
**Institutional Self-Study in Support of
Reaffirmation of Accreditation**

**Merced College
2004**

Submitted by:

Merced College
3600 M Street
Merced, CA 95348

Submitted to:

Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges
Western Association of Schools and Colleges

Submission Date:

January 28, 2005

Table of Contents

• Certification of the Self-Study Report	ii
• Introduction and Background	
History of Merced College Since the Last Team Visit	Intro - 1
Off-Campus Sites and Distance Learning	Intro - 9
Area Demographics and Institutional Statistics	Intro - 11
Longitudinal Student Achievement Data - Enrollment Statistics	Intro - 16
Organization of Merced College	Intro - 22
Abstract of the Self-Study Report	Intro - 26
Organization of the Self-Study Report	Intro - 32
Creation and Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes	Intro - 37
Results of Last Team's Visit - Response to Previous Recommendations	Intro - 39
Certification of Continued Compliance With Eligibility Requirements	Intro - 47
• Standard I - Institutional Mission and Effectiveness	
A. Mission	I - 1
B. Improving Institutional Effectiveness	I - 4
• Standard II - Student Learning Programs and Services	
A. Instructional Programs	II - 1
B. Student Support Services	II - 33
C. Library and Learning Support Services	II - 58
• Standard III - Resources	
A. Human Resources	III - 1
B. Physical Resources	III - 14
C. Technology Resources	III - 26
D. Financial Resources	III - 37
• Standard IV - Leadership and Governance	
A. Decision-Making Roles and Processes	IV - 1
B. Board and Administrative Organization	IV - 12
• List of the Documents Used to Prepare the Self-Study	

Merced College

Certification of the Institutional Self-Study Report

Date January 18, 2005

To: Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges,
Western Association of Schools and Colleges

From: Merced College
3600 M Street
Merced, CA 95348

This Institutional Self-Study Report is submitted for the purpose of assisting in the determination of the institution's accreditation status.

We certify that there was broad participation by the campus community, and we believe the Self-Study Report accurately reflects the nature and substance of this institution.

Signed: <u>Les McCabe</u> Dr. Les McCabe	Chairperson, Board of Trustees
<u>Benjamin T. Duran</u> Dr. Benjamin T. Duran	Chief Executive Officer
<u>Dr. Allan Grimsby</u> Dr. Allan Grimsby	Accreditation Liaison Officer
<u>Dee Near</u> Dee Near	Chair, Self-Study Committee
<u>Dan Smith</u> Dan Smith	President, Academic Senate
<u>Wilma Prine</u> Wilma Prine	President, Classified Senate
<u>Jessica Gutierrez</u> Jessica Gutierrez	Student Trustee

History of Merced College Since the Last Visit

Description and Background of the College/District:

The Merced Community College District was formed by a vote of the people of the Le Grand Union High School District and the Merced Union High School District on February 27, 1962. Merced College became an official entity, for all intents and purposes, on July 1, 1963. Classes began on September 10, 1963 on a temporary campus located at the Merced County Fairgrounds. The College first moved to its present main campus in the summer of 1966 and moved completely to the new site during the spring semester of 1967.

The District is composed of most of Merced County, the area of the Chowchilla Union High School District in Madera County, and the Dos Palos Joint Union Elementary School District. Area high schools served include Merced, Atwater, Livingston, Chowchilla, Le Grand, Dos Palos, Mariposa and Los Banos. The Governing Board is made up of seven elected members. Merced College is fully accredited by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges.

The College's main campus is located one mile north of Olive Avenue in the City of Merced on the east side of M Street. It originally consisted of 110 acres presented as a gift to the College by the C-H-M Company and the Yosemite Land and Cattle Company through the efforts of Merced City officials. Additional purchases of adjacent land increased the size of the present campus to 269 acres. A ten-acre Los Banos Campus, completed in the fall of 1982, serves the needs of the communities of Los Banos, Dos Palos and the surrounding areas.

- Merced College 2004 Accreditation Self-Study -

The administration building, the science building, and a temporary library facility were the first main buildings constructed. The student union was completed in November, 1967 and since that time, facilities added include a gymnasium, automotive shop, agricultural facilities, and technical labs for drafting, engineering, vocational nursing, and home economics. The Leshner Library and the Merced College Theater were completed for use in the fall of 1972.

On February 6, 1973, district voters approved the extension of a 25 cent tax to support the continued growth and improvement of the College. Building continued with an Olympic-size swimming pool with dressing rooms and spectator seats, a track and field facility, a student union addition and an art building addition in 1977, a welding building in 1978, and an allied health center in 1980.

Merced College has been providing residents of Merced County and the surrounding area with a wide selection of programs and services for over forty years. A comprehensive schedule of programs is available to meet the needs of its diverse student body. Merced College offers a broad range of transfer and vocational programs. The College offers programs of study in the liberal arts, natural sciences, preprofessional, business, vocational and technical fields in day and evening classes. Students can fulfill lower division general education and major requirements for a university baccalaureate degree, obtain an Associate of Arts or Associate of Science degree, or complete a vocational program that can lead to immediate employment. The College's transfer curriculum is closely articulated with the California State University and University of California systems, as well as private four-year colleges and universities in the state.

Merced College addresses the diverse educational needs of its students by offering a wide array of associate degree programs, transfer programs, and certificate programs. Among the associate degree programs are three different nursing programs, both police and fire science programs, radiologic technology, agribusiness, and a full range of

industrial and office occupations. The College also offers many fee-based community service classes. In addition, a large basic skills and ESL program is offered to meet the needs of Merced's diverse population. Students who need a review of basic reading, writing, and math skills will find individualized attention in the College's computerized Developmental Education labs. English-as-a-Second Language is taught in an open entry/open exit mode to meet the need of Merced's varied ethnic community.

College Staff:

The College staff includes approximately 123 full-time faculty, 228 full-time classified staff, 348 part-time faculty and 9 senior administrators. The staff is 48% male and 52% female. The ethnic/racial breakdown of staff is as follows: 2% Asian, 3.4% Black, 15% Hispanic, 72% White, 1% Filipino, 1% American Indian, and 2% other.

The college has had a significant number of retirements among faculty (and staff). In the last six years, the college has replaced approximately one third of its faculty, bringing new blood and new ideas to the college. The college has also improved its ratio of classes taught by full-time faculty compared to those taught by adjunct faculty. Over the last six years, the college's administration has remained stable (no turnover). This continuity has been positive for the college, particularly when compared to previous years where there seemed to be little or no continuity at all.

Student Body:

The current ethnic composition of the student body generally reflects the ethnicity of the population served. Total enrollment in the 2003-2004 school year was 8,992. Student body characteristics include an enrollment that is 62% female, 38% male, 53% age 25 or older, and approximately 59% from minority backgrounds. (Additional student data in graphic form follows the narrative.)

Area:

Merced County is located in the center of the San Joaquin Valley, near the geographical center of the state. The County is basically agrarian with some light manufacturing and service industries. Merced College is located in the City of Merced which has a population of 69,805 and is the largest incorporated area of the county and a business and industrial center. The City is approximately 125 miles south of San Francisco and 275 miles north of Los Angeles.

Merced County covers an area of 1,929 square miles and has 231,574 residents. The City of Merced is the County seat and the city with the largest population. The City of Los Banos, the second largest city in the County, has a population of 29,150. The City of Merced is approximately equidistant between the cities of Modesto to the north and Fresno to the south. Continuing outgrowth from the Greater San Francisco/Oakland Bay Area to the north is beginning to affect the area, increasing both housing prices and new business development.

The County is going through a number of changes that are transforming both its work force and the economy as a whole. First, there are ongoing changes in the size and composition of the population and a changing mix of business and industry which will affect employment opportunities and income levels. For example, by 2030, the population of Merced County is expected to grow to 417,200, an 80% increase. (Additional data are provided in the demographics section.) Second, Merced is now the home of the tenth campus of the University of California. U.C. Merced will open its doors to its first students in the fall of 2005. The new U.C. campus will bring new population growth, an expanded cultural base, and greater economic expansion to the City and County of Merced.

Within its service area, Merced College serves a variety of minority-populations including a large migrant population as well as a large Southeast Asian population (approximately 12,000). Overall, Merced County has a varied cross section of ethnic groups: 43% are Caucasian, 47% Hispanic, 2% Black, 7% Asian, and less than 1% Native American. The City of Merced is the seventh most ethnically diverse metropolitan area in the United States. As noted above, net immigration of Southeast Asians has been dramatic. Merced now has the highest per capita concentration of Southeast Asian refugees of any of the fifty-three counties in California. Most settled in the area during the last ten to fifteen years. In 45.2% of homes, a language other than English is spoken. The 2000 U.S. Bureau of Census data indicates that 16.9% of Merced County residents live in poverty.

Merced County is farm-dependent as defined by the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The County ranks sixth in the State of California in agricultural production, accounting for over \$1.4 billion of agricultural products in 2002. Despite the County's current status, it has been steadily moving from an agriculturally-dominated economy to a more diversified service and light manufacturing economy. The largest category of employment in the area is government at 20.5%. Currently, agriculture employment is at 16.5%, manufacturing at 16.5%, retail trade at 12%, and services at 12%. The present economy is balanced by light industry ranging from agribusiness support industries (food processing, canning, agricultural equipment, etc.) and small manufacturing to a number of world-class corporations. The County's unemployment rate in 2002 was 14.3%, approximately 9% above the state average. The unemployment rate in the County over the last ten years has been very high, averaging 14 to 15% per year. As the County moves towards a more diversified mix of employment, light manufacturing and service industries will play an increasingly larger role in the local economy.

Significant Developments Since the Last Visit

Passage of Bond Measures:

In addition to the opening of the earlier-mentioned U.C. campus in Merced, the passage of two bond measures were the most significant events that have occurred which will affect the future of Merced College. The Merced Community College District was successful in the election conducted on November 5, 2002, in obtaining authorization from the District's voters to issue up to \$53,500,000 in bonds for the Merced Campus and up to \$11,930,000 in bonds for the Los Banos campus. The election was conducted under Proposition 39.

Merced Campus: The Merced Bond was passed to build new facilities on the main campus of Merced College to support education and occupational training in sciences, agriculture, technology, health and business, including classrooms, labs and lecture halls; construct a library with computer/research facilities; renovate existing buildings, including the provision of access for disabled students; and for other related projects. Over the next ten years, the following construction projects will occur on the Merced Campus:

- North Loop Road
- Science Building Remodel
- Learning Resources Center
- Business Resource Center
- Leshner Building Remodel
- Allied Health Center
- Agriculture/Industrial Technology Center
- Various remodels

The Science Building remodel has begun, and construction of the new Learning Resource Center will begin this spring.

Los Banos Campus: The Los Banos Bond was passed to establish a new, permanent Los Banos Campus for the Merced Community College District on 120 acres of land that was donated to the College. The bond will finance construction of buildings for classrooms, laboratories, libraries, technology and vocational education programs; provide for the development of the physical site; and enable other related projects. Over the next three years, the first phase of the Los Banos Campus, which consists of three buildings, will be completed. Construction begins this spring.

Other Significant Developments:

Other key developments affecting Merced College include:

1. A large turnover of faculty - approximately one third of the faculty is new since the last visit.
2. Two new buildings were completed: a new Child Development Center and the new Interdisciplinary Academic Center (classrooms, labs, and faculty offices).
3. The passage of the state education construction bond measure was passed which will allow Merced College (as well as others) to leverage the funds from the two local bond measures that were passed in 2002.
4. Obtained a second, individual five-year \$2 million U.S. Department of Education Hispanic-Serving Institutions' grant under the Strengthening Institutions programPartnering with Modesto Junior College and California State University at Stanislaus to obtain a five-year, \$3 million HSI Cooperative grant under the same program.

- Merced College 2004 Accreditation Self-Study -

5. Two improved instructional support strategies are being implemented, Supplemental Instruction and Learning Communities, to better assist and support our students in learning Math and English. Both are being supported by grant funds - from a new Carnegie/Hewlett Packard grant and by the HSI Cooperative grant noted above in #4.

Off-Campus Sites and Centers and Distance Learning

The Los Banos Campus:

The Los Banos Campus, an educational center forty miles from the Merced Campus, serves the people of Los Banos, Dos Palos, and the surrounding area. It provides educational opportunities to many people for whom commuting to Merced is a physical or economic hardship, and it serves as a cultural and intellectual center for the west side of Merced County. As noted earlier, a bond measure was recently passed that will fund the building of a new Los Banos Campus.

The Los Banos Campus offers a variety of programs for day and evening students. It provides a wide range of academic and vocational classes, enabling students to stay in Los Banos and take all the courses necessary for an A.A. degree, and fulfill all the breadth requirements of four-year state universities.

Other Off-Campus Programs:

In addition to extensive day and evening programs at the Merced and Los Banos Campuses, Merced College also provides classes in South Merced, Livingston, Dos Palos, Le Grand, Chowchilla, and Mariposa. Merced College also makes an active effort to reach out to meet community needs through its off-campus contract education offerings to business and government agencies.

