

APPENDIX C

ON-CAMPUS FOCUS GROUPS AND COMMUNITY FORUMS



VENTURA COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT
Market Assessment and Organizational Performance Review

ON-CAMPUS FOCUS GROUPS AND COMMUNITY FORUMS

Appendix C presents an overview of the focus group participants; describes the focus group process; and presents an overview of the focus group findings, including summary reports of the focus groups and focus group concerns. KH conducted two kinds of focus groups:

- On-campus focus groups with faculty, classified staff, and classified supervisors
- Community leadership forums.

ON-CAMPUS FOCUS GROUPS

KH conducted 20 confidential focus groups with 190 VCCCD stakeholders at the three Colleges and the District Administrative Center. These stakeholders, representing students, faculty, classified staff, and classified supervisors also completed a confidential questionnaire. Exhibit C-1 displays how the focus groups were selected, by stakeholder group and College/District Office.

EXHIBIT C-1: FOCUS GROUPS BY STAKEHOLDER TYPE AND LOCATION

STAKEHOLDER GROUP	NUMBER OF FOCUS GROUPS	NUMBER PER JOB CLASSIFICATION	SELECTION METHOD
Moorpark College – June 7, 2005			
Faculty	3	32	All
Classified Staff	2	34	All
Students	1	5	All
Ventura College – June 8, 2005			
Faculty	3	32	All
Classified Staff	2	25	All
Students	1	12	All
Oxnard College – June 9, 2005			
Faculty	2 (3 were offered; 2 were attended)	8	All
Classified Staff	2	15	All
Students	1	2	All
District Office – June 14, 2005			
Classified Staff	2	13	All
MC, OC, VC, and DAC Classified Supervisors	1	13	All
TOTAL	20	190	

EXHIBIT C-2: FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPATION

FOCUS GROUP LOCATION	NUMBER OF FOCUS GROUPS	NUMBER/PERCENT OF PARTICIPANTS	
Moorpark College	6	71	37%
Ventura College	6	68	36%
Oxnard College	5	25	13%
District Administrative Center	3	26	14%
TOTAL	20	190	100%

ON-CAMPUS FOCUS GROUP PROCESS

Focus Groups were held during a contentious time in the District. Budget cuts had resulted in the lay off of several VCCCD employees and the cutting of a number of programs and services. Although the responses of focus group participants were obviously affected by these recent issues, discussions were candid and in general constructive.

The focus group process entailed these steps:

- 1) Participants completed the confidential questionnaire, displayed as Exhibit D-5.
- 2) Participants reviewed a list of 26 topics (identified by KH from the online survey results) and selected the 3-5 topics of most interest to them.
- 3) The focus group facilitator tallied the selections to obtain the five topics of most interest to the group overall. The group then discussed these topics. More than five topics were chosen and discussed in some sessions to reflect the interests of the focus group.
- 4) In preparation for the discussion of each topic, participants wrote brief comments on Post-it notes that were placed on a flip chart for each topic. 482 individual comments were collected and some are anonymously presented to portray issues.
- 5) The facilitator read the comments out loud as a point of departure for the discussion.
- 6) The facilitator wrote summary comments of the discussion.

The topics discussed are listed in order of the number of focus groups in which they were discussed in Exhibit C-3:

EXHIBIT C-3: FREQUENCY OF FOCUS GROUP TOPICS DISCUSSED, BY LOCATION

DISCUSSION TOPIC	TIMES DISCUSSED AT:										TOTAL NUMBER OF TIMES DISCUSSED	
	Moorpark College			Ventura College			Oxnard College			DAC		
	F	C	S	F	C	S	F	C	S	C		CS
Budget and Budgeting Process	2	2	1	1	2	1	2	2	1	1	1	16
College and District Relations	3	2		3	2			1	1	2	1	15
Community Relations, Reputation, Public Image	2	2		3	2		1	2		1	1	14
Enrollment Management	2	1	1	2			1	1	1	1	1	11
Food Services	1	1	1	3	2	1			1			10
Marketing	3	1	1	1	1			2				9
Participatory Governance and Decision-Making	2			3	1		2	1				9
Board of Trustees	1			2	1				1	1		6
Student Services		1		1		1	1	1	1			6
College and District Organizational Structure	1	2								1	1	5
District Administrative Center Management and Operations		1		1						2	1	5
Instruction and Curriculum			1	1		1	2					5
Condition, Appearance, Maintenance of Grounds and Buildings					2			1				3
Counseling			1			1		1				3
Human Resources (Staff Development, Performance Evaluation, etc.)								1		1	1	3
Strategic Directions and Mission		1		1	1							3
Student Newspaper			1	1					1			3
Administrative and Instructional Information Technology	2											2
Athletic Programs					1							1
Business Office/Administrative Functions and Services										1		1
Distance Learning Technology and Curriculum	1											1
Fundraising and Foundation						1						1
Bookstore Operations												0
Campus Security												0
Libraries												0
Student Government												0

Legend: MC – Moorpark College DAC – District Administrative Center F – Faculty S – Students
 VC – Ventura College OC – Oxnard College C – Classified

ON-CAMPUS FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONNAIRE

Participants in each focus group session were asked to complete a questionnaire concerning the 26 topics of greatest concern on the online survey and presented as possibilities for discussion in the focus groups. 164 of the 190 focus group participants completed the survey. Exhibit C-4 shows the breakdown of participants by focus group location.

EXHIBIT C-4: FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONNAIRE PARTICIPANTS BY LOCATION

FOCUS GROUP LOCATION	RESPONSE TOTAL	RESPONSE PERCENT
Moorpark College (June 7, 2005)	67	40.9%
Ventura College (June 8, 2005)	54	32.9%
Oxnard College (June 9, 2005)	22	13.4%
District Administrative Center (June 14, 2005)	21	12.8%
TOTAL	164	

Exhibit C-5 shows the breakdown of participants by job classification

EXHIBIT C-5: FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONNAIRE PARTICIPANTS BY JOB CLASSIFICATION

CLASSIFICATION	RESPONSE TOTAL	RESPONSE PERCENT
Classified Staff	85	52.1%
Classified Supervisor	15	9.2%
Faculty	63	38.7%
TOTAL	163	

One person skipped this question.

