the number of incoming phone calls during peak periods interrupting staff in various offices on campus and at the switchboard.

- Reduces the number of student complaints because the switchboard operator cannot find an available staff member who can answer the call.

- Provides consistent and accurate information to callers by trained staff.

III. Action Priorities

Phase I -Call Center Startup- Fall 2010

1. Collect and analyze call data to determine staff schedules, hours of operation and staffing levels.

2. Secure appropriate resources to hire each staff member and provide them with a computer, phone, desk setup and wireless telephone headset.

3. Secure physical space for the call center. Room I08 in the Village has been identified as a possible location for this operation.

4. Create a website and resource manual that includes the most popular questions and answers from key student services departments and the switchboard. A list of student services staff who will receive phone referrals from the *Call Center* will be collected and included in the manual and on the website.

5. *Call Center* operations will be evaluated at the end of each peak emollment period. Adjustments to the operation and resource material will be made based on the evaluation.

Phase II - Year Round Call Center - Fall 2011

I. Based on the information collected during the first year, determine whether our staffing projections and periods of operation were accurate. Dependent on available funding, a new plan will be created to expand the *Call Center* function to one that operates year-round.

2. Questions and Answers from various student services departments will be reviewed and adjusted for accuracy and relevance to ensure the information being disseminated is the most current available.

3. The Website and the Resource Manual will be updated and redistributed across campus quarterly.

Projected Start-up Expenses

|	QUANTITY	COST PER EACH	TOTAL COST
Telephones	4	$219	$876
Telephone head sets	4	$114	$456
Desks	4	$800	$3,200
Chairs, ergonomic	4	$272	$1,088
Computers & Monitors	4	$890	$3,560
Misc. Office supplies			$100
Resource Manual	100	$3	$300
Website Creation		$1,200	$1,200
TOTAL			$10,780

IV. Market Analysis Summary

Overview of Student Demographics

Ethnic Breakdown: Fall 2009
With the large increase in students attending from outside of our district and as our community becomes more diverse, future *Call Center* analysis may indicate the need to hire bilingual call center staff.
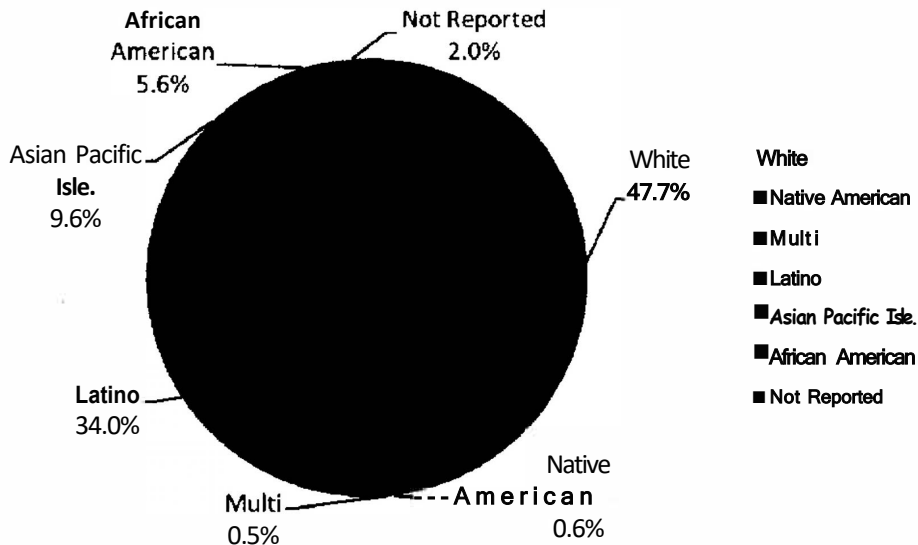
Residence of COC Students
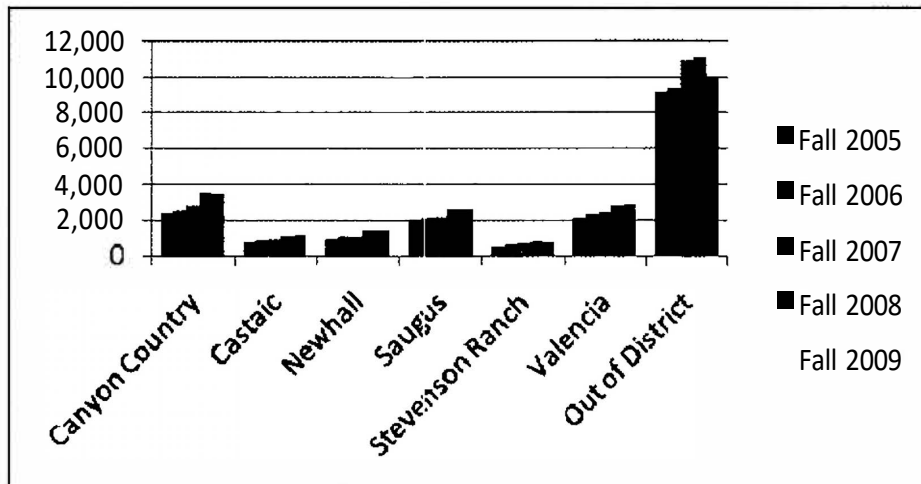
Age of COC Students