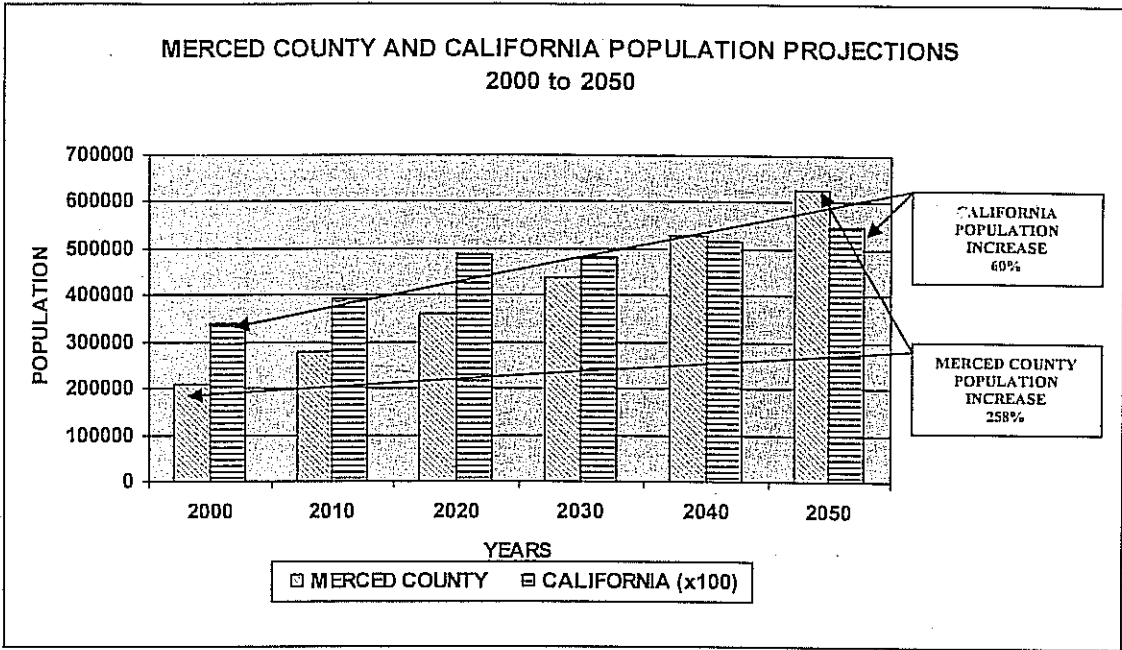
Distance Learning:

The Merced College Distance Learning Program reaches beyond the traditional classroom in order to fill the educational and career needs of people who are not being served by more conventional approaches. Distance Learning courses provide an excellent alternative for students who are unable to attend classes during regular hours, or who would like to take additional units in a time-efficient manner. All courses maintain the

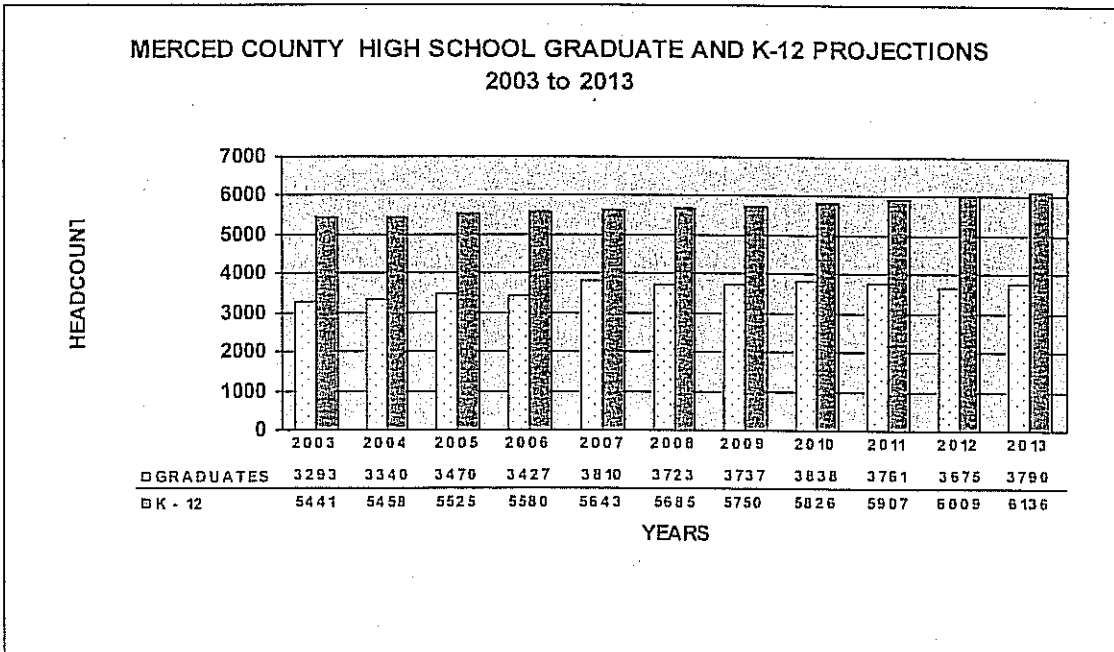
- Merced College 2004 Accreditation Self-Study -

high academic standards of Merced College and are transferable. The college presently offers ten to fifteen Distance Learning classes per semester. All are Internet-based and have been approved by the Merced College Curriculum Committee. Students are required to have experience with e-mail, using file attachments, web browsing, uploading and downloading files, and using on-line chats and electronic bulletin boards. Naturally, they also must have access to a PC or Mac computer.

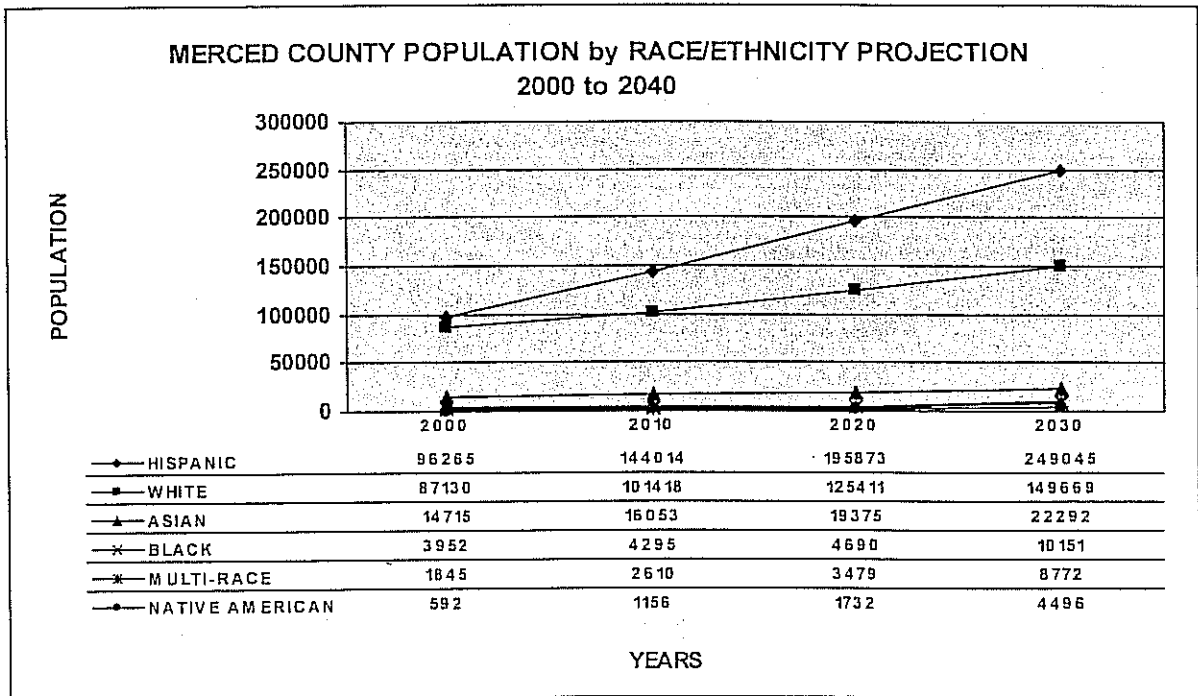
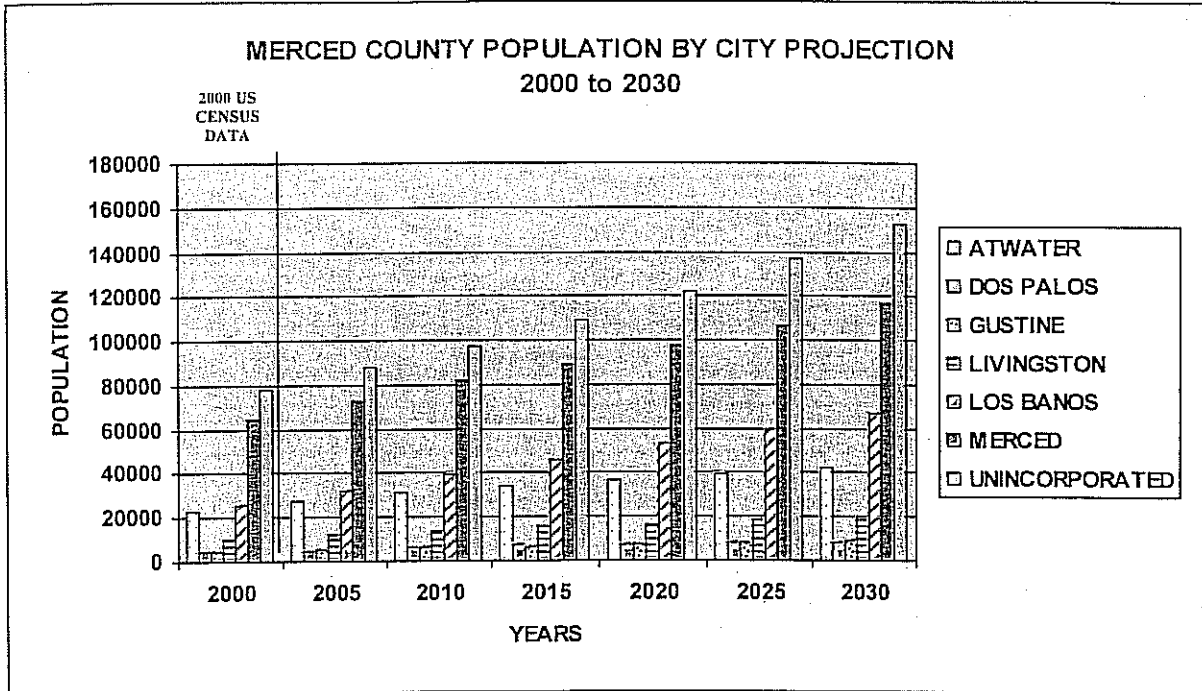
AREA DEMOGRAPHICS

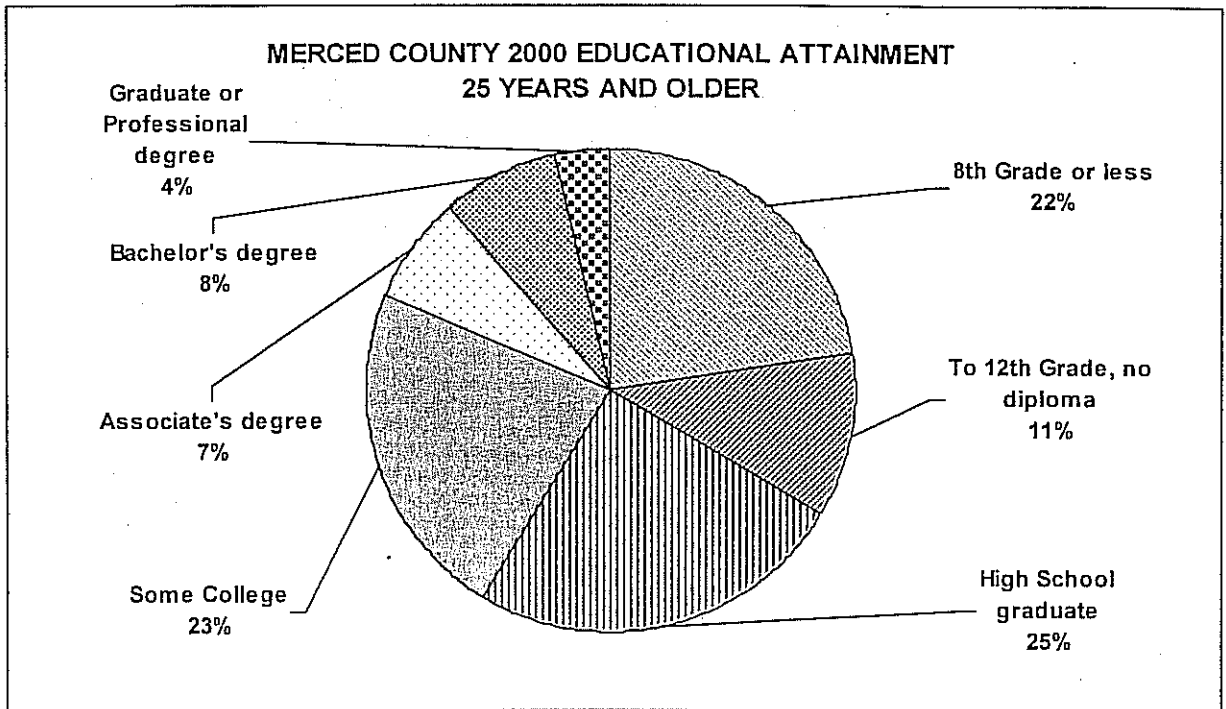
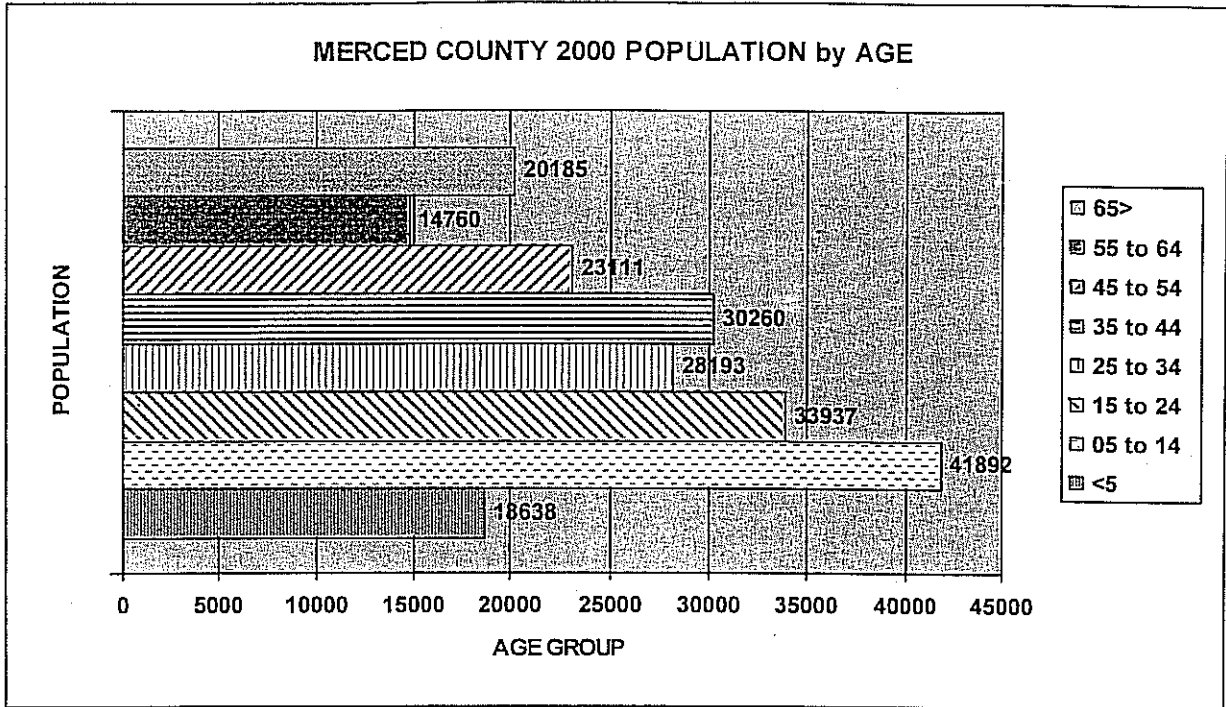