Focus group participants were asked to rate the urgency of addressing the issues listed in Exhibit C-6. These topics are those that stood out as pertinent issues in the online survey and were offered as topics for discussion in each focus group session. In Exhibit C-6:

- 1 = a strong urgency and need to address a topic in the next academic year
- 2 = a need to address issues related to the topic by the 2006-2007 academic year
- 3 = addressing issues related to the topic can wait until the 2007-2008 academic year.

Participants were also given the option to choose N/A, indicating they had no opinion about the urgency of the issue.

EXHIBIT C-6: PERCEPTIONS OF URGENCY

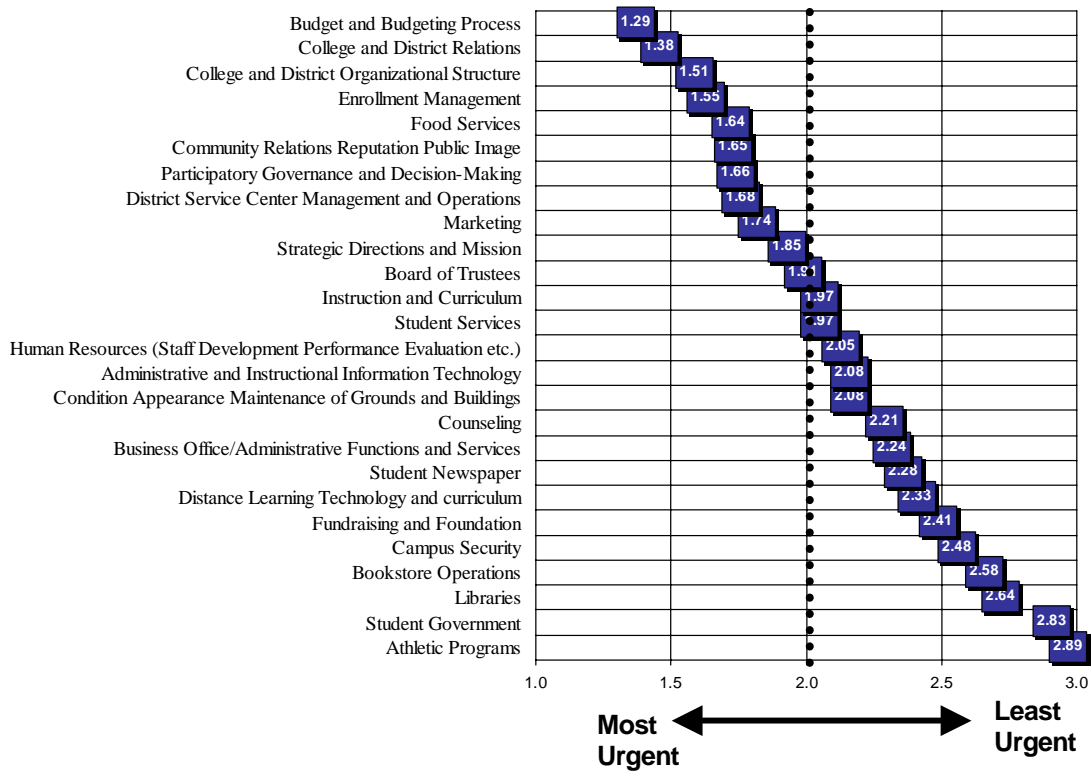


EXHIBIT C- 7: URGENCY OF ADDRESSING TOPIC ISSUES

TOPIC	URGENT			NOT URGENT	N/A
	1 (2005 – 06)	2 (2006-07)	3 (2007 – 08)		
Budget and Budgeting Process	128	20	9	3	
College and District Relations	119	27	8	6	
College and District Organizational Structure	103	27	20	4	
Enrollment Management	99	34	15	7	
Food Services	92	36	23	6	
Community Relations Reputation Public Image	85	40	24	4	
Participatory Governance and Decision-Making	92	36	14	13	
District Administrative Center Management and Operations	84	47	18	8	
Marketing	77	50	17	10	
Strategic Directions and Mission	62	57	23	8	
Board of Trustees	72	39	26	16	
Instruction and Curriculum	54	64	26	12	
Student Services	55	57	26	12	
Human Resources (Staff Development Performance Evaluation etc.)	47	60	40	7	
Administrative and Instructional Information Technology	47	54	41	9	
Condition Appearance Maintenance of Grounds and Buildings	43	70	33	11	
Counseling	37	62	41	14	
Business Office/Administrative Functions and Services	32	65	48	11	
Student Newspaper	48	39	46	23	

ON-CAMPUS FOCUS GROUP FINDINGS

Following is an overview of the focus group discussions. The discussion topics listed in Exhibit C-3 are further dissected to illustrate agreement across stakeholder groups as well as differences by location or group.

Budget and Budgeting Process

Focus group participants feel that the DAC does not communicate budget information to the Colleges provoking a lack of trust concerning the District budgeting process and an impression of secrecy. Participants feeling that there is a lack of accountability for those who manage the budget and the lack of written procedures amplify this perception. Budgeting is reactive rather than proactive and lacks foresightedness. The budget allocation model is not used properly and is used as a “weapon” by the District to pit the three Colleges against one another. Participants resent the recent budget cuts and the manner in which they were presented. Following are specific phrases used by focus group participants to express their opinions about this topic:

“More concerned with cutting expenses than ensuring academic integrity”

“Budget process is a mystery and not communicated to staff”

“What budget process?”

“The District needs to not take from one College and give to others. It creates conflict.”

“Each of the three Colleges should be accountable for their own budget, programs, and enrollment. They should not build programs they can’t afford.”