The current trend seems to indicate that the largest age group increases are occurring in ages 30-49. If this trend continues, an increase in number of *Call Center* staff will assist those students more comfortable talking to a person.
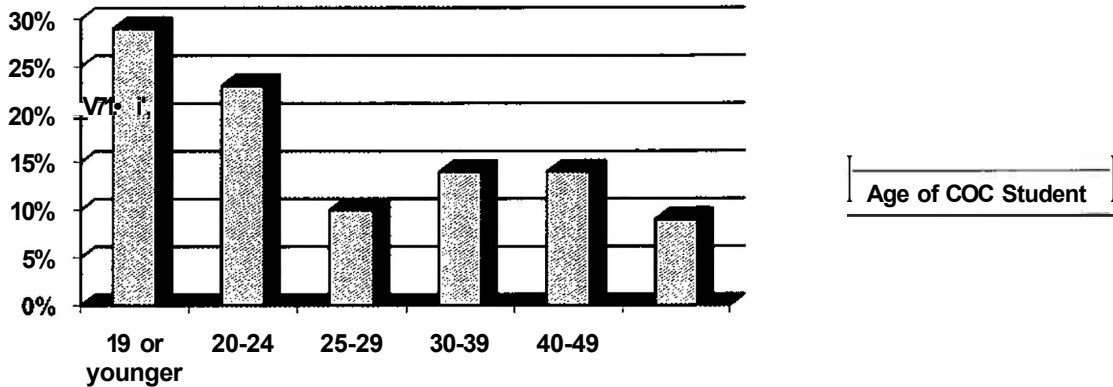
Total Fall Enrollment 1988-2009

Although total enrollment numbers appear to be dropping, annual admission application data indicates the number of students who applied last year to be around 39,000. This means that those potential students are still calling us to obtain information, but may not actually enroll.
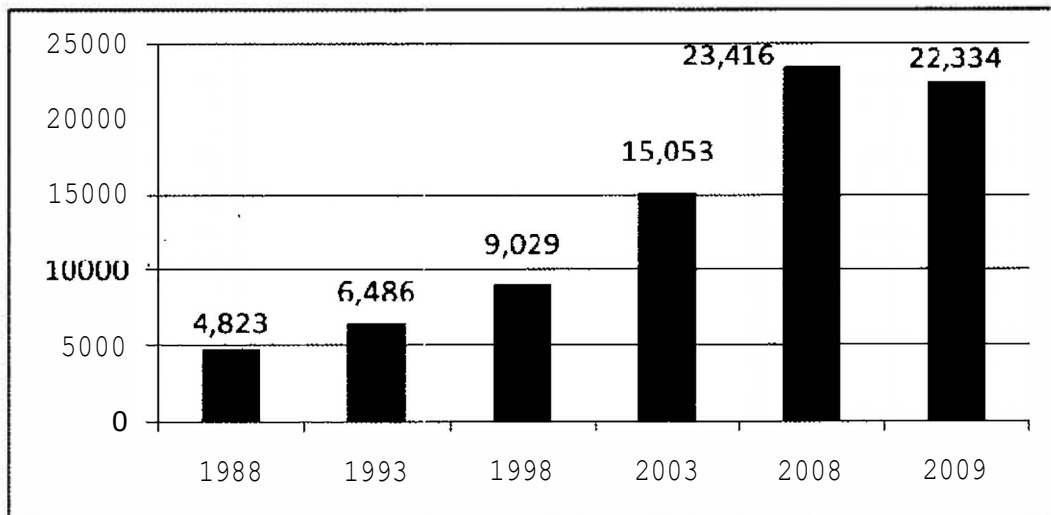
Phone Call Statistics Analysis

The statistics below were gathered using phone log data provided by Robert Betancourt and Admissions & Records. The period the phone log covers is from January to June 2009. Unfortunately, we do not have any data covering the time summer school starts and fall registration begins, which we believe are the busiest times of the year. Using the information we have, we have projected the average daily phone calls for the winter/spring period and the summer period as represented by the charts below.