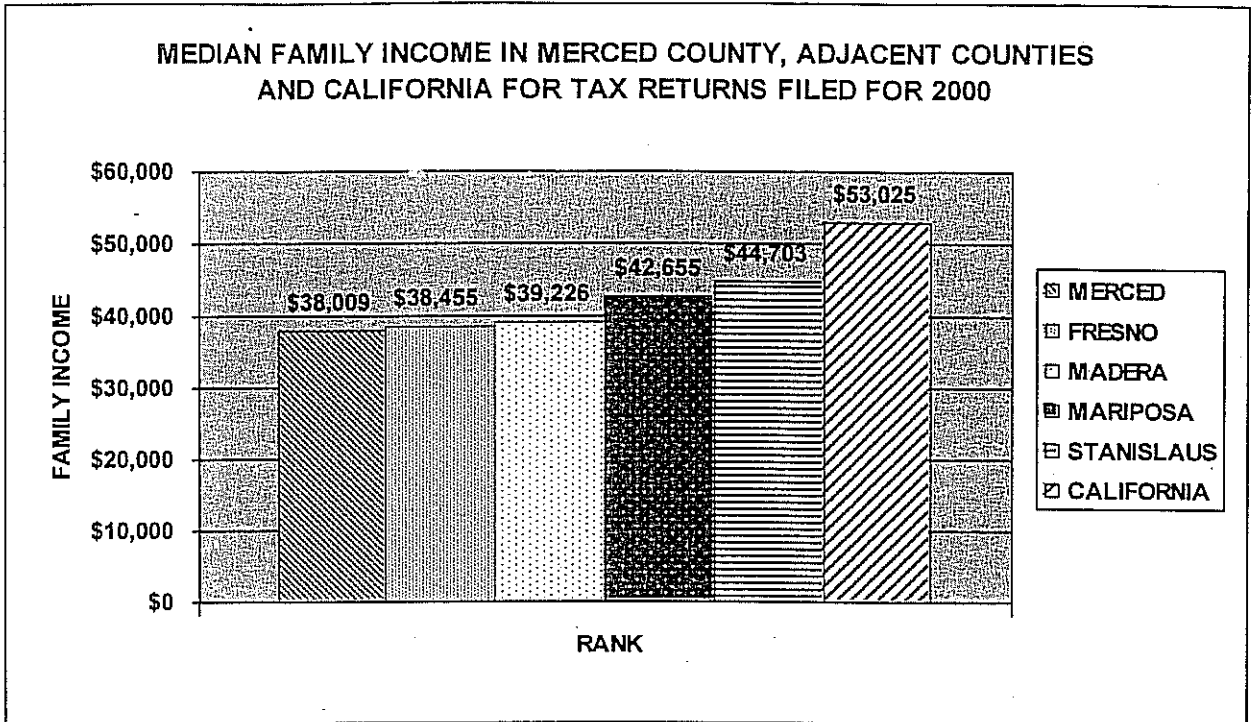
SOURCE: CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE



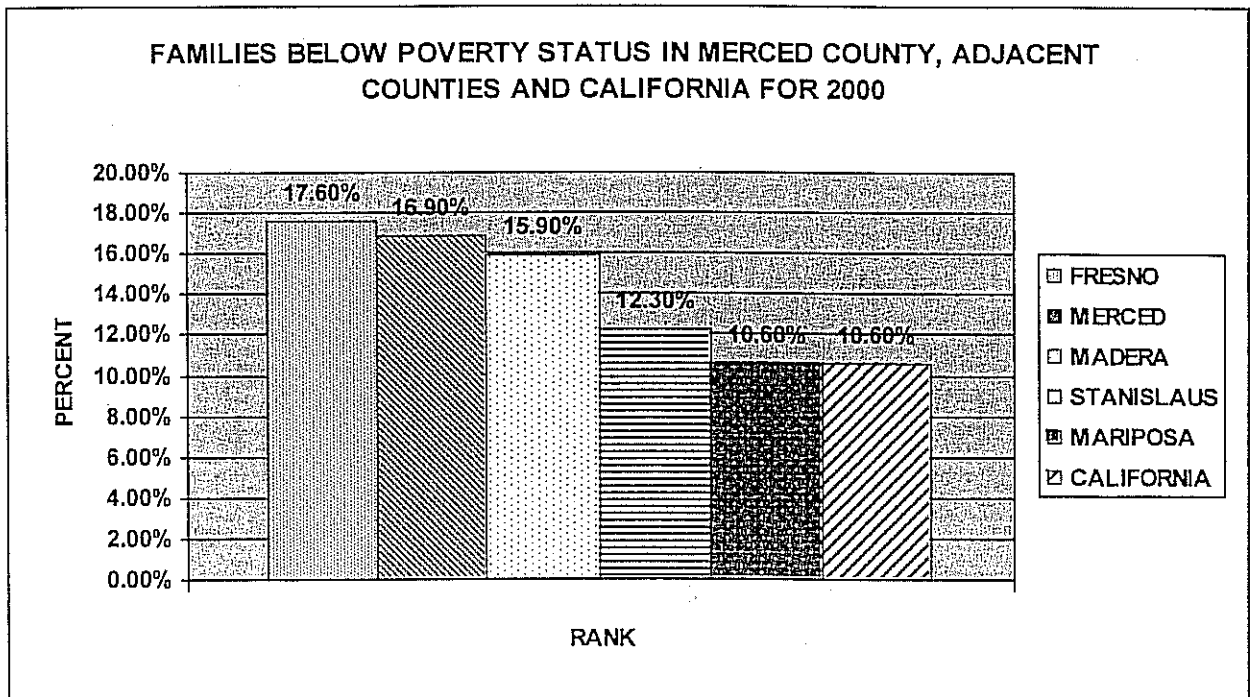
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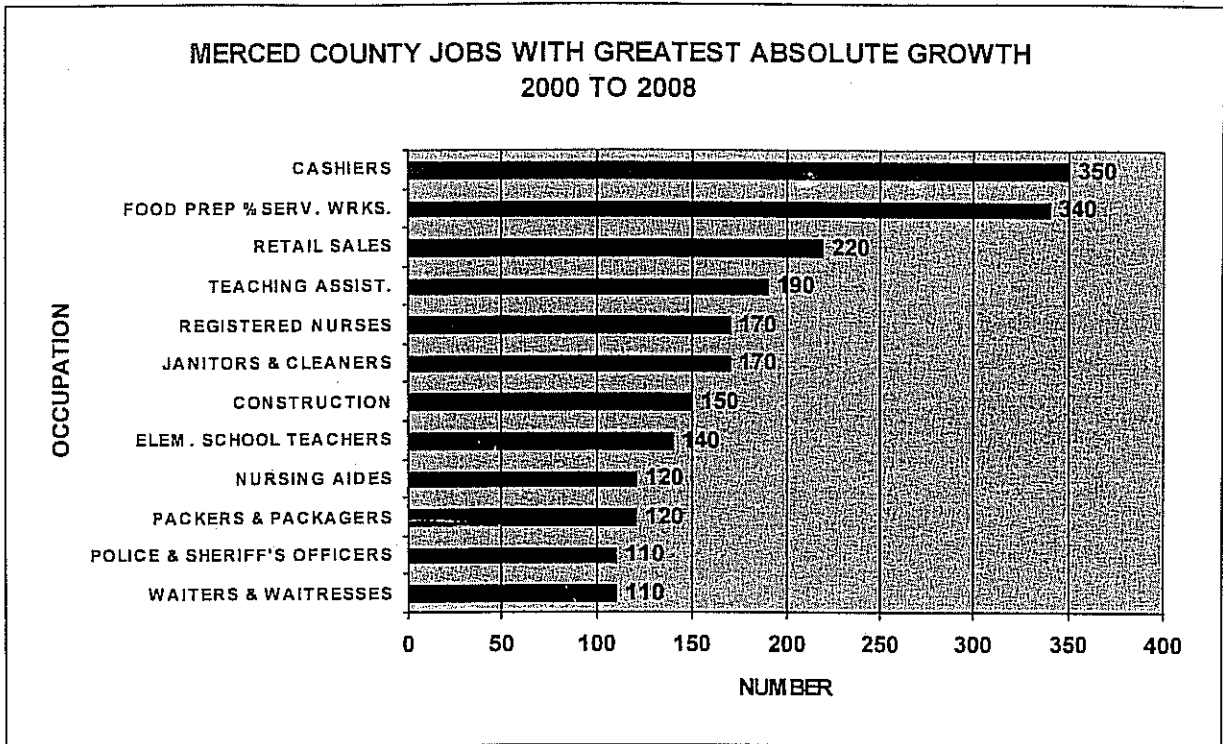




