
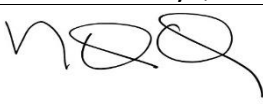




The Board of Governors of the California Community Colleges

PRESENTED TO THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS

DATE: January 16, 2018

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| SUBJECT: Approval of Desert Community College District's Indio Educational Center | | Item Number: 2.3 | |
| | | Attachment: No | |
| CATEGORY: | College Finance and Facilities Planning | TYPE OF BOARD CONSIDERATION: | |
| Recommended By: |  Carlos Montoya, Director | Consent/Routine | |
| | | First Reading | |
| Approved for Consideration: |  Eloy Ortiz Oakley, Chancellor | Action | X |
| | | Information | |

ISSUE: This item requests state approval of the Indio Educational Center in the Desert Community College District.

BACKGROUND: The Desert Community College District was officially formed in 1958 and serves over 15,500 students annually in its 4,229 square mile service area. The district consists of one college: College of the Desert. In addition, the district operates three educational outreach locations in Indio, Mecca/Thermal, and Desert Hot Springs. Together these locations allow the district to meet its goal of being an accessible source of higher education in the Coachella Valley region.

The district submitted a Letter of Intent to the Chancellor's Office in July 2016 requesting approval to establish a center in Indio. The request was approved by the Chancellor's Office in August 2016, and the Department of Finance subsequently approved the outreach center's enrollment projections in October 2016. A Needs Study was submitted to the Chancellor's Office in February 2017. The district submitted additional documentation in September 2017 that demonstrated the proposed educational center generated over 1,000 annual full-time equivalent students, which is more than the 500 required for center approval.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: It is recommended that the Board of Governors approve the Indio Educational Center as a state-approved educational center.

ANALYSIS: The California Code of Regulations, title 5, section 55180(b) defines an educational center as “a postsecondary operation established and administered by an existing college or district at a location away from the campus of the parent institution” which:

- Is planned to continue for 10 or more years;
- Generates at least 500 full-time equivalent students annually;
- Has an on-site administrator;
- Offers programs leading to certificates and/or degrees conferred by the parent institution; and
- Has been approved by the Board of Governors.

The Long-Range Master Plan outlines a framework consisting of four planning categories for the evaluation and review of new colleges and educational centers. The Indio outreach center fully meets three of the planning categories - future demand, capacity of existing campuses, and local intent – and substantially meets the planning criteria in the access category indicating that the proposed educational center falls within the framework established in the Long-Range Master Plan.

Overview

College of the Desert oversees the Indio outreach center and provides educational services to Coachella Valley residents. The Desert Community College District has been providing outreach courses in Indio since 2001. The original Indio outreach center was located in facilities leased from the County of Riverside that was terminated to accommodate county operations. The City of Indio subsequently donated property in downtown Indio with support for needed roadway and infrastructure improvements. The 2.5 acre site is centrally located with accessible infrastructure and access to public transportation. The district utilized local bond funds from the \$346.5 million bond passed by the voters in 2004 to develop the first phase of the Indio outreach center. In February 2014, the 3-story, 40,000 square foot outreach center opened and grew to 932 FTES in fiscal year 2014-15. The new facility includes 16 classrooms, two laboratories, multi-purpose space, student services space, a bookstore, administrative and faculty offices, and interactive spaces for students. To meet the current demand, in August 2016 the district added four temporary portables (three classrooms and one library) and offers Friday and Saturday courses.

Demographic data supports the need for an educational center in the City of Indio to meet the current and future higher educational needs of the residents. The population in Indio has grown from 79,647 in 2010 to 88,488 in 2016. Additionally, the service area population has historically attained a low level of educational achievement. Of the population 25 years and older, 26% do not have a high school diploma, 29% have a high school diploma, and only 16% of the population have achieved a bachelor’s degree or higher. The Indio outreach center provides programs and services that address the basic needs of residents within the service area. As of the Fall 2017 term, students can complete as many as 13 degree programs at Indio. In addition, the Indio outreach center offers Adult Education, Basic Skills, and English as Second Language courses.