Overall¹

- Management gamesmanship
- Numbers keep changing
- Errors
- Lack of far-sightedness; only quick fixes (e.g., golden handshake, summer courses cut, etc.)
- Reactive, not proactive
- Lack of accountability; need internal analysis of spending; no checks and balances
- District management should lobby for funding
- Lack of written procedure
- Large part of budget goes to salaries
- Need fiscal responsibility/accountability
- Allocation model is lopsided; “pits Colleges against one another.”; used as weapon by District against Colleges

¹ “Overall” does not refer simply to all discussion groups, but does refer to all groups who chose each particular discussion topic. This is consistent throughout this summary section.

- Classified is hit first and hardest with budget cuts
- The Board needs to set VCCCD mission and direction to inform budget decisions
- There is secrecy at District level
- Questionable spending (i.e., spending for employee “perks”; wasting grant money)
- Lack of trust between the Colleges and DAC concerning the budget
- Lack of communication between DAC and Colleges concerning the budget
- Lack of staff development
- Budget is planning for the worst case scenario
- Need transparency
- Need to examine Administration – Faculty ratio; 75%-25% compliance
- Cuts were not made uniformly
- Losing important staff, courses, and counselors

Unique to Moorpark College Classified

- Moorpark College subsidizes other Colleges who should live within their means
- Ventura College and Oxnard College have a greater number of Classified Staff than Moorpark College, but Moorpark College has more staff than either Ventura College or Oxnard College.
- The resource allocation model would work if it were followed correctly or if it were used at all.
- Bumping positions causes disruptions
- Classified staff has to cover PERS now
- District should pay their own insurance premiums
- There’s not enough money coming through to use the allocation model
- Need to diversify funding sources

Unique to Moorpark College Faculty

- Need financial accountability of other Colleges – tired of “subsidizing” Oxnard College
- Board of Trustees = rubber stamp
- Don’t “screw” with retirees
- Money is spent on assumptions; planning for the worst
- “Historically [the District] pours money down rat holes.” (i.e., excessive legal fees)

Unique to Moorpark College Students

- Include marketing function in the curriculum of business courses; use students as a resource to recruit; recruiting internships with reporting and feedback from high schools

Unique to Ventura College Students

- The Union is not effective
- Cap salaries and benefits
- Santa Paula should be expanded, not cut
- Students are used as “pawns”; “held hostage”

Unique to Ventura College Classified

- Information and answers change according to the audience (i.e., yes to administration staff/no to classified staff)
- Why does Oxnard College have as many managers as Ventura College and Moorpark College?
- Need to bridge fundraising and budget processes
- Concerned that an extra 14% taken for retiree benefits
- Professional experts require dollars that are needed elsewhere

District Administrative Center and College Relations

The majority of focus groups chose to combine several discussion topics into one comprehensive topic most often entitled– “District”. Those topics combined to create the “District” topic include College and District organizational structure, management, and operations. Further, College and District Relations was discussed by itself in some groups, but the remainder of the discussion topics in this section were never discussed without being combined with College and District Relations.

Discussion participants see the lack of communication between DAC management and the Colleges as a primary concern and assert that this gap in communication is the root cause of most if not all the issues plaguing VCCCD. Input from College faculty and staff is not encouraged and in fact some employees are fearful of voicing their opinions for fear of reprisal. The DAC is perceived to be out of touch with the Colleges and creates roadblocks with cumbersome procedures that impede progress. The lack of written policies and procedures is a major concern and is linked to the need for accountability throughout the District, especially with District Management, and particularly in the realm of Human Resources where discussants feel management is particularly top-heavy. Finally, discussion of divorcing the District came up in several focus groups.

Concerning the relationship between Colleges, focus group participants feel that there is an unhealthy adversarial competitiveness, often blaming District management for encouraging such behavior (i.e., unbalanced budget allocation). It is widely held that the District treats the Colleges like “triplets” when they should be treated “like sisters”, citing that they are each so unique. In several discussions, it was suggested that the District and Colleges should recognize, celebrate, and market their unique qualities for success, rather than using differences as tools of blame and excuse. Following are specific phrases used by focus group participants to express their opinions about this topic:

“The District Office is overblown, over-staffed, and over-funded. The individual Colleges should be more independent, self-sustaining, and self-governing.”

“Centralization does not work. Keep the positions on campus.”

“District Office does not take College cycles into consideration when scheduling meetings, mailings, etc.”

“Duplication of effort between DAC and campuses causes conflict.”

“The Colleges’ seem to work against each other in that they each do not promote the unique programs that are at one of the Colleges (i.e., Fire Tech at Oxnard College, EAT at Moorpark College, Machine Tech at Ventura College).”

“... we seem to be competing against each other rather than seeing us all on the same team.”

“...the budget allocation process that makes us feel we need to fight for the few dollars that the administration/BOT has given us.”

“District has an inability to affectively communicate or develop confidence with staff.”

“I believe managers do not want to be held accountable.”

“The three Colleges are forced to be either adversarial or to lose their autonomy by being treated ‘as one’.”

“Lack of communication illustrated by [the fact that] P/T did not get a [hard] copy [of the online survey] in [their] mailbox, and [it was scheduled] when most staff is gone.”

“DAC should be the facilitator of us getting our jobs done, NOT putting up the roadblocks in getting anything done.”

“Procedures are chaotic. Uniform procedures should be developed and available online.”

“D.O. hasn’t any idea what happens on campuses.”

“The District is run like an autocracy rather than a democracy.”