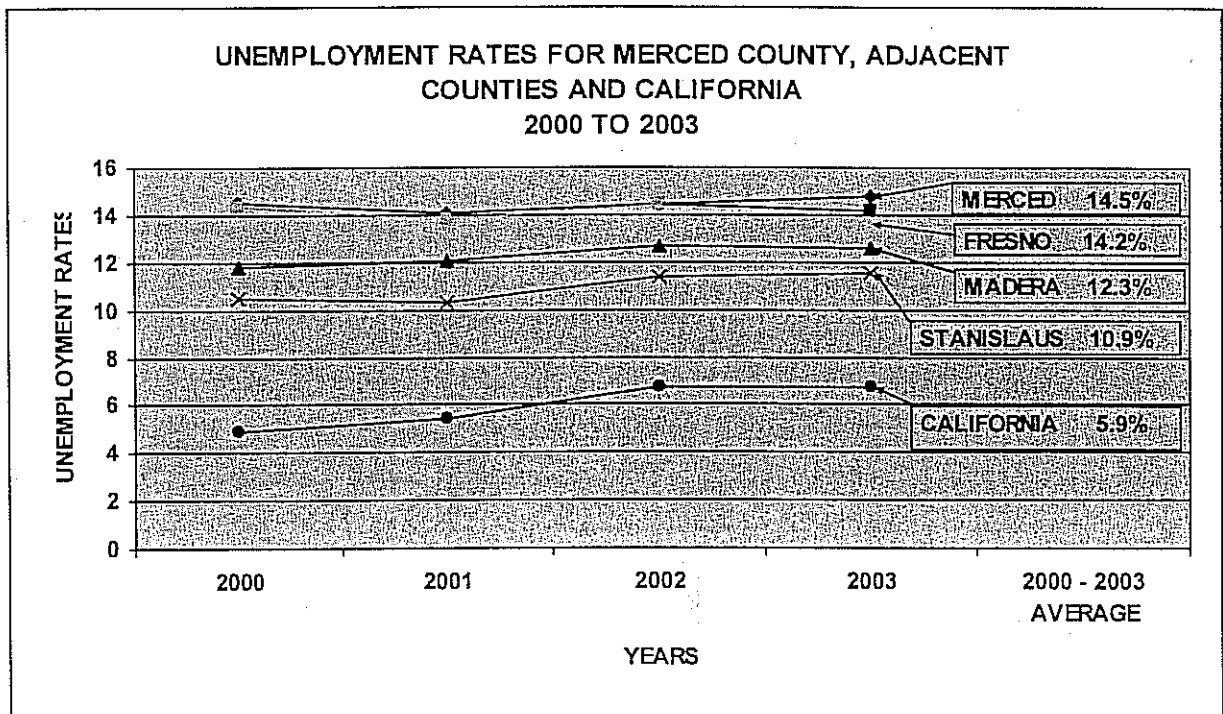
SOURCE: US CENSUS BUREAU



SOURCE: US CENSUS BUREAU

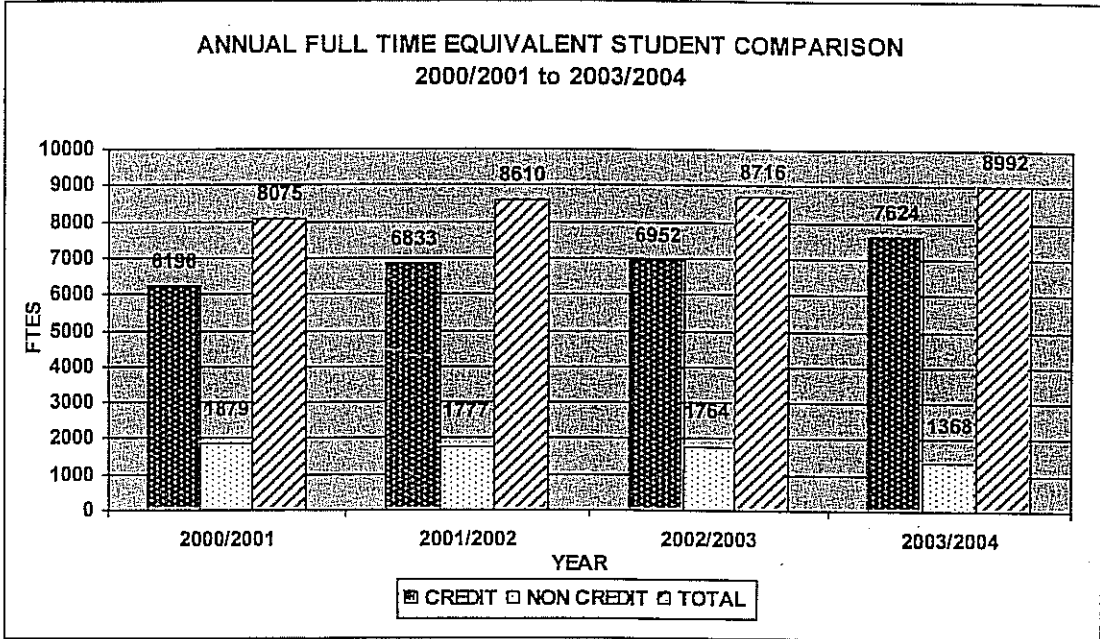


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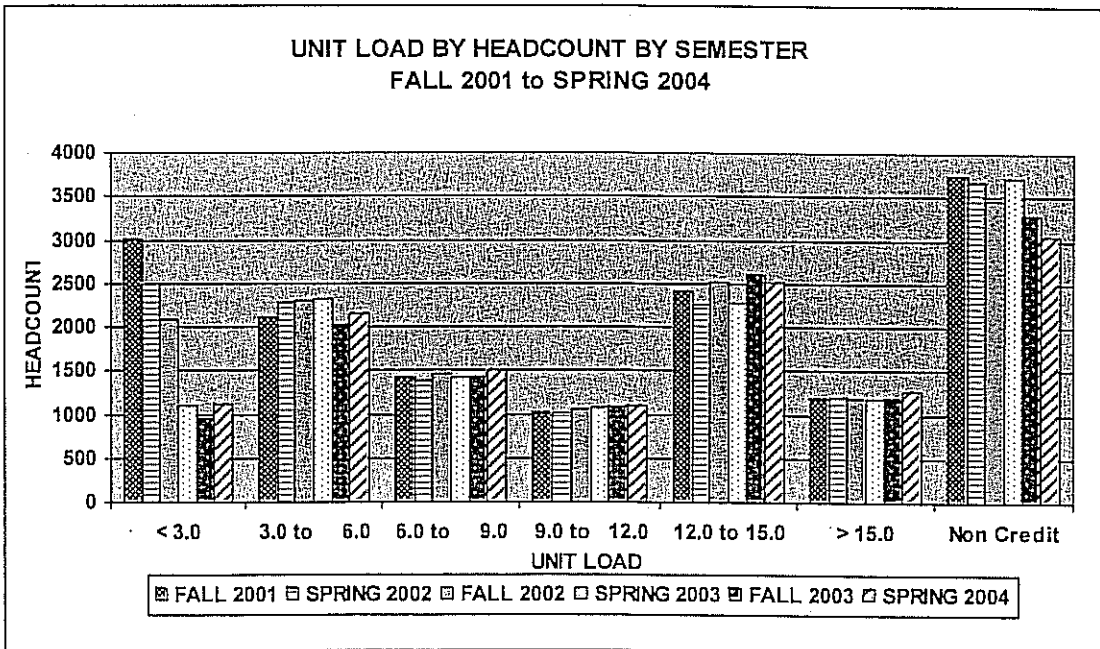


SOURCE: US CENSUS BUREAU

ENROLLMENT STATISTICS



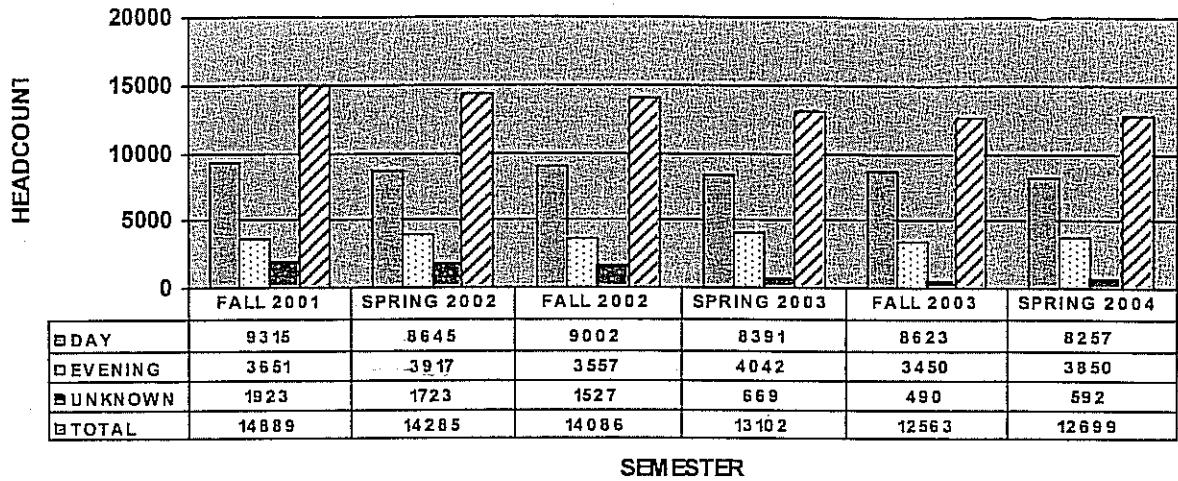
MERCED COLLEGE M.I.S.



SOURCE: MERCED COLLEGE M.I.S.

- Merced College 2004 Accreditation Self-Study -

**MERCED COLLEGE DAY/EVENING HEADCOUNT
FALL 2001 to SPRING 2004**

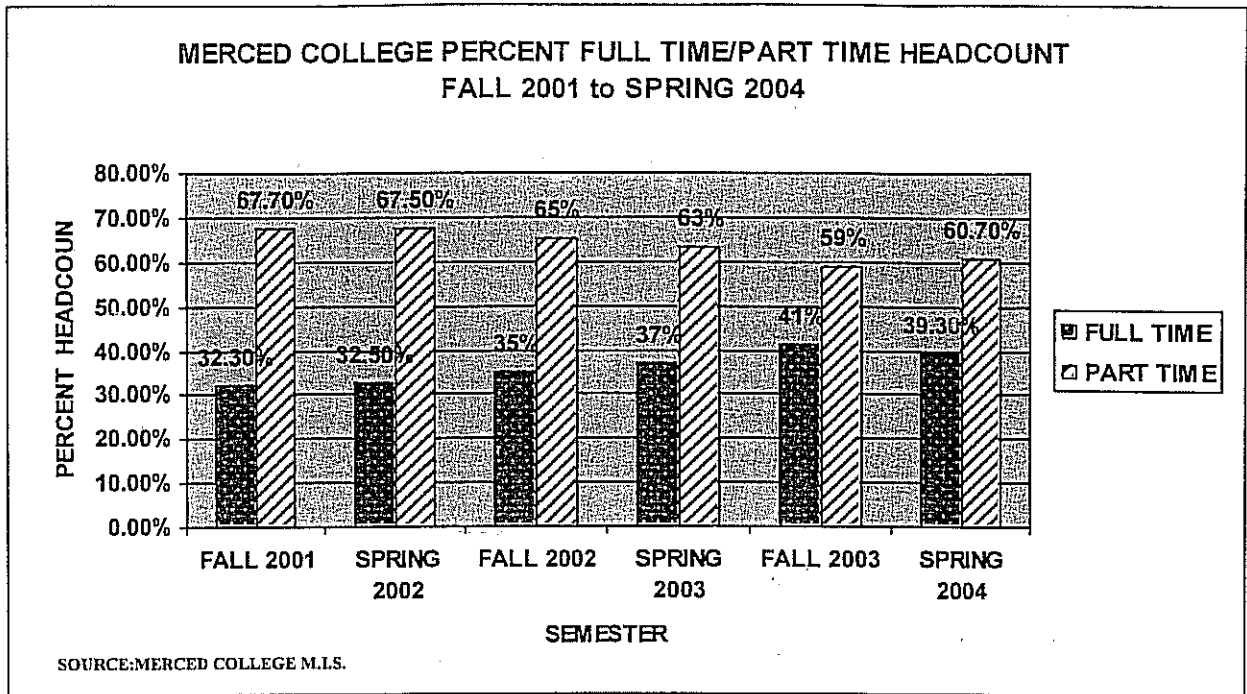


SOURCE: MERCED COLLEGE M.I.S.

**MERCED COLLEGE ENROLLMENT STATUS
FALL 2001 to SPRING 2004**

	FALL 2001	SPRING 2002	FALL 2002	SPRING 2003	FALL 2003	SPRING 2004
CONTINUING STUDENTS	5511	6165	5581	6249	5593	6599
FIRST-TIME STUDENTS	2413	1183	2327	1218	2165	1411
FIRST-TIME TRANSFER STUDENTS	230	198	248	256	220	226
NOT APPLICABLE	2129	1807	1231	734	591	549
RETURNING STUDENTS	964	1398	1265	1003	764	857
UNCOLLECTED/ UNREPORTED	3642	3534	3434	3642	3230	2997
TOTAL	14889	14285	14086	13102	12563	12699

SOURCE: MERCED COLLEGE M.I.S.

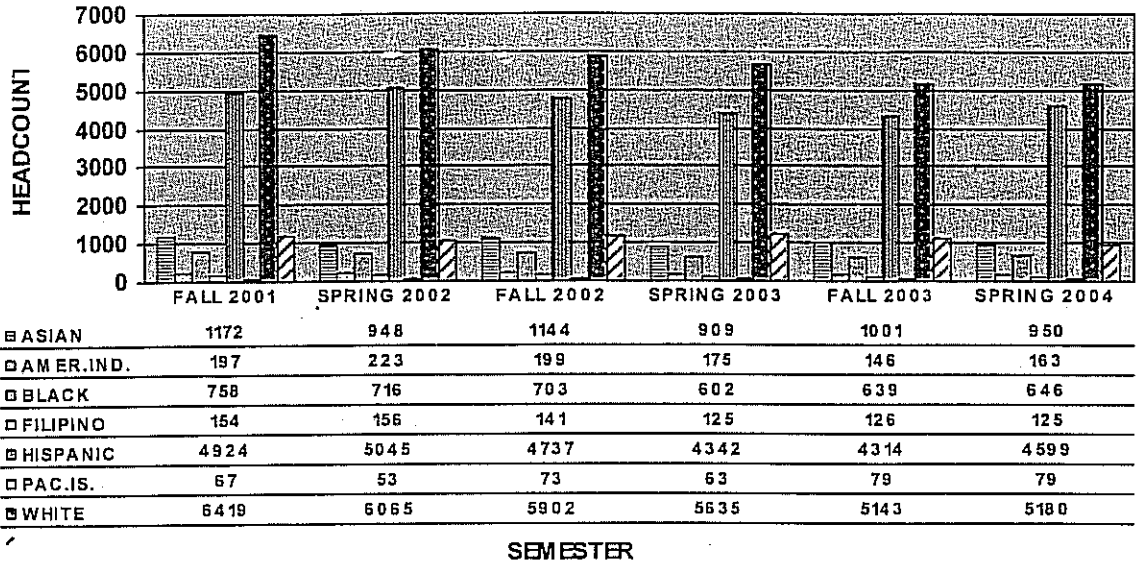


**MERCED COLLEGE COMBINED CREDIT/NON-CREDIT FTES BY TOPS CODE
ANNUAL 1999/2000 to 2003/2004**

TOPS CODE	TITLE	1999/2000	2000/2001	2001/2002	2002/2003	2003/2004
1	AG. & NATURAL SCIENCES	149	126	126	108	139
4	BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES	268	237	307	182	483
5	BUSINESS & MANAGEMENT	324	297	340	335	378
6	COMMUNICATION	4	4	2	3	3
7	COMPUTERS & INFO. SCIENCES	203	226	225	207	253
13	CONSUMER ED. & HOME EC.	304	297	315	302	290
8	EDUCATION	1135	1115	1333	1264	1149
9	ENGR. & INDUSTRIAL TECH.	267	295	308	266	385
10	FINE & APPLIED ARTS	518	493	530	597	613
11	FOREIGN LANGUAGES	139	126	138	154	158
12	HEALTH	356	348	373	442	458
15	HUMANITIES	766	749	768	815	774
49	INTERDISCIPLINARY STUDIES	1821	1850	1861	1860	1662
14	LAW	24	22	28	25	29
16	LIBRARY STUDIES	2	1	1	1	1
17	MATHEMATICS	611	597	649	740	731
19	PHYSICAL SCIENCES	143	127	157	163	259
20	PSYCHOLOGY	174	163	172	180	169
21	PUBLIC AFFAIRS & SAFETY	175	196	234	218	266
22	SOCIAL SCIENCES	791	805	744	854	788