Population and Enrollment Projections

The demographic profile of the City of Indio supports the establishment of a permanent educational center. It is estimated that the Indio service area for adults ages 18 to 64 will increase 20.7 percent from 75,666 in 2016 to 91,336 in 2026.

The California Code of Regulations, title 5, section 55180(b) requires that state-approved educational centers exceed 500 FTES annually. In 2016-17, the Indio outreach center generated 1,168.70 FTES. Enrollment at the outreach center is forecasted to continue exceeding the 500 FTES threshold requirement. Table 1 shows enrollment projections for the center developed by the Desert Community College District and approved by the Department of Finance (DOF) Demographic Research Unit in October 2016. The Indio outreach center surpassed the annual FTES approved by DOF per the SB 361 Approved FTES Certification Form submitted in September 2017. The number of existing FTES and the projected growth in the service area show the center will continue to be a viable institution.

Table 1: Department of Finance Enrollment, WSCH, and FTES Growth Driven Projections

| Year | Fall Enrollment | WSCH/Enrollment | Fall WSCH | Fall FTES | Annual FTES |
|---------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------|-----------|-------------|
| 2016-17 | 2,492 | 6.6 | 16,507 | 464 | 1,168.70* |
| 2017-18 | 2,559 | 6.6 | 16,951 | 477 | 953 |
| 2018-19 | 2,628 | 6.6 | 17,407 | 489 | 979 |
| 2019-20 | 2,699 | 6.6 | 17,876 | 503 | 1,005 |
| 2020-21 | 2,771 | 6.6 | 18,357 | 516 | 1,032 |
| 2021-22 | 2,846 | 6.6 | 18,850 | 530 | 1,060 |
| 2022-23 | 2,923 | 6.6 | 19,358 | 544 | 1,089 |
| 2023-24 | 3,001 | 6.6 | 19,878 | 559 | 1,118 |

*2016-17 Actual FTES shown

Alternatives

The Desert Community College District considered a number of alternatives to pursue and establish a state-approved educational center, and the district's Board of Trustees has determined that a center is the most feasible alternative. The alternatives evaluated as part of the Needs Study include the following:

Expansion of Existing Institutions within the Region

As of 2017, the College of the Desert enrolled more than 15,000 students. It is currently the fastest growing community college in California with enrollment up 30 percent since 2012. This demand from growth is particularly great in the Eastern Valley area of the district where the greatest growth in population is projected to continue. Many students utilize public transportation and access to bus service was a top priority when searching for the Indio center location. Bus service to College of the Desert from the Indio outreach center is approximately 45 minutes one way (24 minutes by car). Bus service to the Mecca/Thermal outreach location from the Indio outreach center is 30 minutes one way (20 minutes by car). Bus service to the Desert Hot Springs outreach location from the Indio outreach center is 2 hours one way (34 minutes by car). General education coursework has the highest demand districtwide, which is the main driver for offering these courses at outreach locations, nearest to where students work and live. Considering the population growth and existing travel times, expanding any of those locations would dramatically reduce access to a community college education. Additionally, the infrastructure at the Mecca/Thermal outreach location is at capacity and cannot grow until surrounding infrastructure improvements are made. College of the Desert is land-constrained preventing significant development of the site.

Increase the Utilization of Existing Institutions

The Desert Community College District has increased the utilization of existing space by offering educational services during late afternoons, evenings, and weekends. A number of factors restrict the district's ability to optimize space utilization rates at outreach locations that are not owned by the district. Chief among them are restrictions on operating hours and budget constraints. The district utilizes Coachella Valley High School within the Indio service area as an additional location to provide courses, but hours of operation are restrictive at this facility. The district has also maximized its use of the existing operations it owns and shares.

Shared Use with Other Postsecondary Institutions

The district has committed to partnering with other educational institutions serving the region. At present, the district has 22 joint-use arrangements with local high schools and other community organizations. Unfortunately, none of those sites can house the existing operation at the Indio outreach center, which continues to grow. There is also a limited number of post-secondary institutions in the region so establishing the proposed Indio Educational Center would create a much needed higher education facility to promote partnerships with other educational institutions not otherwise present in the area. Currently, the district has partnered with CSU San Bernardino and UC Riverside to create pathways for transfer students. However, they do not have the facilities available to offer community college coursework.