Overall

- “Chaos reigns”
- Lack of communication
- District decisions are made without input from Colleges; democracy vs. dictatorship; decisions made in a vacuum; District decisions are made without forethought
- Inconsistent policies and procedures and lack of written procedures and policies
- Hiring procedures are unclear
- Duplication of effort
- Lack of commitment
- District is reactive; not proactive/ District managers don’t manage
- No accountability for District Management

- Lack of mutual respect – management/faculty; between Colleges and DAC
 - Moorpark College = “Prima Donna”
 - Oxnard College = “Step Child”
 - Ventura College = “Good Ole’ Boys”
- Lack of training
- Personnel Commission is antiquated, ineffective, and “double-dipping”
- Human Resources needs an overhaul; too many District HR managers
- Human Resources decisions are made without input
- Speaking up makes you a target for threats
- District is not in touch with and does not understand the campuses at all
- District creates “road blocks”; “black hole”
- DAC has lost the recognition of their SERVICE role in VCCCD
- Colleges would like to see District Management on the campuses more
- District does not take College cycles into consideration when scheduling meetings, mailings, etc.
- Autocratic rule
- District Management’s vision is not clear to VCCCD employees
- Top-down decision-making
- Top-heavy; too many District managers (HR especially)
- District Management salaries are too high
- DAC micromanages
- Unhealthy competitiveness between Colleges
- The Colleges are very different (community served, operation, etc.)
- District and Colleges are territorial
- Need email for part-time
- Allocation model causes jealousy/adversarial relationship between Colleges
- Want to divorce from District
- Cumbersome paperwork that creates barricades to progress
- Chancellor sets the tone for the District
- Pertinent stakeholders are often left out of decision-making processes (Child Development Center not included in Bond measure, Classified Supervisors not included in management meetings, etc.)

Unique to Moorpark College

- Too many administrators at Oxnard College/not enough at Moorpark College

Unique to Moorpark College Classified

- Moorpark College can stand alone
- Moorpark College has to pay for the other Colleges to implement programs and services that are pioneered at Moorpark College
- Grades are not posted on time
- Would like Board structure to change to USC Board of regents structure
- Oxnard College should be a satellite of Ventura College or Moorpark College
- VCCCD needs an in-house attorney
- Does the District qualify as a Hispanic serving district? – If so it can pursue more funding

Unique to Moorpark College Faculty

- The mix of disciplines in Moorpark College’s organizational structure leaves some Deans and Chairs stretched too thin
- Need to collaborate with other Colleges – do it with multimedia
- Lack of respect of VCCCD programs – cuts; ESL at Moorpark College
- Attitude that Faculty are the problem: Chancellor vs. Faculty
- “Let Moorpark College be Moorpark College”
- Centers of Excellence

Unique to Ventura College Faculty

- District Office is like a 4th campus
- District Office should cover costs of retirees

Unique to Ventura College Classified

- DAC management and staff don’t see students as their concern

Unique to Oxnard College Faculty

- Division Chairs and Deans are the hardest working managers
- Division Chairs and Deans help the College the most

Unique to Oxnard College Classified

- Need cross-training

Community Relations, Public Image, and Marketing

This section combines several discussion topics gleaned from the online survey: Community Relations, Reputation, and Public Image and Marketing. These topics have been combined to reflect their occurrence in the focus groups. The majority of focus groups who chose these topics also chose to combine them in their discussions.

Discussants agree that the District and the Colleges need to develop an outreach plan built on a creative and collaborative effort between programs, departments, the Colleges, and the District. There is strong agreement that the Colleges need to market and build programs that reflect community needs, including business and industry needs. In addition, discussants agree that “bad press” has hurt the District as a whole and that there needs to be a focus on the positive. Following are specific phrases used by focus group participants to express their opinions about this topic:

“The College needs to honestly look at and accept the programs that the community appreciates from our College.”

“Get the community on campus by ‘marketing’.”

Overall

- Need to market strong academic programs
- Need a broad outreach to K-12
- Fight junior College stigma
- Need to challenge negative press by focusing on the positive
- Need to understand external needs, i.e., find out what programs that businesses need for employee training and then offer those programs; provide an annual VCCCD report to share with businesses
- Reach out to the entire community
- Need an outreach plan and coordination
- Need better communication/coordination between departments to enhance outreach efforts
- Distance Education
- Negative press because of outfall from District issues
- There's growing competition
- Need to survey students on how they feel their College is doing
- Market collectively; more cost effective; shows District strength
- Celebrate differences between Colleges

Unique to Moorpark College

- Moorpark College has a good reputation
- Moorpark College is seen as ONLY a transfer College
- East County vs. West County
- Need to market for whole student

Unique to Moorpark College Classified

- Moorpark is a growth area
- Lack of focus on Community Education
- Benefits of ACCESS

Unique to Moorpark College Faculty

- Need to beef up Vocational Ed. Program
- Market to older students
- Banner waiting lists

Unique to Moorpark College Students

- Have an open-house for high school students
- Simplify

Unique to Ventura College Faculty

- Deans do not know anything about marketing
- Need to provide the feeling of going away to College; dorms
- Present a "College going through change" properly

Unique to Ventura College Classified

- Community wants to help by donating money, but College can't respond because processes are not in place to address these situations
- Faculty and staff are using the media to bash the District, rather than to build it up
- Would like to organize a campus clean-up
- Ventura College does not market itself well
- Use financial aid for ads and marketing

Unique to Oxnard College Classified

- Need annual recruiting event
- Oxnard College doesn't take advantage of recruiting opportunities at community events on campus (were no class schedules available for visitors at the multi-cultural day event; no advertising at on campus swap meets)
- Need international marketing
- Need to improve website; not user friendly
- PASS program will start this year
- Have cut graphic artist position
- Have negative image in local high schools
- Oxnard College is associated with Oxnard area gang injunctions
- Demographics are changing so need to change marketing outlook
- Need one District budget for advertising
- Grounds not inviting
- Should market by program, not College
- Oxnard College can't be all things to all people; needs to pick an appropriate direction

Enrollment Management

Discussants were not aware of any consistent enrollment management efforts at their Colleges, and often had little understanding of the concept citing it as a tool used for cutting classes and programs. KH presented an explanation of enrollment management and FTES/WSCH to many of the groups who did not understand the process. After discussing the process, most participants advocated the implementation of an enrollment management strategy at their College. Following are specific phrases used by focus group participants to express their opinions about this topic:

“More core classes – less ‘feel good’ classes”

“Some low-enrollment classes are more than just numbers”

Overall

- There isn't any enrollment management; random
- Enrollment Management = cutting classes
- Top-down decisions
- What is enrollment management?