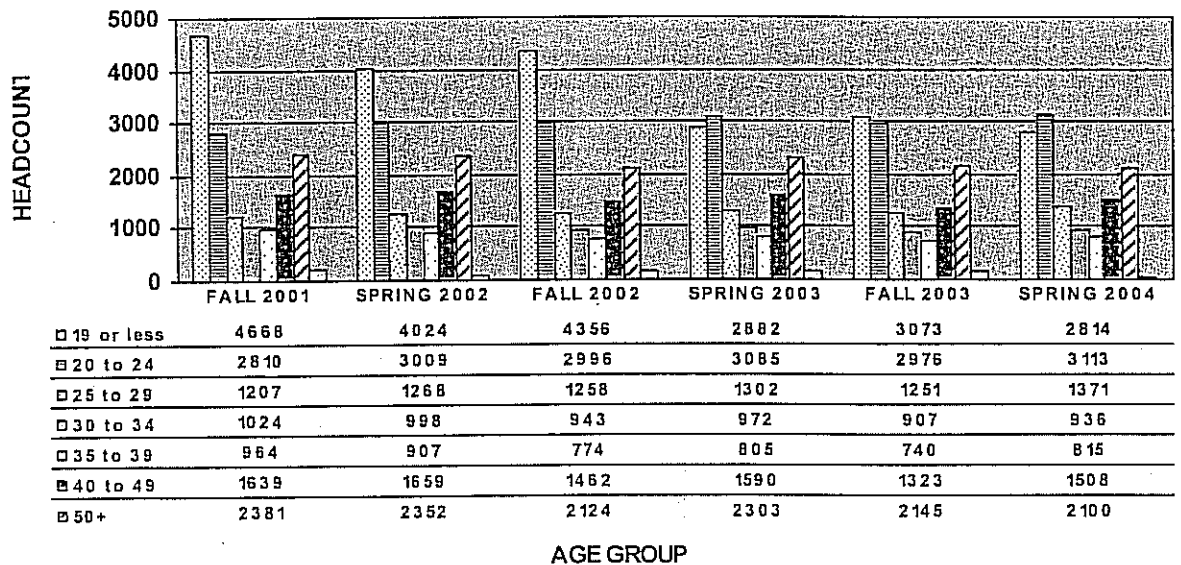
SOURCE: MERCED COLLEGE M.I.S.

**MERCED COLLEGE STUDENTS BY ETHNICITY
FALL 2001 to SPRING 2004**

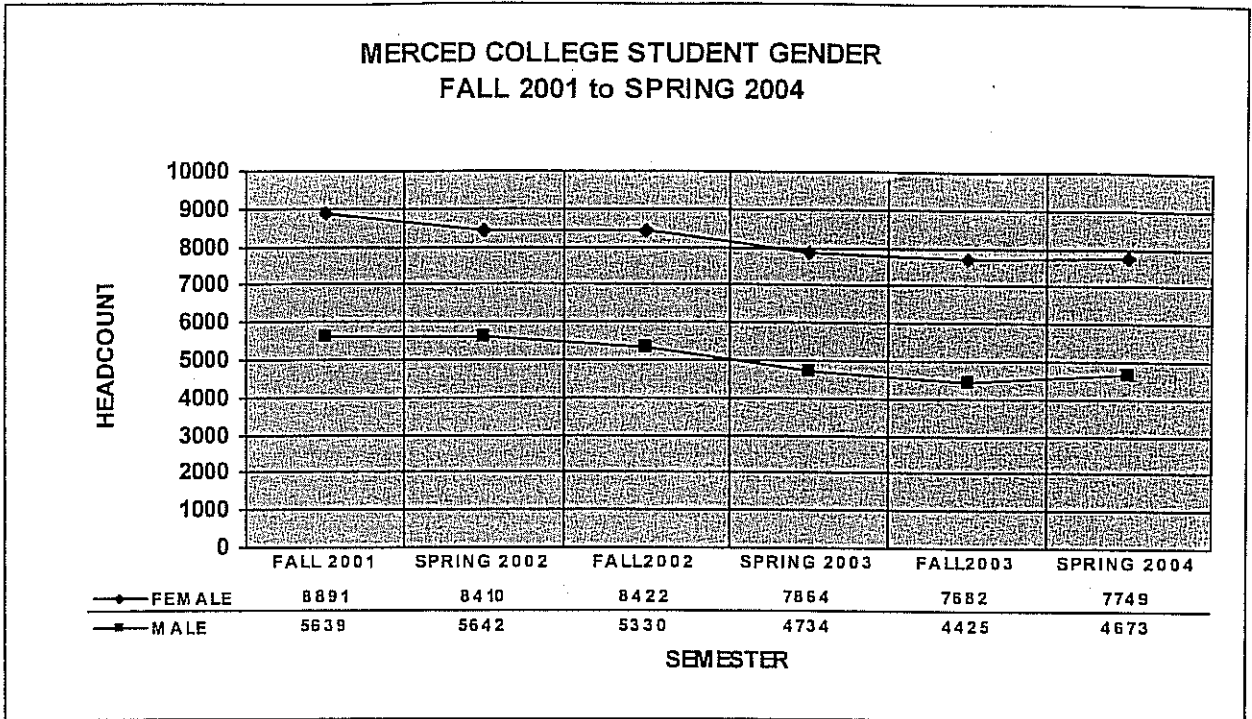


SOURCE : MERCED COLLEGE M.I.S.

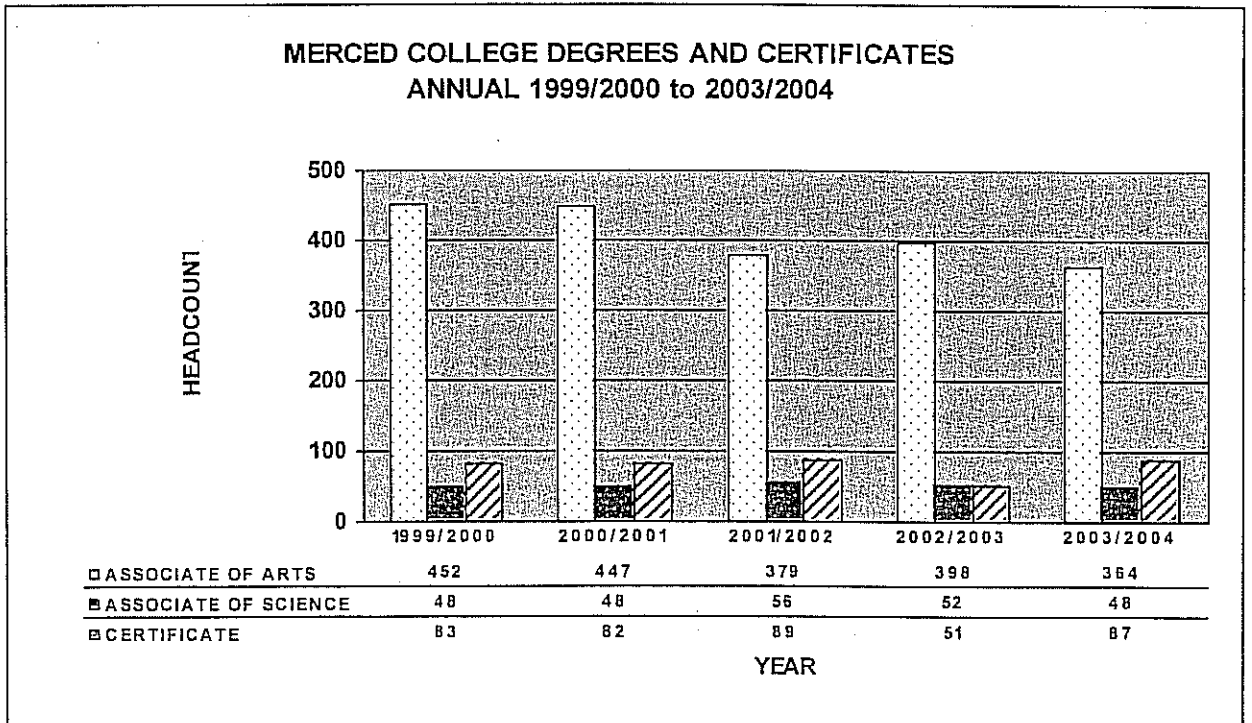
**MERCED COLLEGE STUDENTS BY AGE GROUP
FALL 2001 to SPRING 2004**



SOURCE: MERCED COLLEGE M.I.S.



SOURCE: MERCED COLLEGE M.I.S.

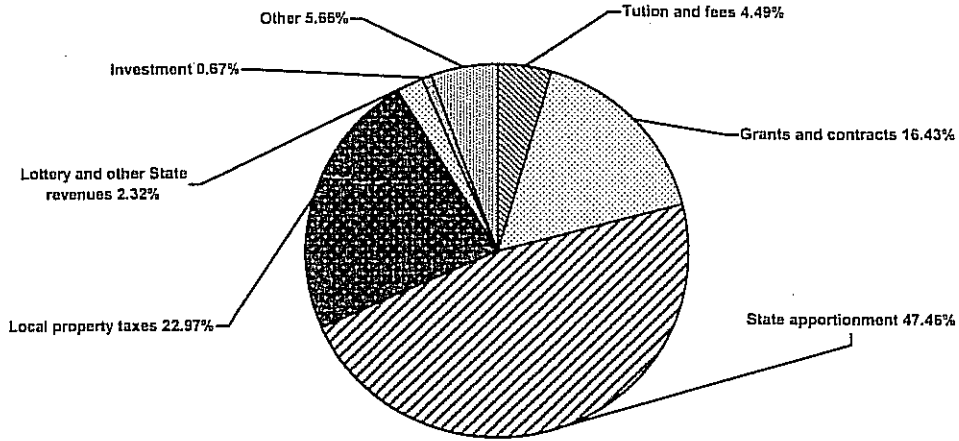


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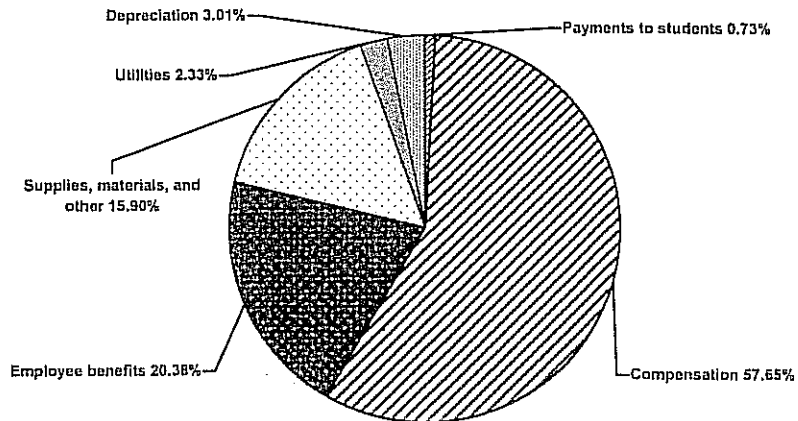
College Budget

