Contra Costa College History & Demographics

 History & Organizational Structure

The Contra Costa Community College District, which covers almost all of Contra Costa County (an area of approximately 700 square miles), was established by the Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors on December 27, 1948, and headquartered in Martinez, the county seat.

Contra Costa College was the first of the district's three colleges, officially starting life as Contra Costa Junior College-West Campus. Its first president, or director, John H. Porterfield, was appointed by the district board on December 9, 1949, and the west campus opened for the spring 1950 semester with 500 students and 30 faculty and administrators. In that first semester, three students graduated with A.A. degrees.

The college, known locally then as "Shipyard Tech," was first located at the vacant World War II Kaiser Shipyard II (and an old Lucky store a mile away) in Point Richmond. In 1956, the college moved to its present 83-acre hillside site straddling the city limits of Richmond and San Pablo.

Organization of the District and College

 The Contra Costa Community College District is composed of three colleges: Contra Costa College in San Pablo (west county); Diablo Valley College in Pleasant Hill (central county), which also operates the San Ramon Valley Center in San Ramon; and Los Medanos College in Pittsburg/Antioch (east county), which also operates the Brentwood Center.

The district is governed by a five-member board of trustees, elected from local wards for four-year terms. The district chancellor recommends policy to the board and supervises the administration of policy as determined by the board. The chancellor's staff includes three vice chancellors, nine directors and a chief facilities planner.

District certificated and classified personnel are represented by collective bargaining units. The president of each college serves as chief administrative officer and represents that college in its own community and, through the chancellor, to the governing board.

 Contra Costa College currently is organized into divisions under the management of division deans, who report to the senior dean and/or vice president, who in turn report to the president.

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Campus committees in the shared governance structure are composed of representatives from the Academic Senate, the Classified Senate, the Associated Students Union, and management.

 The Community

Contra Costa County is part of the San Francisco-Oakland metropolitan region and faces San Francisco and Marin County across the bay. Contra Costa College is situated geographically in the middle of its service area, the western-most part of Contra Costa County. The area, approximately 85 square miles, curves around the eastern end of San Francisco Bay and San Pablo Bay to the Carquinez Straits, where the Sacramento River flows into San Pablo Bay. The west county is a long, narrow corridor, paralleling Interstate 80 from Kensington in the south to Crockett in the north, and from the bay flats on the west to the hills on the east that separate this region from the rest of Contra Costa County.

Communities within this service area include:

Crockett, Pinole, El Cerrito, Rodeo, El Sobrante, Richmond, Hercules, San Pablo, and Kensington. Because of its proximity, the college also serves students from Albany and portions of Berkeley to the south.

Secondary schools in the area are organized into two unified school districts and one parochial school.

West Contra Costa Unified School District has seven high schools:

DeAnza, El Cerrito, Hercules, Kennedy, Pinole Valley, and Richmond, as well as two high schools located on the CCC campus: Middle College High School and Gateway to College.

One high school in this district, Harry Ells, closed in June of 1985. Salesian High School is a coed parochial school in Richmond. John Swett Unified School District has one high school (John Swett) in Crockett.

Higher education, both two- and four-year, is very accessible to west county residents. Besides the campuses of the Contra Costa Community College District, East Bay colleges include UC Berkeley, CSU-East Bay (with an additional satellite center in Pleasant Hill), Mills College in Oakland, St. Mary's College in Moraga, John F. Kennedy University in Pleasant Hill, the Oakland community colleges of the Peralta district, and Chabot Community College in Hayward.

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In its diversity, West Contra Costa County is a microcosm of the entire San Francisco Bay Area. The city of Richmond, the largest in the West County area, extends from the upper middle class, predominantly-white Point Richmond area on the bay, through the lower income, primarily black and Hispanic flatlands, into the high-income, mainly white areas of El Cerrito, Kensington, and the Berkeley hills. The growing communities to the north of the college tend to be more middle-class and ethnically mixed.

The college is centrally located to most of the cities and towns within the radius of the western part of Contra Costa County.

The service area in which Contra Costa College is located represents a diverse mixture of 15.1% white, 26.8% Hispanic, 24.3% African American, 21.5% Asian/Filipino, 0.5% American Indian/Alaskan Native, and 0.9% Pacific Islander. Student enrollment demographics closely parallel these community percentages.

 The College

Attempting to describe the profile of the average Contra Costa College student is somewhat hard to do based on ethnicity, since no one group is significantly greater than the others represented. Based on other parts of a demographic analysis, the college is populated by more females (59.7%) than males (37.9%). Most of our students are in the 25 to 49 age group at 35.3% with the second largest population in the 20 to 24 age group at 27.5%, and the 19 or younger age group is at 26.9% which is more than likely attributed to the Middle College High School students on campus who enroll in college courses. The over 49 age group accounts for 10% of our student population.

Employees of the college are 34.4% white, 26.6% African American, 15.6% Hispanic, 12.5% Asian/Filipino, and 10.9% other.

The above stats of student ethnicity and enrollment were extracted from the 2012 ARCC Report (Accountability Reporting for the California Community Colleges).

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