- Schedules are made according to the convenience of faculty; Faculty has taken a 9-1, Mon-Thurs schedule
- Diluting numbers by adding too many sections
- Programs not consistent across disciplines

Unique to Moorpark College Classified

- Not just numbers
- Need a strategic College wide discussion
- Lack of reciprocity in offering classes – Moorpark College journalism professor travels to Ventura College and Oxnard College to offer courses; Ventura College and Oxnard College do not send ESL professor to Moorpark College to offer courses
- Classified throughout District can take courses toward a degree, but management will not let them take the time off to do so

Unique to Moorpark College Faculty

- Loss of overflow from CSUN
- Some low enrollment courses have more value than just numbers
- Nursing – lab overload; no online classes
- Students can't talk to counselors until they are enrolled
- Lack of market analysis
- Vocational ed. – Renew skills; can't retake classes
- Students dislike Friday classes
- Whose job is it?
- Lack of reporting mechanisms

Unique to Moorpark College Students

- Cutting non-transferable courses will take away the back bone of programs

Unique to Oxnard College Classified

- Classes are cancelled without notifying Admissions and Registration
- Staff doesn't know location of off campus classes
- A student survey is in progress
- Students foresee that Oxnard College will close their classes and so they just go to Moorpark College or Ventura College

Food Services

Focus group participants felt that the long-term implications of closing the cafeterias were not considered, including the possibility of losing students who depend solely on the cafeteria services for their meals. The cafeterias are seen as an important component of student life, especially for those who stay on campus.

Overall

- Long-term implications not being considered
- Lack of planning

- Students are upset
- Contract out food services; Union problems
- All College's think that their respective cafeterias were making money

Unique to College Students

- Rather cut food services than courses and programs
- Have food stands (i.e., "Food for Thought")

Unique to Moorpark College Classified

- District purchasing process
- Provide service on a limited basis

Unique to Moorpark College Students

- Hours and decisions need to be communicated
- Loss of jobs for International Students

Unique to Ventura College Students

- Need to be better run
- Need to be cleaner
- Students have dropped out because of cafeteria closing
- Need a snack bar/lounge at Santa Paula campus

Unique to Ventura College Classified

- Used as a Union negotiating issue
- Closed in a sneaky way

Participatory/Shared Governance and Decision-Making

Focus group participants do not feel that there is "true" shared governance in the District. The Board of Trustees and District and College management make decisions without input from faculty and staff, when faculty and staff should be involved at all levels of decision-making. Following are specific phrases used by focus group participants to express their opinions about this topic:

"We get decrees – not discussion."

"Administration does not value the opinions and suggestions of its employees. 'Shared governance' does not exist."

"We need to participate in decisions. The DAC does not understand instruction – they only understand business. They (DAC) do not take shared governance seriously."

“Decision to abandon shared governance at the District level has filtered down to lack of shared governance on campus.”

Overall

- Lip service to governance
- Faculty and staff should be involved at all levels
- Lack of follow-up at College and District level
- Lack of understanding of shared governance
- Deans on gag order

Unique to Moorpark College Faculty

- Follows a corporate model rather than a collegiate model

Unique to Ventura College Classified

- Ventura College Classified Senate is strong and well-respected on campus

Unique to Ventura College Faculty

- Community offended by cuts
- Unfunded liabilities at Ventura College, but other CCD's set 1% aside
- Governance works at Ventura College; Deans consult and get input

Unique to Oxnard College Classified

- Union gets in the way; political warfare

Board of Trustees

Discussants perceive that Board members are not qualified for their positions and that they are disconnected from the Colleges, students, and the community. There is disagreement as to whether the Chancellor acts at the whim of the Board of Trustees, or vice versus, but one of the two scenarios was presented in each discussion of this topic. There is also agreement that the Board is responsible for setting policy for the District, which most feel they are not doing well. In addition, the Board micromanages and steps beyond their function and should not be involved with staff-level decision-making. Board meetings are uninviting, intimidating, and many feel pointless because decisions have already been made without input of those attending. Many also feel that the Board members' benefits are overly generous. Following are specific phrases used by focus group participants to express their opinions about this topic:

“It is very obvious at Board Meetings that trustees simply suffer through public comments, but decisions have already been made.”

“Trustees get inappropriately involved in staff level decision making.”

“The Board of Trustees is out of touch with the real needs of the students and Colleges.”

“Members of the Board do not have expertise in specific academic disciplines and need to take advantage of those in the District with that expertise – faculty in the disciplines.”

“Micromanages”

The Board acts hastily, using incomplete data that has been filtered through management

Board needs to make policy and not process and details

Overall

- Board members are not qualified to meet the requirements of their positions
- The Board is misinformed
- The Board implements top-down decision making
- Board meetings are just formalities; a waste of time
- The Board is inaccessible
- The Board is not in touch with student needs
- The layout and organization of Board meetings is not conducive to an effective and inviting forum (i.e., whispering on stage, body language, time keeping, disrespectful, intimidating, impromptu location and time changes, “waste of time”)
- The Board micromanages
- The Board steps beyond their function
- The Board has a narrow perspective
- The Board upholds a closed decision making process – not collaborative (i.e., negotiations)
- There was a manipulation of time in announcing cuts
- The Board has too many “perks”
- The Board is voted in by an uninformed community

Unique to Moorpark College Faculty

- Long history of adversarial relationships
- The Board reflects the community at large, not the College Community
- Lack of information given publicly
- Policy was not followed in program cuts
- The Board makes arbitrary policy interpretations

Student Services

Many discussants feel that student services are not marketed well and that students do not know what is available to them. Many feel that improved orientation programs could boost the awareness of these services. Student Services have taken considerable cuts due to the budgetary issues and many are concerned that the deletion of services will negatively impact student enrollment. Finally, there are concerns with poor customer

service skills in this area. Following are specific phrases used by focus group participants to express their opinions about this topic:

“Make students more aware of the services available to them”

“Sadly education is a business. Provide the services necessary to running a successful business. It’s simple: GOOD CUSTOMER SERVICES. STUDENTS ARE CUSTOMERS.”