High Volume Weeks - Winter/Spring					
Department	TERM	Week	DATE	Daily Total	Voice Mail
Admissions & Records	Winter 2009	Week 4	1/26/09	376	6
			1/27/09	290	62
			1/28/09	300	41
			1/29/09	295	19
			1/30/09	206	0
Total				1,467	128
Average Daily Calls				293.4	**25.6**
Department	TERM	Week	DATE	Call Total	Voice Mail
Admissions & Records	Winter 2009	Week 5	2/2/09	350	36
			2/3/09	428	53
			2/4/09	348	19
			2/5/09	363	**34**
			2/6/09	378	0
Total				1,867	142
Average Daily Calls				373.4	**28.4**
Department	TERM	Week	DATE	Call Total	Voice Mail
Admissions & Records	Spring 2009	Week 1	2/9/09	671	43
			2/10/09	353	17
			2/11/09	380	29
			2/12/09	172	32
			2/13/09	65	0
Total				1,641	121
Average Daily Calls				**328.2**	**24.2**

Department	TERM	Week	DATE	Call Total	Voice Mail
Admissions & Records	Spring 2009	Week 2	2/16/09	17	0
			2/17/09	336	43
			2/18/09	223	26
			2/19/09	189	29
			2/20/09	215	7
Total				980	105
Average Daily Calls				196	21

High Volume Weeks - Summer 2009					
Department	TERM	Week	DATE	Daily Total	Voice Mail
Admissions & Records	Summer 2009	Week 1	6/1/09	561	45
			6/2/09	896	55
			6/3/09	736	35
			6/4/09	511	99
			6/5/09	392	99
Total				3,096	333
Average Daily Calls				619.2	66.6
Department	TERM	Week	DATE	Daily Total	Voice Mail
Admissions & Records	Summer 2009	Week 2	6/8/09	508	122
			6/9/09	465	188
			6/10/09	427	113
			6/11/09	379	149
			6/12/09	362	143
Total				2,760	715
Average Daily Calls				552	143

Statistical Projections

The winter/spring projections are accurate data taken directly from the log. *The Summer projections are estimated using the average weekly calls for two weeks available and estimating them over the 12 week summer period. We believe these numbers are a conservative projection and that the actually calls will go up substantially as soon as the fall registration period begins in mid-July and will stay high through the first two weeks of the fall semester.

Winter/Spring Projections	
5995	(# of calls in 4 week period)
20 days	(4 wks x 5 days)
297.75	(average daily calls in 4 week period)

Summer Projections•	
35,136	(# of calls in 12 week period)*
60 days	(12 wks x 5 days)
585.6	(average daily calls in 12 weeks of summer)

Recommendation

Based on the information provided and the projections made using the phone statistics, we recommend that the *Call Center* be staffed for two distinct high volume periods. The first period encompasses the last two weeks of winter intersession and the first two weeks of the spring semester; this is a four week period of time. The second period begins the first week of the summer intersession and goes through the first two weeks of the fall semester; this is a twelve week period of time. These are the two busiest times for students trying to obtain information and service from the college, both on the phone and in person.

V. Marketing

<u>*Marketing Activities*</u>
- ***Call Center*** Website
- Advertise on all College Marquees
- Banners/Posters/Flyers posted throughout the campus
- Ad in spring and fall class schedules
- Advertising on Cougar News
- Email notification to campus community

<u>*Marketing Strategy*</u>
- Use of ***Call Center*** staff will provide consistent information and great customer service, rather than using an automated voice operating system or voice mail system.
- The Main Phone message will direct callers to the ***Call Center.***
- The Website will provide answers to all staff across campus so they can assist callers.

Projected Marketing Budget

ITEM	QUANTITY	COST	ANNUAL TOTAL
Advertising	2	$200	$400
Banners/Flyers	20	$3	$60
Posters	3	$109	$109
Reference Manual	100	$3	$300
Website Maintenance	1	$300	$300
Total Cost Annually			$1,169

VI. Personnel

Monitoring and Evaluating Services

A Student Services Technician I from the Admissions & Records office will oversee *Call Center* operations during both enrollment periods, spring and fall respectively. This includes website content updates, electronic correspondence, incoming and outgoing telephone calls and written correspondence. When working in the *Call Center,* this person will supervise the workload of three additional part time staff, who will all answer the phones and provide accurate answers to caller questions. In the evenings, administrative oversight for part time staff will fall under the Director of Admissions & Records, Jasmine Ruys, who works until 7:00 p.m. every evening. During the times the full time staff member dedicated to the *Call Center* is sick or on vacation, another Admissions & Records staff member will fill in to ensure the *Call Center* is functioning properly at all times.