General Fund Revenue and Expenditures

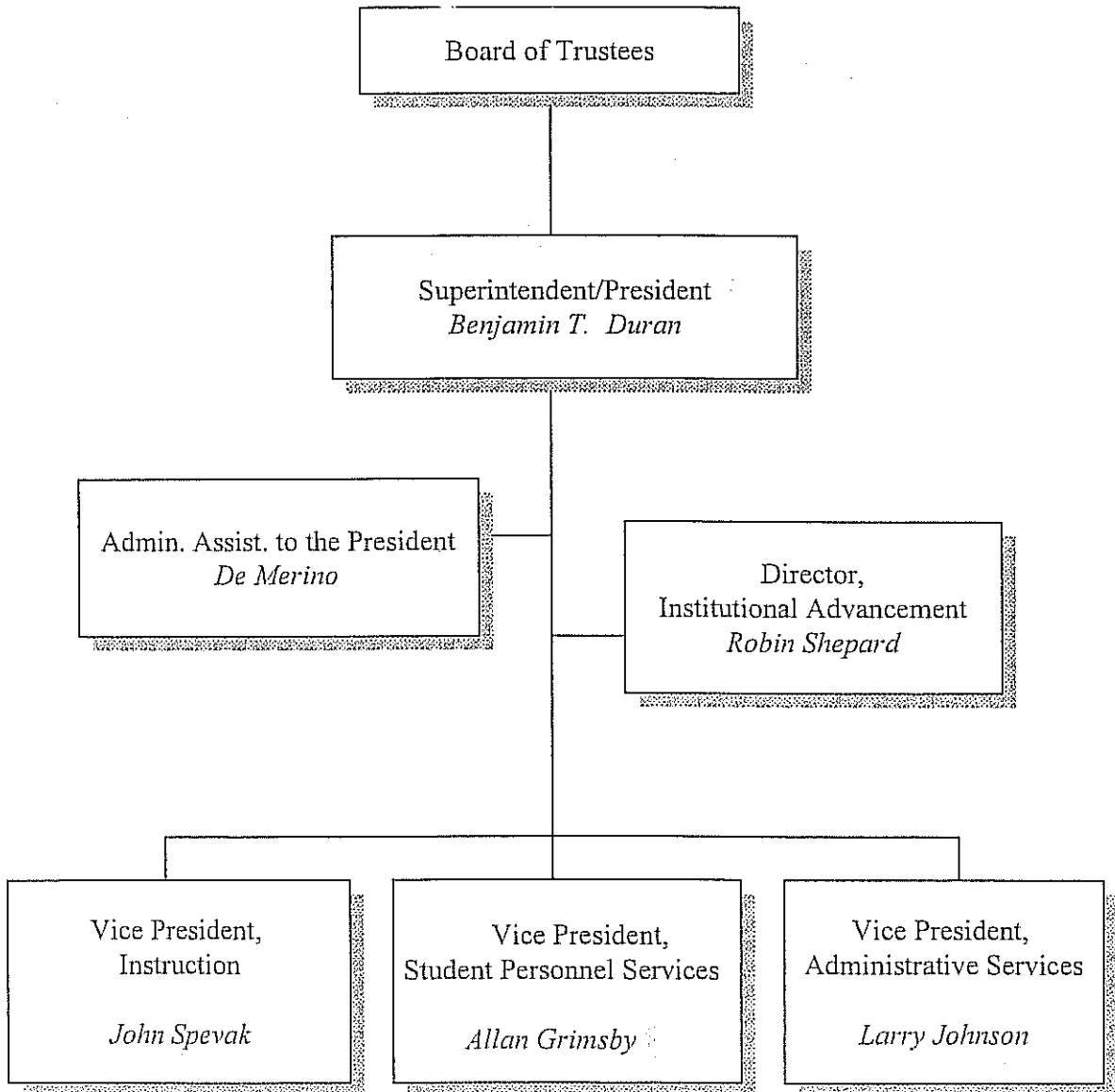
2003 - 2004 Revenue
\$48,202,657



2003 - 2004 Expenditures
\$47,993,460

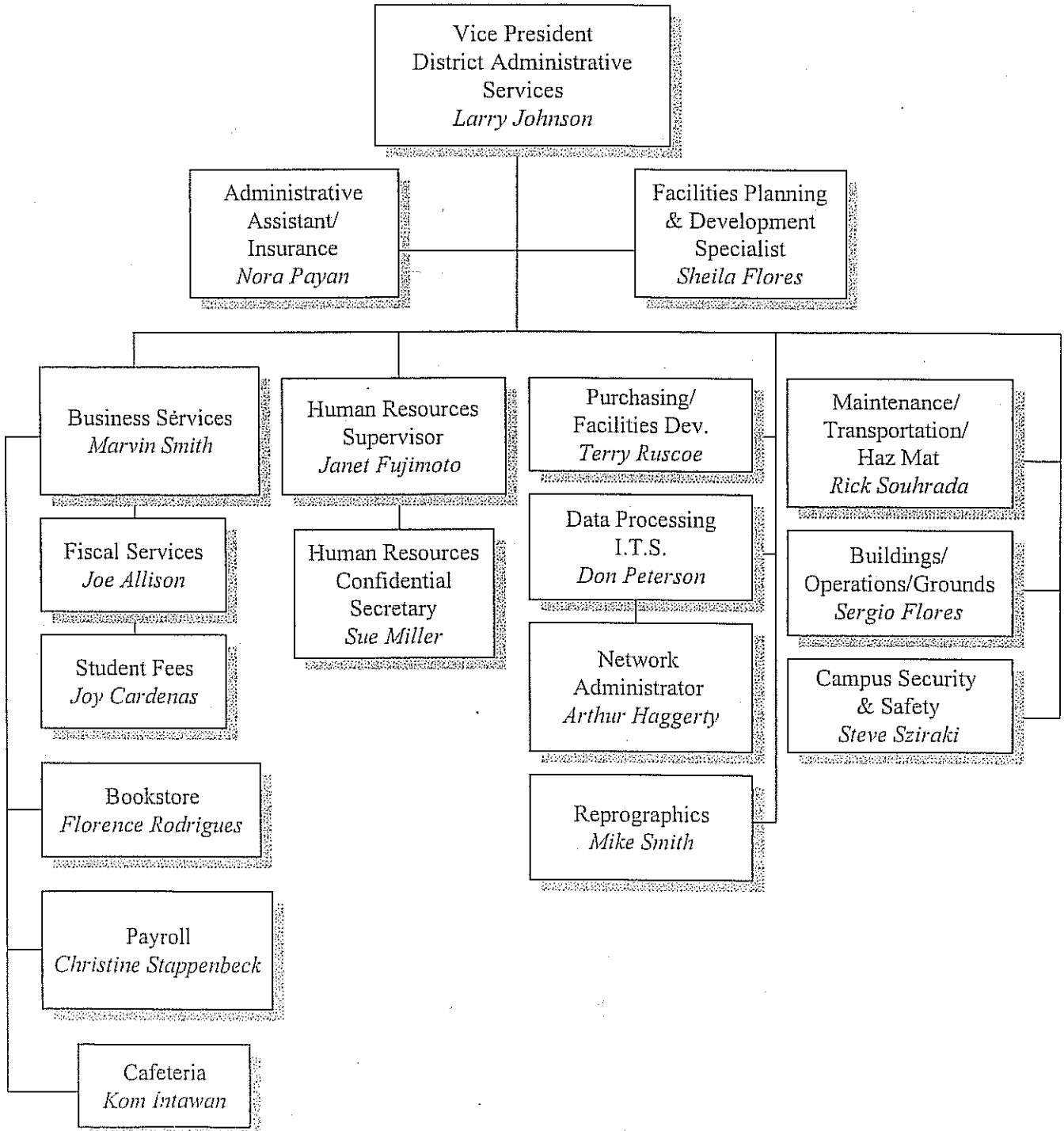


Merced College Organizational Chart 2004-05

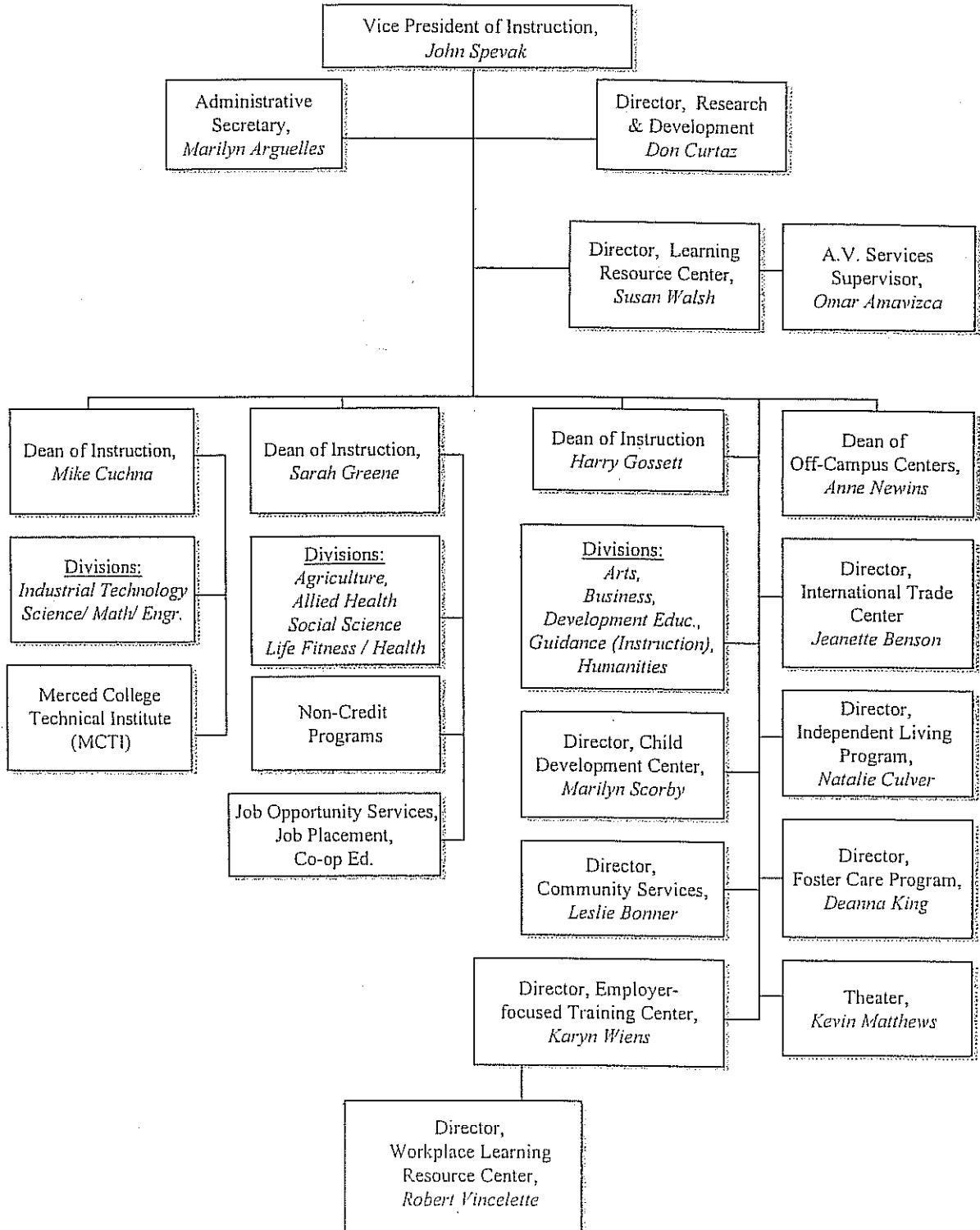


Merced College

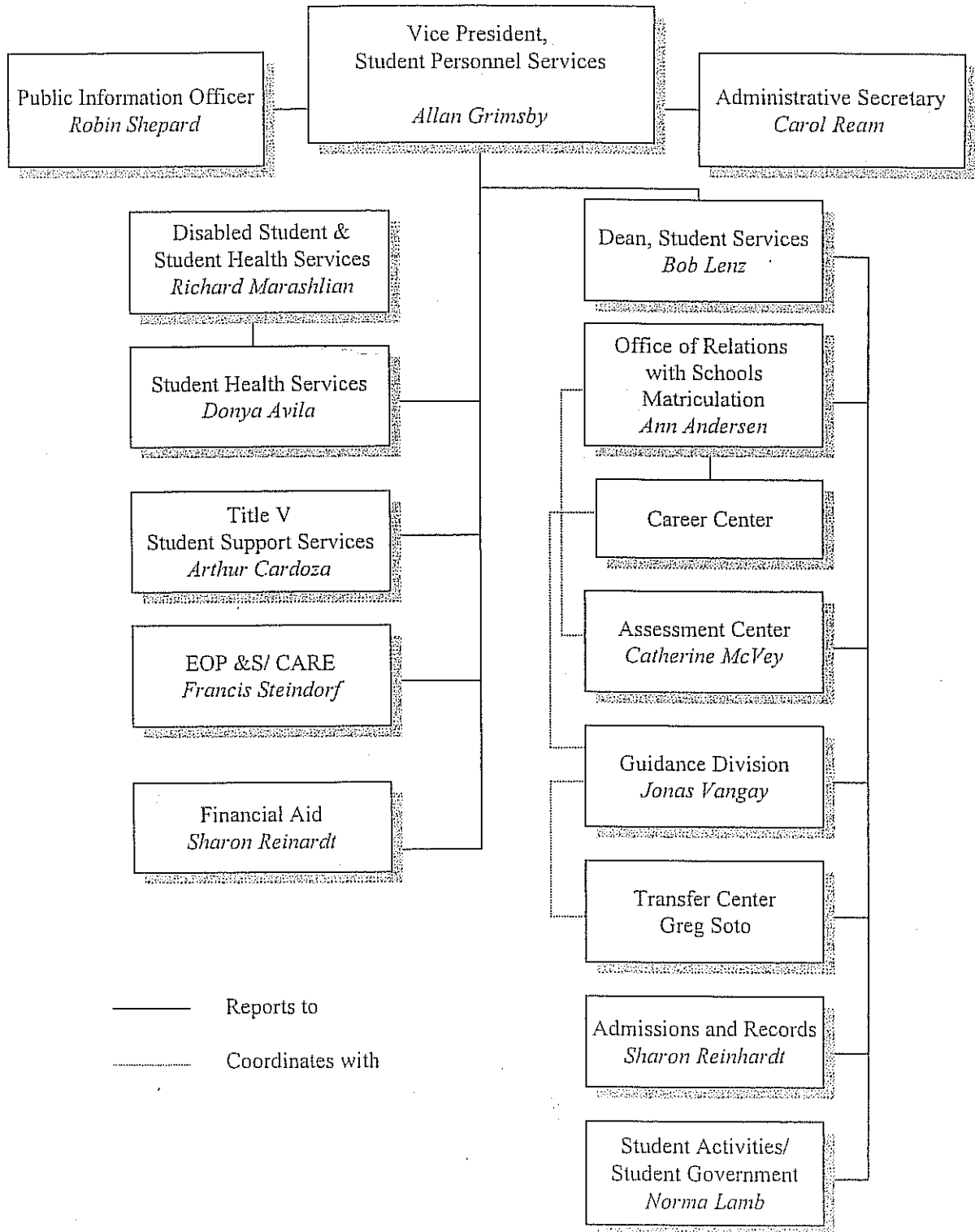
District Administrative Services



Merced College Office of Instruction



Merced College
Office of Student Personnel Services



Abstract

Compliance With Accreditation Standards:

During the 2003-2004 school year, Merced College staff, students, Board members and community representatives participated in preparing this comprehensive self-study. Its major focus is to appraise all aspects of institutional performance and to identify problems or weaknesses. Although recommendations for improvement exist in most areas, the study shows that the college is in basic compliance with each of the standards. The final self-study report is being distributed to the college planning committees so that they can begin addressing the weaknesses found and implementing the planning agenda and other recommendations for change and improvement. Merced College is committed to incorporating these plans and recommendations into its planning process and implementing them over the coming years.