Overall

- Deteriorating because of lack of budget; Student Services was the first to feel the brunt of budget cuts
- Need student services to provide a complete student experience; “whole student”
- Student Services value not realized by District; students need total College experience
- Students are not made aware of all of the Student Services available to them
- Need more complete orientation for students

Unique to Moorpark College Classified

- No mutual respect between student and academic services
- Lack of accountability

Unique to Ventura College Faculty

- Need career service center
- Emphasis on money has an adverse impact on Student Services

Unique to Ventura College Students

- Some Student Services need to improve their customer service skills (disabled students, etc.); see students as a problem, as if they are providing a favor to students
- Incompetent staff protected by Union

Unique to Oxnard College

- The Student Center is not used
- Counseling is not effective (discussed later)
- No theater
- Oxnard College Library needs upgrading; better hours; new books

Strategic Direction and Mission

This topic was chosen only three times during the focus groups, but was discussed under many other headings, identified as a need for a Strategic Plan or policies and procedures. Many perceive that there is no VCCCD Strategic Plan, and see the strategic direction that the District is taking as being too narrow and reactive rather than holistic and proactive.

Following are specific phrases used by focus group participants to express their opinions about this topic:

“That’s why we need this survey. We need to run like a private enterprise business within government-education setting.”

“We’re not building on our strengths.”

Overall

- No Strategic Plan; have to strategize even/especially during budget cuts
- Focus is too narrow
- Lack of forethought
- Need to develop whole student (academic services and student services); need more integrated system
- Need to be proactive
- Take holistic vantage
- Need to run more like a private enterprise business within government/education setting
- Student Services should be centralized on campus

Unique to Moorpark College Classified

- Moorpark College actions (ESL cuts) do not reflect Mission (diversity)
- Student Services have been “neutralized” by student learning module
- Student Services need a Dean to advocate on their behalf
- Need to reinstate Student Service Counsel
- Build synergy within student services
- Need signage

Administrative and Instructional Information Technology

Focus Group participants were concerned about what they perceive as a lack of technological hardware, software, and support. Participants see a need for an IT strategic plan and would like to apply technology to distance learning initiatives. There is a desire for better broader use of technology for District and College functions, IT orientation and support, and up-to-date equipment and software. Following are specific phrases used by focus group participants to express their opinions about this topic:

“Need more tech support; each department needs to repair their own computers.”

“We need classes and training and a person (faculty member?) devoted to technology training; not one more thing for IT people.”

Overall

- Need Tech support
- Need smart classes
- Distance education
- Need Language labs
- Have outdated equipment
- Technology needs to be cutting edge
- Lack of instructional support for technology; need orientation; training
- Need a strategy
- Student Newspaper
- Get user input
- No program discontinuance

Distance Learning Technology and Curriculum

Focus Group participants would like to tap into the realm of Distance Learning to a greater degree in order to increase enrollment and broaden the District's reach. In order to do this, they need training, funding, and IT support—resources they feel are not available. Following is a specific phrase used by focus group participants to express their opinions about this topic:

“Administration does not adequately support the concept of distance learning.”

Overall

- Not supported by philosophy
- Source of added enrollment/ hybrid
- Socialization across disciplines
- Zero support for IT
- Lack of dedicated Tech staff
- Lack of training
- Lack of funding

Instruction and Curriculum

This topic was often discussed under other topics like Budget and Community Relations. Discussants see a need for more full-time faculty, saying that this would increase knowledge base and improve the quality of course offering and curriculum. In addition, Focus group participants feel that course offerings and curriculum need to better reflect the needs of the community and that the overall curriculum and grading practices have become too lax, resulting in under-prepared transfer students. Following are specific phrases used by focus group participants to express their opinions about this topic:

“Teachers expect less of unprepared students and it's insulting.”

“Some teachers don't give us enough preparation.”

“Grading standards are too lax”
“Some instructors are rude and hard to get a hold of.”
“Provide the range of classes students need.”

Overall

- Need more full-time faculty
- Curriculum needs to reflect student/community needs
- Quality instruction is important to increasing enrollment
- Cuts in courses will cause greater enrollment decline
- Loss of knowledge base when FT Faculty are cut

Unique to Moorpark College Students

- Can't overwork part-time by cutting full-time faculty
- Need forward thinking

Unique to Ventura College Students

- Standards aren't set high enough for transfer students; students are unprepared for University
- Faculty promote political bias on campus
- Need more student and peer evaluations for faculty

Unique to Oxnard College Faculty

- Curricular decisions are made unilaterally
- Program review process is good, but it's not used

Counseling

Focus Group participants are concerned that counseling has become too thin and that this hurts the Colleges because counseling services are essential to student success and retention. In addition to increasing the counseling presence, there is a need for better informed counselors with improved customer service skills and hours of availability that reflect the needs of students. Following is a specific phrase used by focus group participants to express their opinions about this topic:

“Counselors tend to give very impersonal information – they give no help in choosing or discussing a path, instead they only give information on how to follow a path you've already chosen yourself.”

Overall

- Lack of availability due to cuts (i.e., there's 1 counselor for 1000's of nursing students at Moorpark College)
- If you want greater enrollment, why cut counseling
- College counselors should do more recruiting in local high schools
- Increase AA/AS programs that have guaranteed acceptance to 4-yr
- Loss of counseling is interrelated with other problems
- Need more well-informed counselors
- Need more full-time, well-informed counselors
- Need improved customer service skills; need to be friendly
- Counselors need to follow-through/follow-up with students

Unique to Ventura College Students

- Include women's reentry with counselors

Fundraising and Foundation

The major concern about this topic is that there is a need to make scholarship information more readily available to students and to in general have more scholarships available.

