The History of the Santa Cruz County Provisional Community College District – 30+ Years in Higher Education

The creation of the Santa Cruz County Provisional Community College District (SCCPCCD), referred to as the Santa Cruz Center, grew out of the need for higher education opportunities in our border county and the desire of residents and community leaders to have access to local post-secondary programs. State law requiring a minimum property valuation and population to form a community college district essentially prohibited what is one of Arizona's smallest counties from forming its own college district. So, in 1980, Santa Cruz County started its odyssey to provide higher education opportunities by contracting with Pima Community College to offer classes at a community center.

With that success, Santa Cruz County leaders began a quest to sponsor legislation that would enable the county to have its own college. In 1999, legislation was passed that provided for the establishment of a Provisional College District in Santa Cruz County. At that time, of the fifteen Arizona counties, only Santa Cruz, Greenlee, Apache, and Gila did not have a community college of their own. Today, with strong leadership from the Governing Board, and wide community support, SCCPCCD has focused on increasing higher education opportunities, comprehensively revisiting its strategic plan, and investigating the pathway to future independent accreditation.

Following a comprehensive review of this history and the vision of SCCPCCD, the **Governing Board of the SCCPCCD,** which includes Mr. Greg Lucero, Ms. Liz Collier, Dr. Marcelino Varona, Jr., Dr. Angela Meixell, and Mr. John Fanning, has developed this new five-year strategic plan for 2024 through 2029. They are pleased to share this plan with you and to working together to serve all who seek to learn.

Values, Vision and Mission

Values

Accountability

> We place honesty and openness, trust and respect at the center of all decisions, policies, and operations.

Collaboration

> We are the community's college and commit ourselves to harmonious partnerships that respond to the changing needs of those we serve.

Inclusivity

> We value the integration of the diverse backgrounds and perspectives from our community and promote accessibility to all cultures and ideas through the programs and services offered.

Knowledge

> We believe life-long learning is central to enriching the lives of students and to our community's success in a global society.

Resourcefulness

> We foster an environment of growth and accomplishment by persistently seeking innovative ways to meet the ever changing needs of our community.

Vision

Through the establishment of an independent community college in Santa Cruz County, all residents of our region will have the opportunity to achieve their educational goals.

Mission

Provide educational and career development opportunities that advance student achievement and are a catalyst for growth and prosperity in our bi-cultural community.

Strategic Initiatives

I. Build Community Relations and Partnerships

- Objective: Build and strengthen community relations and partnerships to enhance support for SCCPCCD and facilitate collaborative initiatives.
  - Strategies:
    - Identify and prioritize current and targeted partners.
    - Gather input and feedback from community members.
    - Forge partnerships with local businesses, non-profits, and government agencies to address community needs and promote economic development.
    - Provide for SCCPCCD's presence in the community.
  - Metrics:
    - Increase awareness and positive community sentiment towards SCCPCCD.
    - Percentage increase in community partnerships and collaborations annually.
  - Potential Challenges:
    - Determining best approach to benchmarking current presence.
    - Balancing various community interests and priorities.
    - Building trust and credibility with community stakeholders.

II. Outreach and Recognition

- Objective: Enhance outreach efforts and raise awareness of SCCPCCD's contributions to the community through targeted messaging and recognition programs.
  - Strategies:
    - Develop a comprehensive marketing and branding campaign to highlight SCCPCCD's programs and achievements, and that aligns with our values, mission, and goals.
    - Recognize and honor community partners and major milestones.
    - Engage in community events and initiatives to showcase SCCPCCD's expertise and resources.
  - Metrics:
    - Increase in community engagement metrics.
    - Increase in social media and website usage metrics.
  - Potential Challenges:
    - Ensuring consistency in messaging across diverse communication channels.

III. Educational Programs and Partnerships (JTED, Workforce Development, Employer Needs)

- Objective: Develop, expand, and deliver educational programs and degree and certification opportunities to meet the needs of students, employers, and the local workforce, and to facilitate resulting growth in student populations (headcount).
  - Strategies:
    - Continue to work with PCC to expand accredited general education, degree/certificate, and transfer offerings as Santa Cruz enrollment grows.
    - Collaborate with Joint Technical Education Districts (JTEDs) to offer career-focused programs and pathways.
    - Develop K-12 STEAM (Science Technology Engineering Arts Math) partnerships.
    - Collaborate with local government agencies, organizations, and industry and business employers to develop post-secondary curriculum and training programs aligned with individual industry workforce needs, and to develop a countywide workforce development plan.
    - Build local internships, apprenticeships, and work-study opportunities in partnership with K-12 districts and local industry and business employers to enable students to gain practical experience.
    - Monitor and assess programs and partnerships being offered through other educational institutions, local governments, and public-private partnerships.
  - Metrics:
    - Location of Santa Cruz County HS graduates for their post-secondary education.
    - Increase in enrollment in targeted programs, particularly in high-demand fields.
    - Increase in the number of highly-skilled positions being filled by locally educated, trained, or certified employees.
  - Potential Challenges:
    - Maintaining positive collaboration and communication between SCCPCCD and PCC.
    - Supporting PCC's needs and goals.
    - Addressing rapidly changing workforce demands and technological advancements.
    - Ensuring accessibility and affordability of programs for all students.
    - Prioritizing the various educational programs, degrees, and opportunities to best serve the needs of both local employers and students.
    - Providing sufficient resources, specifically facilities and equipment, to meet these needs.
    - Timing of program development.