Evaluation, Planning, and Improvement At Merced College:

Planning

Since the last accreditation team visit in 1998, a number of significant changes have taken place in the planning process at Merced College. The college has continued its development of a comprehensive planning model which encompasses short and long-range planning in a committee structure that utilizes shared governance.

- Merced College 2004 Accreditation Self-Study -

Under the direction of the college's Superintendent/President, Dr. Benjamin Duran, the college revised and improved its planning process. With some exceptions, the planning committees, which are an integral part of the planning model, first began their work in the 1991-92 school year. Since that time, and particularly since Dr. Duran was hired as Superintendent/President in 1997, their roles have been clarified and their effectiveness improved. A focus on budget planning led to the formation of the Budget Development Committee, which was later renamed the Committee on Budget Review and Recommendation (CBRR). With each new budget cycle, the budget development process has been reviewed, and recommendations for improvement have been implemented.

Over the last six years, new and revised master planning committees were developed. These include the Administrative Services and Technology Master Planning Committees, and the revised Staff Planning & Priorities Committee (formerly two separate committees). These and the other master planning committees submit their annual plans to the Educational Master Planning Committee which works closely with the Committee on Budget Review & Recommendation.

An Example of Improvement - Information Technology Services

Merced College has developed and implemented significant improvements to its Information Technology Services (ITS) department. ITS has added four new employees since the last accreditation visit. The college now has a dedicated web master, as well as additional support for campus networking and database administration.

The college has fully implemented DataTel, a relational data base that includes student, staff, financial and other modules. DataTel software, in combination with upgraded hardware, replaced the college's aging legacy computer system at about the time of the last accreditation. The DataTel system is now providing a more comprehensive, real time access to key data for the college's staff to use in day-to-day and long-term management.

The college recently received a grant from Oracle that is providing full access to Oracle database software along with technical support. This grant will give the college greater capacity and ability in utilizing database software to manage the college.

An ongoing and significant technological development is the maintenance and expansion of the college's computer network. The college now provides even greater access to students and staff through an expanded number of computers in labs and offices and a much faster connection to the Internet. The college now has a total of 1,124 computer work stations in the various labs on campus.

The expansion of the college's Intranet and full, high-speed access to the Internet and World Wide Web are changing the way College staff and students see the world and implement instructional activities, as well as how they interact and communicate on a daily basis.

In the 2004-05 academic year, the college is implementing its last year of a five-year Title V, Hispanic-Serving Institutions grant (federal Dept. of Education). The Title V grant has made many new activities possible, along with enabling improvements in many key areas on campus. This includes providing funds for technology equipment upgrading and expansion, supporting multimedia instruction (now considered a must by many instructors), providing support for the Merced College Foundation, and targeting additional outreach and support services to Hispanic and other low-income students.

Organization and Institutional Commitments

Merced College is committed to student learning and development and seeks, in this context, to be responsive to the surrounding community. The key focus and commitment

of Merced College is exemplified in the college's mission statement: "Students are our focus, and we are known by their success." Specific examples of ways that the college is responding to the particular needs of its students and the surrounding community are noted below.

The college built a permanent center to replace the portables previously used to house its Early Childhood Education Center. In addition, the college's new Interdisciplinary Academic Center was completed in December of 2004 and is now fully occupied (includes classrooms, labs, and faculty offices).

Key industry-responsive programs, which were developed or expanded in coordination with business and health care providers, are continuing to be highly successful. They include the new Sonography program, the Cisco Networking program, and a doubling of enrollment in the college's Registered Nursing program (directly supported by ongoing contributions from area hospitals and the use of grant funds for start-up costs).

The college's Contract Instruction Program has grown in size since the last visit. The services of the college's Employer-focused Training Center have been extended through the continued funding for the Workplace Learning Resource Center. The *Computers in Business* and *Medical Assisting* programs (originally developed with grant funds and now both supported by noncredit FTES) are still going strong. A wide array of contract classes are offered to meet business, industry and government needs. In addition, the college continues to offer the services of its Center for International Trade Development.

Further developments are detailed in the narrative for each standard. Merced College staff continue to work together with other educational institutions and the community to provide quality educational programs and services to the residents of the Merced Community College District.

Student Learning Outcomes

Student learning outcomes for Merced College are being developed at the course, program and institutional level through a five-year plan adopted by the Instructional Master Planning Committee (IMPC) in the Spring of 2004. The IMPC has been given the charge of coordinating the student learning outcomes process on the campus. The Student Learning Outcomes Director will facilitate the development of course-level and program-level outcomes with the discipline faculty. Program-level outcomes will be developed in coordination with the Program Review process. Institutional-level outcomes will be developed, adopted, and evaluated under the direction of the Instructional Master Planning Committee in cooperation with the Faculty Senate, the Superintendent/President and the Board of Trustees.

All student learning outcomes for degrees and certificates at Merced College are determined by the faculty as part of the curriculum review process. Dialogue occurs during curriculum meetings regarding learning outcomes for degrees and certificates as they appear before the committee.

Dialogue and Institutional Integrity

The college has a multitude of avenues through which it conducts an ongoing dialogue concerning the quality of its programs and services and thus its institutional integrity and responsibility to students. The college has a broad-based committee structure that encourages and enables an active dialogue concerning the maintenance of instructional and student service quality. The need to plan and allocate resources to meet student needs is carried out through the college's master planning process, which is built on shared governance and the dialogue that is an integral part of it.

Other key elements in the process of maintaining institutional integrity via an ongoing, open, and collegial dialogue by all campus constituencies include the program review process, the college's responsiveness to following through on accreditation recommendations, and the oversight and participation of an active, informed, and involved board.

Organization Of The Self-Study

The organization of the Accreditation Self Study was planned during the spring of 2003 after reviewing the guidelines of the Accrediting Commission for Community Colleges of the Western Association of Schools and Colleges and beginning the planning process for the development of student learning outcomes. Dee Near was selected to serve as Chair of the Self-Study Committee to help direct the self-study. The Chair and the College's Accreditation Liaison Officer, Dr. Allan Grimsby, established the time table for the self-study and planned for broad participation of staff, students, and community representatives. Following the College's governance model, top administrators and deans acted as resources to the standards committees and, where appropriate, serve directly on the committees. Accreditation activities were given a high priority in the day-to-day business of the College.

Standards' committee members were volunteers from all campus groups, with representatives from key constituencies included as appropriate. Each of the four standards committee selected a lead writer and a secondary writer. Because of its size and scope, three leads were selected for Standard II, one for part A, one for part B, and one for part C. The lead writers and other standards' writers, the chair, the Accreditation Liaison Officer, the editor, and the researcher comprised the Accreditation Self-Study Committee.

After the standards' writers completed the initial drafts of their reports in December of 2003, they were reviewed by the Steering Committee and the editor to produce a first full draft, which was widely distributed for comment. Comments on the content and accuracy of the report were solicited from all major campus organizations, including the ASMC Executive Board, the Classified and Faculty Senates, the associations, the Management Team, and the Board of Trustees. Comments were also solicited from members of the

- Merced College 2004 Accreditation Self-Study -

community. The Self-Study Committee reconvened to review the comments and to make sure the planning agenda were consistent throughout the document. The draft of the Self-Study was also reviewed by senior administrative staff. In late September of 2004 the Self-Study Committee met to finalize the organization of the document and the associated resource materials.

The Merced College Accreditation Self-Study was truly a shared effort. The faculty, classified staff and managers were widely consulted by the standards writers, the Self-Study Committee, and by the chair. All worked cooperatively to complete this in-depth evaluation of the College's programs and services.

Accreditation Self-Study Time Line

May 2003	Confirm Self-study teams to include Faculty, Administration, Classified, and Student members
Summer 03	Create resource intranet site with documentation for self-study teams
Sept 5 03	First Fall Meeting of Self-study teams
Dec. 5 03	First Draft due of each team's self-study report. Share drafts among the teams for comments on themes.
Feb. 20 04	Comments on first drafts of each team's self-study report due to standard leaders.
March 18	Corrections to drafts due to standard leaders
March 30	Accreditation Team meeting 3 p.m.
April – May 04	Self-study report ready for campus review by the Master Planning Committees. Planning agenda to be approved by master planning committees.
May 24	Standards Committee final meeting of the year.
June – Aug 04	Editing of final drafts
August 13	Edited final draft available for review
Sept. 04	Final drafts routed through Senates for acceptance. Faculty Senate will require a resolution.
Sept. 30 04	Final meeting of Self Study Committee prior to Accreditation site visit
Oct 04	Board approval of self-study document
Nov. 04	Self-study sent to AACJC.
Spring 05	Accreditation site visit.

ACCREDITATION SELF-STUDY TEAMS

Standard 1 - Institutional Mission and Effectiveness

Sue Chappell, Lead
Lenice Wilson
Sarah Greene
Bonnie Muscutt
Jim Glidden
Steve Bell

Standard 2 - Student Learning Programs and Services

Part A

Krista Wilson,
Tom McCall
John Spevak
Jim Bonstein
Patricia Schade
Larry Peck
Janice Stearns
Jim Andersen
Jeff Nagano
Dee Near, Lead

Part B - Student

Betsy Donovan
Richard Marashlian
Bob Lenz, Lead
Eugene Her

Part C - Library & Learning Support

Ed Brush, Co-Lead
Susan Kimoto, Co-Lead
Susan Walsh, Staff

Standard 3 - Resources

Vince Piro, Lead
Caroline Dawson
Carl Estrella
Harry Gossett
Michael Barba
Sheila Flores
Will Resendes
Joe Allison

Standard 4 - Leadership and Governance

Mark Nicoll-Johnson, Lead
Ralph Morris
Ray Fitchett
Brenda Latham
Anne Newins

EDITOR: Don Curtaz
RESEARCH SUPPORT: Bob Bauer
ADMINISTRATION LIAISON: Allan Grimsby
CHAIR, SELF-STUDY: Dee Near
SECRETARIAL SUPPORT: Carol Ream

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES TASK FORCE

Bob Bauer
Jim Bonstein
Mike Cuchna
Anne Harris
Mabel Jones
Susan Kimoto
Tom McCall
Dee Near
Jeff Tassej
Bill Walls

SLO TASK FORCE AND ACCREDITATION TEAM MEMBERS

Bob Bauer
Dee Near
Jim Bonstein
Mike Cuchna
Susan Kimoto
Tom McCall

Creation and Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes

Merced College faculty, staff, and administrators have been working over the last two years to understand how to create and assess Student Learning Outcomes (SLO's) at the course, program, degree, and institutional levels. The process is ongoing and continues to this day. In the spring of 2003, the college developed a Student Learning Outcomes Task Force to begin the process of integrating the use and measurement of Student Learning Outcomes at Merced College.

We began the process of learning about SLO's with training. In the spring of 2003, Merced College staff and faculty members attended a workshop on Student Learning Outcomes at Santa Rosa Junior College. In addition, on October 2 of 2003, Merced College staff attended a workshop at Modesto Junior College that placed Student Learning Outcomes (SLO) in the context of the newly-revised accreditation process. And finally, on March 19th of 2004, the college hosted a presentation by Bill Scroggins, President of Modesto Junior College, on how to design and implement SLO's at the institutional, program, and course level.

The college has created a set of twenty preliminary institutional SLO's. Examples include requiring students to:

1. Compose coherent written communication appropriate to the audience.
2. Read and analyze written communication appropriate to the subject.
3. Comprehend and aural and visual communication in its various modes.
4. Apply mathematical concepts to appropriate tasks.

The departments and division are now working developing SLO's for the program and course level. Many of these are targeted for completion of a first draft in the fall of 2005.

- Merced College 2004 Accreditation Self-Study -

To assist in accomplishing this task, the SLO Director, Vince Piro, has developed and distributed the "Division Student Learning Outcomes Report Handbook."

Examples of the data that the college is collecting to assist in measuring SLO's includes:
1) graduation rates, 2) course completion rates, 3) grades, 4) surveys of student satisfaction, and 5) faculty documentation of student course mastery.

Response to Previous Recommendations

RESPONSE TO RECOMMENDATION #1

Establish long-term goals that are a part of the college-wide planning process and integrated with the mission statement.

The Merced College Board of Trustees has established a process by which college goals are set, reviewed, and integrated with the college's mission statement. Each calendar year the Board reviews the previous year's goals and establishes new and/or revised goals. In addition, the mission statement is visited each time to ensure the goals are aligned with the college's mission statement. Upon completion of this process, the administration disseminates to the college community the college's goals for the year. The direction from the Superintendent/President to college-wide planning groups and master planning committees is that the Board goals and the college's mission be considered in the development of both short-term and long-term goals. In the spring, the Board of Trustees holds a meeting where progress on established goals is evaluated. The Board has institutionalized the process for goal setting, evaluation, and integration of its goals into the college master planning process.