Overall

- Need more scholarships
- Need more information available about scholarships
- Counselors should inform students about scholarship opportunities

Condition, Appearance, and Maintenance of Grounds and Buildings

Focus Group participants are concerned with the physical condition of facilities on the College and DAC campuses. There is a need for preventative maintenance plans and increased janitorial services. Following are specific phrases used by focus group participants to express their opinions about this topic:

“Need to consider life-cycle management required to maintain and sustain infrastructure (operation and maintenance of buildings, technology, etc.)”

“We do not have enough custodial staff to keep our campus looking inviting.”

Overall

- More facilities but fewer maintenance staff; beyond capacity of maintenance to support
- No preventive maintenance
- Staff are cleaning their own buildings

Unique to Ventura College Classified

- Should organize a campus clean-up day

Athletic Programs

Focus Group participants are concerned about the prohibitive costs of athletic programs.

Overall

- Expensive
- Need to analyze costs

Human Resources

Human Resources was chosen as a discussion topic in three focus groups, but was discussed under other discussion topics in nearly every session (i.e., College and District Relations, College and District Organizational Structure, District Administrative Center Management and Operations, etc.).

Following are specific phrases used by focus group participants to express their opinions about this topic:

“Need to communicate a sense of value to employees”

“Health and wellness is not encouraged, but discouraged.”

“No formal orientation for those newly hired faculty”

“There is a District Council for Human Resources that is the shared governance committee for HR, but it has not met in over a year.”

Overall

- Recommendations of hiring committees are ignored
- Often “know” who will be hired before hiring process; “fixed hiring”
- Need greater access to staff development
- Promotion is difficult; need mentoring program
- Unclear career paths
- Hiring from outside, not pulling from internal pool to fill positions
- Health and wellness is not encouraged
- Need cross-training
- Hiring process is long and cumbersome
- Location/allegiance of HR consultants is not clear
- Lack of orientation for new hires
- Lack of accountability
- Need written procedures; existing Administrative Manual is out-of-date, VERY general, etc.

Student Newspaper

There were varied opinions concerning the closing of two out of the three College newspapers. There is a concern that students will lose this forum for expressing their views and opinions. A District-wide run paper until each College can once again afford to have separate programs was seen as a reasonable compromise. Following is a specific phrase used by focus group participants to express their opinions about this topic:

“The best way to control the masses is to take away their voices. One newspaper does not represent a district as varied as ours.”

Overall

- Three-College newspaper does not reflect the diversity of the three Colleges
- Three-College newspaper is a good idea
- Three-College newspaper would improve the flow of information

COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP FORUM

VCCCD invited approximately 100 community, educational, and governmental leaders to attend two Community Leadership Forums (Community Forums) in June and July 2005. Approximately 34 attended the June 2005 Community Forum; another 33 attended the July Community Forum; and 17 participants completed the Community Forum Questionnaire where the majority identified themselves as representatives of the county overall, indicated in Exhibit C-8.

EXHIBIT C-8: COMMUNITY FORUM PARTICIPANTS

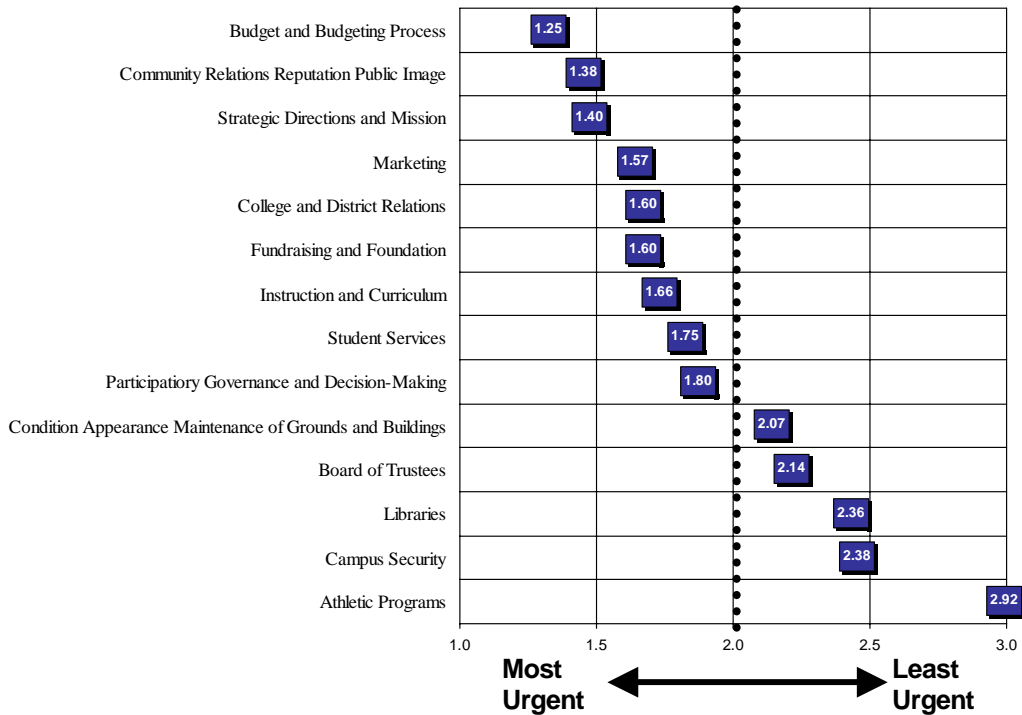
AREA REPRESENTED BY STAKEHOLDER	NUMBER
Moorpark College ONLY	1
Oxnard College ONLY	3
Ventura College ONLY	1
Ventura County Community College District	11
TOTAL	17

COMMUNITY FORUM'S PRIORITIES FOR VCCCD

Seventeen Community Forum participants rated the urgency of addressing the issues listed in Exhibit C-9. These topics are those that stood out as pertinent issues in the online survey are relevant to the community at large, and that were offered as topics for discussion at the Community Forum. In Exhibit C-9:

- 1= a strong urgency and need to address a topic in the next academic year
- 2 = a need to address issues related to the topic by the 2006-2007 academic year
- 3 = addressing issues related to the topic can wait until the 2007-2008 academic year.