Utilization of Non-traditional Delivery Methods

One method the Desert Community College District has utilized to increase access is their online distance learning program. The development of this program started with the approval of the 2010 Strategic Educational Master Plan – Implementation Plan and Technology Plan. These plans identified the resources necessary to grow the online distance learning program as a priority of the district, and in 2015 they launched the CANVAS online learning management system. At this time, the distance learning program is at capacity and though it will grow, it cannot immediately fulfill the need of the existing FTES at the Indio outreach center. The majority of students now attending the Indio outreach operation are low-income, first generation college students and adult learners in need of basic educational skills, so are not likely to benefit from online educational services. For these students, a traditional classroom setting is a more suitable method for learning.

Private Fund Raising or Donation of Land

The land that the Indio center is situated on was donated by the City of Indio. The district also received a donation of land from a developer for the Mecca-Thermal outreach location. Overall, the district seeks and receives support from the community. In addition to the land donations, the voters have passed two local bonds to develop facilities. No state funding was utilized in the development of the Indio location.

Alternative Sites Considered

The Desert Community College District Board of Trustees carefully considered 10 different site locations in the Eastern Valley starting in 2005. Among the factors the board and staff used to evaluate the sites were:

- Adequacy of the space necessary to build the Indio outreach center based on the number of projected students and the College of the Desert's Facilities Master Plan.
- The willingness and capacity of the site owners/developers to donate the property to the district for the purpose of the Indio outreach center.
- Availability of infrastructure services.
- Accessibility by students and staff to the property, located in the region to provide access to the service area.

In the initial investigation of potential sites, the current Indio center location was not included. The College of the Desert eventually requested the City of Indio for assistance to find the right location. The Board and City of Indio reached an agreement at the current site in downtown Indio as of the city's efforts to redevelop the downtown area. This site met all of the criteria of the board and the city aided in infrastructure improvements to support the educational outreach operation.

Academic Planning and Program Justification

Chancellor's Office staff in the Academic Affairs Division reviewed the Needs Study for the proposed Indio Educational Center and found: 1) no significant inter-district concerns, 2) that the proposed delivery system is reasonable, and 3) that the Desert Community College District provided adequate information to support the academic course offerings. The Indio outreach center is affiliated with College of the Desert and offers courses required for the general education component of the college's associate degrees and courses for transfer.

The 2017-2022 Educational Master Plan has focused attention on labor market information regarding emerging career pathways and job opportunities in the Coachella Valley. That research has confirmed academic programming aimed toward Business Information Technology, Administration of Justice, and Early Childhood Development as immediate pathways to employment. The Indio outreach center is offering educational programs to meet these demands. In addition, the outreach center offers a comprehensive set of courses in Basic Skills, English as a Second Language, Adult Basic Education, and vocational certificate programs. The Indio outreach center has full and partial program offerings for associate degrees as well as providing full certificate programs.

Student Services and Outreach

Chancellor's Office staff from the Student Services and Special Programs Division reviewed the student support services described in the Needs Study of the proposed Indio Educational Center and concluded that the proposal adequately provides student services and outreach efforts at the site. Based on the information provided, there is sufficient justification for approving an educational center in the geographic area identified.

In general, the narrative in the Student Services and Outreach section in the Needs Study is thorough and complete. The narrative lists services provided at the Indio outreach center including: Admissions, Orientation, Assessment including an EDGE Program, Financial Aid, Bursar, Administrative Services, Mental Health Services, Extended Opportunity Programs and Services (EOPS) including Foster Youth Services, Veterans Services, Library Services, Bookstore Services, Health Services, Counseling (Academic, Transfer, STEM, Career and Personal), Tutoring Services, and Cooperative Agency Resources for Education (CARE) Counseling. The narrative provides detailed information on staffing levels, schedules, and sufficiently details methods of service delivery and evaluation, as well as ADA accessibility. Lastly,

the study identifies methods for ensuring that the services provided and staffing levels meet student needs. For example, a representative from the Veterans Services Office is available on the fourth Wednesday of every month. The level of veteran services are regularly evaluated by surveying students. In the event that the need for veteran's services at the Indio center increases, the data is used to determine the increased availability of services.