IV. Planning for the Future

- Objective 1: Secure and/or develop facilities for long-term use and expansion of SCCPCCD's educational offerings; for long-term financial sustainability; and for growing community needs.
    - Strategies:
        - Conduct a thorough assessment of future space needs that includes but is not limited to centralized location and transportation needs.
        - Explore partnerships for facility sharing or joint development projects with local governments, businesses, and other educational institutions.
        - Seek funding opportunities and grants to support facility acquisition, construction, or renovation.
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    - Metrics:
        - Acquisition of new facilities or expansion of existing ones to accommodate growth.
        - Completion of facility development projects within specified timelines and budgets.
    - Potential Challenges:
        - Securing adequate funding for facility acquisition and development.
        - Addressing regulatory and zoning requirements for facility expansion or construction.

- Objective 2: Actively identify, cultivate, and recruit new, underserved, and "untapped" student markets, including veterans, unemployed and underemployed, adult education, special needs, and those in our sister city of Nogales, MX.

    - Strategies:
        - Actively recruit from identified underserved and "untapped" student markets.
        - Arrange international financial sponsorship opportunities for international students.
        - Work with the Consulado de Mexico to build opportunities for students and financial support for SCCPCCD.
        - Market educational opportunities and programs to international students and to local industry and businesses operating in Mexico.
    - Metrics:
        - Student numbers by targeted demographics.
        - Revenue from tuition.
        - Amount of money earned from tuition and sponsorships for international students.

- Potential Challenges:
    - Ongoing ability of international students to cross the US/Mexico border easily and efficiently for in-person educational opportunities.
    - Transportation needs for students with specialized needs and/or greater distance from center.

- Objective 3: Secure short-term and long-term funding to support the work and continued growth of the College.
    - Strategies:
        - Position the Santa Cruz Educational Foundation to be the primary fundraising vehicle for the SCCPCCD and/or develop new fundraising vehicles.
        - Develop a network of private, federal, state, local, university and K-12 partners for joint resource development.
    - Metrics:
        - Amount of funding raised from identified sources.
    - Potential Challenges:
        - Foundation's current bylaws and operation capacity.
        - Competition from other educational programs and opportunities.

- Objective 4: Continue SCCPCCD's future transition from Provisional Status to Accreditation as this process aligns with and supports the changing needs of those served.
    - Strategies:
        - Articulate College's Provisional Status as a long term pathway to initial accreditation.
        - Monitor efforts of Gila County and changes to eligibility requirements for Initial Candidacy Status.
    - Metrics:
        - [Identify specific metrics required by HLC for accreditation].
    - Challenges:
        - Meeting the requirements for full accreditation.
        - Articulating the value of full accreditation to the citizens and employers of Santa Cruz County.
        - Developing and maintaining sustainable revenue streams, including but not limited to increased tax rates.
        - Dependency on community growth.

V. Board Accountability

- Objective: Ensure accountability for the current board and its successors while fostering strong community representation.
    - Strategies:
        - Initiate efforts for board members to be kept abreast of all programs and initiatives, and provide resources and support to speak to same in the community.
        - Provide for the ongoing implementation of the Strategic Plan through Board succession planning and onboarding process.
        - Hire a designated board liaison who will serve as the representative of SCCPCCD within the community and will facilitate implementation of this Strategic Plan.
        - Establish clear performance metrics and benchmarks for the board liaison, including community engagement and partnership development goals.
        - Conduct regular evaluations and assessments of the board liaison's performance, with input from community stakeholders and board members.
        - Implement a succession planning process to ensure continuity in community representation and accountability.
    - Metrics:
        - Percentage increase in community engagement metrics attributed to the efforts of both the board and the board liaison.
        - Achievement of partnership development goals outlined in the strategic plan.
    - Potential Challenges:
        - Hiring a qualified person as the Strategic Liaison.
        - Balancing the responsibilities of the board liaison with those of board members.
        - Ensuring alignment between the board's and board liaison's efforts and the strategic goals of SCCPCCD.
        - Development of "onboarding" process for new members of the Board of Governors.