EXHIBIT C-9: PERCEPTIONS OF URGENCY



Participants were given the option to choose N/A, indicating they had no opinion or that there was no real urgency to the matter. In addition, participants were encouraged to add concerns not available on the list provided to them. Out of the 11 responses to this option, three indicated enrollment as a topic for consideration; three chose partnering with business and industry; others chose the expansion of the Santa Paula campus, building a center in Camarillo, the quality of academic preparation, legislative advocacy, and partnering with high schools to provide classes for high achieving high school students.

The June Community Forum participants selected 7 topics to discuss.

- Strategic directions
- Community relations, public image, and reputation
- Foundation and fund-raising
- Budget and budgeting processes, including revenue generating strategies, cost reduction, and the resource allocation model
- Collaboration with businesses and educational systems and enterprises
- Instruction and curriculum, including student retention and student services
- Marketing and enrollment management.

The concerns raised during two breakout group discussions are highlighted below.

Strategic Directions

- The District should determine the mission of each College (a “branding” exercise) so that they are mutually supportive and not duplicative. (Note: Distance is not viewed as a real impediment to working as a single system.)
- The strategic priorities should be market driven (i.e., local job requirements and student needs).
- VCCCD should differentiate and measure student success against student goals (e.g., not just raw transfer rates but the percent of students who transfer versus those who wanted to transfer).
- VCCCD should ensure that the campuses’ are open and accessible to the community.

Community Relations, Public Image, and Reputation

- In general, VCCCD has a mixed image:
 - On the negative side: 3 competing Colleges, the scandal of the previous chancellor, not cost-effective
 - On the neutral side: no image in Camarillo
 - On the positive side: good value despite fee increases
- VCCCD should build an image of a strong system where the Colleges compliment each other and are distinguished by their areas of excellence.
- VCCCD should develop concentrated outreach efforts to the community, particularly new members moving into developing areas

Foundations and Fundraising

- The Foundation(s) may be a significant untapped revenue base
- There is a synergy between the Foundations’ fundraising activities and building stronger community relations.
- In addition to scholarships, the Foundation(s) should develop endowments to support both operational and capital programs.
- The market for contract and community education should be explored as an effective revenue source.
- Given the apparent low State priority for community colleges, lobbying strategies should be developed by targeting both local and Sacramento-based officials and agencies.

Budget and Allocation Model

Revenue

- VCCCD should develop a strategy to diversify its revenues sources to:
 - Fund the staffing and maintenance of the new buildings
 - Obtain a better FTES rate from the State
 - Develop other revenue sources, such as contract education, community programs, International Students, etc.

Cost Reduction

- VCCCD should get rid of the emotion and deal with the facts.
- VCCCD needs to build trust with the faculty and staff.
- VCCCD should eliminate duplication and develop centers of excellence.
- VCCCD should explore options to get salary and benefits costs to a level that will enable them to pursue program enhancements and new strategic choices.
- VCCCD should clarify the criteria and develop a model to allocate resources in a way that optimizes the overall effectiveness of the system.

Collaboration with Businesses and Education

- Collaboration will allow VCCCD to leverage its efforts and share resources better to meet common needs.

With Businesses

- VCCCD has a primary mission to help the County have a trained workforce as part of its economic development mission. Such training is more complex today with the global marketplace and critical for keeping employers in Ventura County.
- The business community can help the Colleges be more aware of the community needs regarding student qualifications to be successful in the job market.
- VCCCD should be aware that small business needs change and differ from large businesses.
- The College programs may not match all of the career opportunities in Ventura County. Businesses spoke of vacancy rates in well-paying vocations (e.g., individuals with CAD/CAM skills). Other business leaders complained of the lack of qualified applicants with skills in:
 - Computers
 - Critical thinking
 - Studying (learning how to learn in this rapidly changing world)

- Report reading and interpretation
- Report writing
- Team work

- Some of the vocational education areas lack qualified instructors (i.e., difficulty recruiting needed expertise) or instructors who are up-to-date.

- Class schedules should be compatible with work schedules (e.g., evening and weekend programs).

With K-16

- Educational collaboration needs to start at a young age to meet student needs. As such, the community colleges are in a unique position to chart a pathway for students from Kindergarten through college (grade 16).
 - The more elementary, middle, and high school students are exposed to the community college setting, the more likely they will be to pursue and complete a college education.
 - The California State University at Channel Islands (CSUCI) perceives that the VCCCD Colleges work collaboratively with them today. They are concerned, however, with the lack of skills required to perform successfully in upper division courses.

- Vocational education programs should be designed to meet business needs. To do that requires consultation with businesses regarding their job needs.

- Students should have planned paths that include meaningful work experiences.

Instruction, Curriculum, and Student Services

- Community college students should have learners' needs analyses, which would encompass assessment of what they already have mastered, what they have yet to learn, and what teaching-learning styles might be most effective for them. Such analyses would permit more meaningful academic advising.
 - Instructors should share their "teaching styles" so students can match what approach works best, given their "learning styles".
 - Community colleges should become skilled in examining the teaching methodology or pedagogical model that "fits the learners' needs" (i.e., an adult-learning approach).

- Expected student outcomes should be measurable.

- Students benefit from work-study programs where they can learn on-the-job and get paid.

- The Colleges could do more through contract education and adult education for ongoing training and education.

- The Colleges should offer more course work and programs through online instruction and distance education.
- Some were confused about the three-College structure (particularly the marketing of three individual College class schedules) and thought there should be one VCCCD class schedule and catalog. Students should be able to take courses at any of the locations where courses are offered.

Marketing and Enrollment Management

- Regarding VCCCD's recent enrollment decline, they perceived that:
 - Part-time students were probably the most sensitive to College fees.
 - VCCCD might be competing with the trade schools that have a more targeted marketing plan for businesses.
- Many of VCCCD students are first-generation American or at-risk students.
- VCCCD inadequately promotes or markets its success stories (e.g., transfer rates to four-year institutions). VCCCD should market that a student can complete their first two-years of a bachelor program at a significantly reduced cost by attending any of the VCCCD Colleges.