From the information provided in the Needs Study, the Indio center appears prepared to provide and sustain support services to students. By recognizing the Indio Educational Center as a state-approved educational center, the center will be able to increase its outreach efforts and provide new programs and services that respond to the needs of its service area population.

Support and Capital Outlay Budget Projections

The Chancellor's Office College Finance and Facilities Planning Division has reviewed the Needs Study for the proposed Indio Educational Center and determined that the Desert Community College District's fiscal performance and condition are adequate to meet the future fiscal demands of the proposed center. The district has effectively managed its monetary resources to achieve a fiscal year 2015-16 unrestricted annual fund balance of 31%, which is above the recommended minimum 5% reserve. The FTES potential of the Indio Educational Center should enable the district to take full advantage of any additional system funding available in 2017-18 and ongoing budget years. The district certified that the outreach center achieved 1,169 FTES in fiscal year 2016-17.

In March 2004 the district passed Measure B, a \$346.5 million bond measure. The district utilized \$24,123,997 of that bond to construct the 3-story, 40,000 square foot Indio building that became operational 2014. In 2016 three portable classroom buildings were added to the site to house growth, as well as a portable library building. In November 2016 the district passed Measure CC, a \$577.9 million bond measure. With growth projected in the Cities of Indio and Coachella, the district is now planning to use approximately \$26.4 million to expand the Indio outreach center. The expansion is estimated to double the size of the current building while removing the four portables. The project goals include adding academic classrooms and science laboratories, expanding Early Childhood Education facilities, constructing a library, and adding a career placement center by the year 2020. The district is not considering using capital outlay funding for the Indio center.

Geographic and Physical Accessibility

The City of Indio is located in the Coachella Valley in the lower Colorado Desert Region of Southern California. The Coachella Valley is bordered by the San Jacinto, Santa Rosa, and San Bernardino mountains. The availability of roadways is limited and the valley is very narrow surrounded by nature conservation areas. The Indio outreach center is located in downtown Indio. The 2.5-acre site was identified to accommodate available infrastructure and be readily accessible to major freeways and public transportation. The location is not far from Interstate 10 and Highway 111, as well as having regional bus service through the SunLine Transit system. The Indio outreach center is approximately 11 miles from the College of the Desert, 14 miles from the Mecca-Thermal outreach location, and 27 miles from the Desert Hot Springs outreach location. The Indio outreach center is well-served by on-site parking. Although the installation of the portables utilize some of those parking stalls, the expansion project will include additional parking. There is also free parking available in the downtown area surrounding the outreach center.

Figure 1: Desert Community College District – District’s Locations



Effects on Other Institutions

The establishment of the proposed Indio Educational Center is consistent with the district’s long-range planning policy as part of their 2003 Facilities Master Plan to establish a district-owned center in the Eastern Valley. All district campuses are currently operating at or near capacity and there is no concern over loss of students in this growing district. Neighboring community college facilities are more than 50 miles from the Indio service area. While the University of Riverside-Palm Desert and Palm Desert campus of the California State University, San Bernardino is located within 10 miles, these are four-year institutions and serve a different mission than that of the district. College of the Desert collaborates with two K-12 districts where students are served by the Indio outreach center offering EDGE, the bridge program. In addition, degree planning at the Indio outreach center is based on direct transfer to CSU San Bernardino Palm Desert.

The Desert Community College District has received letters of support for the Indio Educational Center from neighboring higher education institutions, government officials, and community businesses. These organizations include: Copper Mountain College, Imperial Valley College, Mt. San Jacinto College, Palo Verde College, Desert Alliance of Community Empowerment, the Salton Sea Authority, Assembly member Benoit, the 4th District Supervisor for Riverside County, and the Coachella Chamber of Commerce.

Environmental Impact

The Desert Community College District expanded its services in Indio with a new facility that opened in February 2014. The three-story building is approximately 40,000 gross square feet with an expansion of the center in the planning process. The environmental impacts were studied appropriately, and as a result, a Notice of Determination was filed with the State Clearing House (State Clearing House # 2011041089) in January 2012. The filed Notice of Determination is compliant with the California Environmental Quality Act guidelines.

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