Personnel Budget

NAME	START DATE (START OF FALL 2010)	END DATE (END FALL 2010)	BUDGET	MANAGER/ SUPERVISOR	DEPT.
Student Services Tech. I*	*7101110*	6/30/11	$0*	Jasmine Ruys	Admission &Records
10 College Assistants	7/01/10	6/30/11	$33,600	Student Services Tech. I	Student Services
TOTAL:			$33,600		

*The Permanent Staff member salary of $71,868 is already being paid by District funds.

Student Services Technician I
Range 38, Step 7, $5,989.00/month, **$71,868 yearly.** This salary is already being paid by the District, so there is no additional cost.

College Assistant
Range 5 - Hourly rate of $10.50 per hour - $33,600
($10.50 per hour x 10 part-time hourly workers @ 20 hrs. per week for 16 weeks = $33,600)

Source: Current COC Salary Schedule A (Adult Hourly) and I (College Assistant).

Recommendation

The Personnel budget is based on the hours of operation for the *Call Center,* which will be Monday through Friday, 8am to 7pm. The LEAP committee envisions a full time person (working 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.) with three college assistants working four hour shifts throughout the day. In the evening, there will be four college assistants, supervised by the Director of Admissions & Records from 4:45 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. This means a total of 10 college assistants working different shifts to cover the operating hours as illustrated by the following table. If the funds to operate this level of service cannot be acquired, there are other options.

Hours of Operation

Employee Classification	Work hours	Hour Per Day	Operating Hours **Monday - Friday**	# of people on during operating hours
Std. Serv. Tech. I, Supervisor	7:45-4:45 (12-1)	8.0 hrs. (Lunch)	8:00 a.m. - 7:00 p.m.	
3 College Assistants	7:45-11:45	4.0 hrs.	8:00-11:30	3 + supervisor
3 College Assistants	11:30-3:30 p.m.	4.0 hrs.	11:30- 3:30	3 + supervisor
4 College Assistants	3:00-7:00	4.0 hrs.	3:00- 7:00	4 + supervisor

Option One

Option one is the optimal service hours outlined above. It provides the best coverage during the times other offices are closed; there will be four people answering phones all day long.

Option Two

Option two would accommodate the same hours above and the student services offices that are benefiting by the *Call Center* service could donate some or all of the money to operate the *Call Center* out of existing part-time staff budgets.

Option Three

Option three would be to reduce the number of college assistants from two shifts of three college assistants and one shift of four college assistants to two shifts of two college assistants and one shift of three college assistants. This would make it more difficult for the *Call Center* to answer all calls during operating hours; however, it would save the District $10,080 annually.

Option Four

Option Four would be to reduce the operating hours so that they mirror the Admissions & Records Office operating hours of 10:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m., Monday through Thursday, and 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. on Friday. This would reduce the hours of college assistants to 16 hours per week for a total cost of $26,880, saving the College $6,720 annually. However, this option will not help callers when Admissions & Records is closed and those are the times when the *Call Center* is needed most.

VII. Project Management Summary

Management

Management of this project will fall under the Admissions, Records and Online Services department.

Staffing

The *Call Center* will be staffed by one permanent staff member, a Student Services Technician I, from Admissions, Records and Online Services, who is already assigned this task in their job description, with assistance from three to four part-time staff per shift during the peak calling times during the day.

Peak Periods for staffing the *Call Center* will be: Period One: the two weeks prior to the start of the spring term and then the following two weeks (4 weeks) .and, Period Two: The first week of summer school through the second week of the fall semester (12 weeks).

Support from Other Departments
- Coordination will occur with high call volume student service departments, the switchboard staff, PIO, computer support, telecommunications, facilities and campus safety offices will be essential in keeping the *Call Center* running efficiently.

- Funding could be secured from other student services departments' part-time staff budgets to assist in funding adult hourly staffing for the *Call Center.*

Call Center StaffSkills Requirements
- High level customer services skills and experience.
- Heavy telephone volume experience
- Accurate spelling skills and attention to detail is critical and vital in this assignment.
- Must be able to work well with the public.
- The ability to work effectively and demonstrate a current working use of computer systems in a Windows environment.
- Must have the ability to work with distractions.
- *Call Center* software skills a plus

Managing o(Daily Operations

Under the direction of the Director of Admissions & Records, the Student Services Technician I will manage the daily operations, record keeping, monitoring of work schedules, hours of operation and staffing levels.

Timeline

If budget can be secured, the implementation could take place in fall 2010.