RESPONSE TO RECOMMENDATION #2

Systematically assess progress in meeting the college's mission, planning goals, and identified priorities for improvement of programs and services by integrating institutional research with, and in support of, planning and evaluation of outcomes.

- Merced College 2004 Accreditation Self-Study -

Merced College has been moving steadily to improve its ability to assess progress in meeting the college mission, planning goals, and identified priorities for improvement of programs and services. Almost six years ago, the college hired a full-time Research Analyst to improve and expand its ability to assess progress in meeting its goals and objectives. The application of institutional research is being integrated into the planning process and into the evaluation of outcomes. This process is by no means complete, although it has come a long way.

An important improvement at the college which has helped advance our ability to perform research in support of institutional planning and evaluation is the additional clarity brought to the planning committee structure and, thus the planning process, by Dr. Duran and other key participants on the planning committees. This additional definition and clarification of the roles and relationships of the various planning committees has made the assessment of outcomes both easier and more understandable.

Considerable progress has been made to date in developing and implementing methods of evaluating how and in what ways the college accomplishes its mission and goals. Examples include:

1. The development of a student data sheet which accompanies the administration of the Accuplacer test. This data sheet has been filled out by over 9,000 incoming students over the last three years and has provided much needed data for college reporting purposes, for use in grant applications, and in other areas of need. The data sheet includes information on students not previously collected, such as educational level of parents, family income level, and so forth.
2. An ongoing evaluation of the extent to which assessment information relates to target courses.

- Merced College 2004 Accreditation Self-Study -

3. An ongoing evaluation of the extent to which matriculation services promote student success.
4. An evaluation of the predictive ability of assessment testing on later student course success.
5. The response to the request for information from the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) has been greatly facilitated and supported by the advent of Datatel, the hiring of the Research Analyst, and the regular collection of data, which now occurs. Completing IPEDS data surveys ensures that the college maintains its eligibility for various types of federal funding.
6. Tracking our progress in meeting the goals of the Partnership for Excellence program.
7. The Research Analyst regularly monitors student success, persistence, and graduation and transfer rates.
8. The Research Analyst provides data in support of the program review process; he serves as staff to the college's Program Review Committee. The Research Analyst also serves as staff to the Facilities Committee and the Matriculation Advisory Committee, among others.
9. The Research Analyst has become a key source of data in support of the reporting requirements of many of the categorical programs at the college. He also provides data used in applying for new grants.

Information from the above processes, as well as others, assists in providing the data needed for a "systematic and integrated educational, financial, physical, and human resources planning" process at Merced College. The implementation of these efforts, along with others, is periodically reviewed to assure their ongoing utility for assessing institutional effectiveness.

RESPONSE TO RECOMMENDATION #3

Enhance the use of technology in programs and services throughout the college by providing better coordination, maintenance, and technical support.

Nine years ago the college began the process of wiring the campus and bringing all servers and resources under one area — Information Technology Services. A District committee was formed with representation from the developers of local area networks and parties interested in the development of a college-wide network. A network consultant was hired with the intent to design and install the beginning of the College network. The group that began this development was called the Network Committee. Upon completion of this effort, the committee was reconstituted as the college's major planning committees for technology — the Technology Master Planning Committee (TMPC).

As part of the effort to prepare faculty to take advantage of all the services a network can provide, a staff member was hired to train faculty in the development of multimedia materials. It was again discovered that faculty needed appropriate computer systems; therefore, a program for faculty called Access to Technology (A2T) was initiated. Faculty requesting a new computer agreed to undergo training as they developed multimedia materials to benefit their students, and to present outcomes to their peers. Along the way, requests to wire classrooms for multimedia presentations began to come in. Internet connectivity was also requested for these classrooms, and we initiated web course development. Training efforts have been expanded with the hiring of a second staff member to work with faculty in not only multimedia materials development, but also web development. In the intervening period all computer labs (nine hundred plus computers) on campus have been connected to the network. All faculty requests for connection to the network have been fulfilled, and thirty plus classrooms have been equipped with multimedia for classroom presentations and Internet access. All of these efforts have

caused higher traffic on the network, and it was decided that campus network needed to be rewired. This was done over the last two years.

Other technology efforts have included the acquisition of satellite (analog and more recently digital) down link capability, two-way interactive video conferencing, and two-way video conferencing between classrooms in Merced and Los Banos.

RESPONSE TO RECOMMENDATION #4

Clearly define and implement the program review process and integrate it with the college planning and budgeting process.

Since the accreditation visit, the program review process has been revised and clearly documented as follows:

Clearly Define and Implement the Program Review Process:

- The membership of the Program Review Committee is clearly defined and includes representatives from the various segments of the academic faculty and an administrative ex-officio representative.
- A detailed process for the implementation of program review has been developed and distributed to the college community and has been delineated in the Merced College Program Review Guidelines. Distribution included Instructional Council, executive administration, and Faculty Senate.

Integrate It With the College Planning and Budgeting Process:

- The program review process requires that divisions review their goals and future resource allocations in conjunction with the development of their

five-year plans. The five-year plans are a major part of the program review process and serve as the means by which divisions that have gone through program review will integrate their five-year plans into the college master planning and budgeting process.

RESPONSE TO RECOMMENDATION #5

Increase the number of ethnic minority faculty, staff, and management personnel by expanding and refining activities in such areas as mentoring, recruiting, and retention.

The District has programs to address mentoring, recruiting, and retention. Senior faculty members mentor new faculty members. This helps retain more faculty by making the individuals feel wanted and giving them necessary information.

Recruitment is done on a nationwide basis. All faculty positions are advertised in the most widely read publications of community college job seekers "The Chronicle." Advertisements in numerous publications are targeted to underrepresented groups. The District's Board of Trustees has made this one of their goals also. For each of the hiring committees, a vice president meets with them and reviews the Board goal related to diversity. Each pool of applicants is reviewed and the search is extended when the pool lacks diversity.

RESPONSE TO RECOMMENDATION #6

Continue to integrate Multiculturalism more broadly throughout programs and services.

The spirit of Multiculturalism, the acknowledgment and acceptance of cultures different from our own, is present in most aspects of Merced College life, from student activities to class curriculum. The following are samples of the many ways Multiculturalism has been addressed:

1. Coverage in the College newspaper of multicultural activities such as Black History Month, Cinco de Mayo activities, El Dia de Los Muertos, Women's History Month, student art shows, and culturally based dance troupes.
2. Literature and composition classes in the Humanities Division cover readings by a variety of cultural groups on multicultural topics. These range from novels by authors such as Toni Morrison and Isabel Allende to poetry by Rita Dove, Joy Harjo, and Mitsuye Yamada to plays by Luis Valdez to short fiction by Sandra Cisneros or Langston Hughes.
3. Special offerings by the English Department include a Chicano Literature course and a Modern African Literature, Film, and Music course (Humanities 47).
4. ASMC posts pictures and information on the bulletin board and in the trophy case. During appropriate months, displays of diverse cultures are viewed by many students, faculty, staff, and community members.
5. Title V sponsors multicultural activities guest speakers--Luis Valdez, Manuel Pena, Victor Martinez, Juan Felipe Herrera, Lawson Fusao Inada - and activities such asCinco de Mayo entertainment, Mariachi music and Ballet Folklorico.
6. Multicultural issues are addressed in the nursing classes as they pertain to patient care issues. In the Nursing 40 class, the course outlines include the social, cultural, and ethnic identity areas of patients, including the recognition of bias, prejudice, stereotyping, discrimination, and ethnocentrism. The social identity, cultural values, and ethnic identity of

patients are stressed. The college also obtained and is now completing a Nursing Diversity grant designed to improve the ethnic diversity of the students in the nursing program.

7. In staff development, workshops on multicultural awareness training, the healing of racism, and ethnically diverse, student-led panels for discussion. One example would be the Southeast Asian culture workshop presented a number of years ago.
8. Gallery shows always include artists of varying ethnic backgrounds. Shows have included, for example, a Japanese printmaker and a Japanese/Chinese American graduate of Merced College. Student shows always include multicultural items.

RESPONSE TO RECOMMENDATION #7

Adopt policies and procedures for the regular assessment of the Board and CEO that meets the accreditation standards.


- The Board of Trustees established a process for a regular assessment of the Board. They adopted a policy and procedure for this process in 2001.
- With respect to the CEO evaluation, the Board of Trustees established a process by which the CEO is evaluated on an annual basis. The Board also developed a policy and procedure for this process in 2001.

Certification of Continued Compliance with the Eligibility Requirements

The Accreditation Self-Study Steering Committee conducted a review of the eligibility requirements to ensure continued compliance with accreditation standards. The Committee reviewed and discussed each of the twenty eligibility requirements during their meetings in the fall of 2003 and the spring of 2004. The Self-Study Report describes and analyzes how well each of the standards is being met and addresses in more detail the college's response to the eligibility requirements.

Statement of Assurance

We hereby certify that Merced College continues to meet the eligibility requirements for accreditation.

Signed: 

Dr. Les McCabe

Chairperson, Board of Trustees



Dr. Benjamin T. Duran

Chief Executive Officer

Date January 18, 2005

Continued Compliance with the Eligibility Requirements for Accreditation

1. Authority

Merced College is authorized or licensed to operate as an educational institution and to award degrees by an appropriate governmental organization or agency as required by each of the jurisdictions or regions in which it operates. The college is accredited by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges and is part of the California Community Colleges system.

2. Mission

Merced College's educational mission is clearly defined, adopted, and published by its governing board consistent with its legal authorization, and is appropriate to a degree-granting institution of higher education and the constituency it seeks to serve.

3. Governing Board

Merced College has a functioning governing board responsible for the quality and integrity of the college and for ensuring that the college's mission is being carried out. Its membership is sufficient in size and composition to fulfill all board responsibilities. The governing board is an independent policy-making body capable of reflecting constituent and public interest in board activities and decisions. None of its board members has any employment, family, ownership, or other personal financial interest in Merced College.

4. Chief Executive Officer

Merced College has a chief executive officer who is appointed by the governing board, and whose primary responsibility is to the college.

5. Administrative Capacity

Merced College has sufficient staff, with appropriate preparation and experience to provide the administrative services necessary to support its mission and purpose.

6. Operational Status

Merced College is operational, with students actively pursuing its degree programs.

7. Degrees

A substantial portion of Merced College's educational offerings are programs that lead to degrees, and a significant proportion of its students are enrolled in them.

8. Educational Programs

Merced College's principal degree programs are congruent with its mission, are based on recognized higher education field(s) of study, are of sufficient content and length, and are conducted at levels of quality and rigor appropriate to the degrees offered. A significant number of its degree programs are of two academic years in length.

9. Academic Credit

Merced College awards academic credits based on generally accepted practices in degree-granting institutions of higher education. Merced College is governed by the statutory and system regulatory requirements of the California Community College's Chancellor's Office. The college follows the Chancellor's Office's requirements for the awarding of academic credit. It provides appropriate information regarding the award of academic credit in its catalog.

10. Educational Objectives

Merced College defines and publishes for each program the program's educational objectives for students.

11. General Education

Merced College defines and incorporates into all of its degree programs a substantial component of general education designed to ensure breadth of knowledge and promote intellectual inquiry. The general education component includes demonstrated competence in writing and computational skills and an introduction to some of the major areas of knowledge. Degree credit for general education programs is consistent with levels of quality and rigor appropriate to higher education.

12. Faculty

Merced College has a substantial core of qualified faculty with full-time responsibility to the college. The core is sufficient in size and experience to support all of the college's educational programs. A clear statement of faculty responsibilities is provided to all faculty.

13. Student Services

Merced College provides for all of its students appropriate student services and development programs consistent with student characteristics and the college's mission.

14. Admissions

Merced College has adopted and adheres to admission policies consistent with its mission that specify the qualifications of students appropriate for its programs.

15. Information and Learning Resources

Merced College provides specific long-term access to sufficient information and learning resources and services to support its mission and all of its educational programs.

16. Financial Resources

Merced College possesses a funding base, financial resources, and plans for financial development adequate to support its mission and educational programs and to assure financial stability.

17. Financial Accountability

Merced College regularly undergoes and makes available to the Chancellor's Office and the public an external financial audit by certified public accountants. Merced College submits a copy of the current budget and a copy of the current audited financial statement prepared by an outside certified public accountant who has no other relationship to Merced College. The audit is certified and any exceptions explained.

18. Institutional Planning and Evaluation

Merced College provides evidence of basic planning for the development of the college. The college has a planning process which identifies and integrates plans for academic personnel, learning resources, facilities, and financial development, as well as procedures for program review and institutional improvement.

Merced College systematically evaluates and makes public how well and in what ways it is accomplishing its purposes, including assessment of student learning outcomes and documentation of institutional effectiveness.

19. Public Information

Merced College publishes in its catalog, and in other appropriate places, accurate and current information that describes its purposes and objectives; admission requirements and procedures; rules and regulations directly affecting students; programs, courses, degrees offered and degree requirements; costs and refund policies; complaint and

grievance procedures; academic credentials of faculty and administrators; and other items related to attending or withdrawing from the college.

20. Relations with the Accrediting Commission

The governing board provides assurance that Merced College adheres to the eligibility requirements, accreditation standards and policies of the Commission. The college describes itself in identical terms to all its accrediting agencies, communicates any changes in its accredited status, and agrees to disclose information required by the Commission to carry out its accrediting responsibilities.