

FCMAT

FISCAL CRISIS & MANAGEMENT
ASSISTANCE TEAM

Strategic Enrollment Management Plan Review

September 1, 2020



California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office regarding **Lassen Community College District**

Michael H. Fine
Chief Executive Officer

FCMAT

FISCAL CRISIS & MANAGEMENT
ASSISTANCE TEAM

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Vice Chancellor Lizette Navarette
California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office
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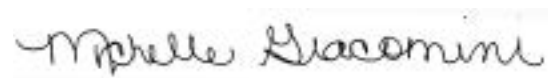
Dear Vice Chancellor Navarette:

In November 2019, the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office (CCCCO) and the Fiscal Crisis and Management Assistance Team (FCMAT) entered into an agreement for FCMAT to conduct a review of Lassen Community College District. The agreement stated that FCMAT would perform the following:

1. Prepare an analysis using FCMAT's Fiscal Health Risk Analysis (2019 version) and identify the Lassen Community College District's risk rating for fiscal insolvency.
2. Review unrestricted general fund expenditures reported on the districtwide annual financial and budget report, CCFS-311, in material categories, including salaries and benefits, for fiscal years 2016-17, 2017-18, and 2018-19.
3. Review revenue and budget projections for fiscal years 2019-20, 2020-21 and 2021-22, and make recommendations, if appropriate.
4. Determine whether the district has developed and implemented a strategic enrollment plan that considers the impact of SCFF metrics. FCMAT shall make recommendations regarding the plan, where appropriate.

This final report contains the study team's findings and recommendations in relation to scope item number 4. FCMAT appreciates the opportunity to serve the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office and Lassen Community College District and extends thanks to all the Lassen CCD staff for their assistance during fieldwork.

Sincerely,



Michelle Giacomini
Deputy Executive Officer

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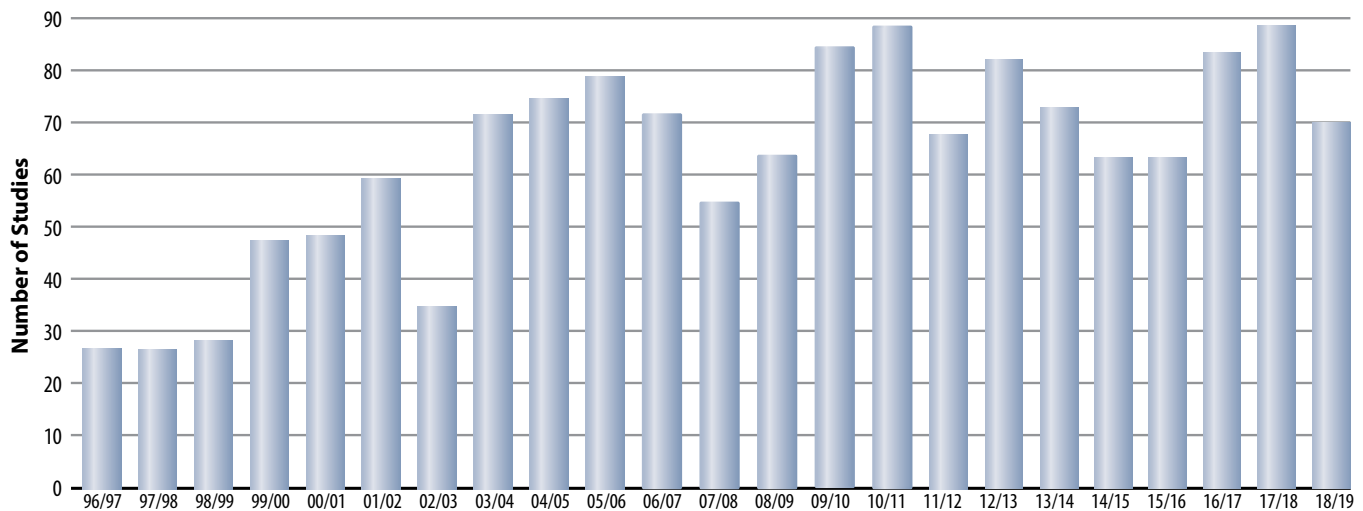
About FCMAT

FCMAT’s primary mission is to assist California’s local K-14 educational agencies to identify, prevent, and resolve financial, human resources and data management challenges. FCMAT provides fiscal and data management assistance, professional development training, product development and other related school business and data services. FCMAT’s fiscal and management assistance services are used not just to help avert fiscal crisis, but to promote sound financial practices, support the training and development of chief business officials and help to create efficient organizational operations. FCMAT’s data management services are used to help local educational agencies (LEAs) meet state reporting responsibilities, improve data quality, and inform instructional program decisions.

FCMAT may be requested to provide fiscal crisis or management assistance by a school district, charter school, community college, county office of education, the state Superintendent of Public Instruction, or the Legislature.

When a request or assignment is received, FCMAT assembles a study team that works closely with the LEA to define the scope of work, conduct on-site fieldwork and provide a written report with findings and recommendations to help resolve issues, overcome challenges and plan for the future.

Studies by Fiscal Year



FCMAT has continued to make adjustments in the types of support provided based on the changing dynamics of K-14 LEAs and the implementation of major educational reforms. FCMAT also develops and provides numerous publications, software tools, workshops and professional learning opportunities to help LEAs operate more effectively and fulfill their fiscal oversight and data management responsibilities. The California School Information Services (CSIS) division of FCMAT assists the California Department of Education with the implementation of the California Longitudinal Pupil Achievement Data System (CALPADS). CSIS also hosts and maintains the Ed-Data website (www.ed-data.org) and provides technical expertise to the Ed-Data partnership: the California Department of Education, EdSource and FCMAT.

FCMAT was created by Assembly Bill (AB) 1200 in 1992 to assist LEAs to meet and sustain their financial obligations. AB 107 in 1997 charged FCMAT with responsibility for CSIS and its statewide data management work. AB 1115 in 1999 codified CSIS’ mission.

AB 1200 is also a statewide plan for county offices of education and school districts to work together locally to improve fiscal procedures and accountability standards. AB 2756 (2004) provides specific responsibilities to FCMAT with regard to districts that have received emergency state loans.

In January 2006, Senate Bill 430 (charter schools) and AB 1366 (community colleges) became law and expanded FCMAT's services to those types of LEAs.

On September 17, 2018 AB 1840 was signed into law. This legislation changed how fiscally insolvent districts are administered once an emergency appropriation has been made, shifting the former state-centric system to be more consistent with the principles of local control, and providing new responsibilities to FCMAT associated with the process.

Since 1992, FCMAT has been engaged to perform more than 1,000 reviews for LEAs, including school districts, county offices of education, charter schools and community colleges. The Kern County Superintendent of Schools is the administrative agent for FCMAT. The team is led by Michael H. Fine, Chief Executive Officer, with funding derived through appropriations in the state budget and a modest fee schedule for charges to requesting agencies.

Introduction

Background

Lassen Community College is a small, rural college that provides programs for those pursuing higher education goals. Its official service areas are Lassen and Modoc counties. The college enrollment has been declining for the last several years. For 2019-20 the estimated full-time equivalent students (FTES) was approximately 1,300. The core programs offer a range of educational opportunities including transfer degrees and certificates, economic and workforce development, and basic skills instruction. The college serves a diverse student body, both on campus and in outreach areas.

Study and Report Guidelines

In November 2019, the California Community College Chancellor's Office (CCCCO) and Lassen Community College District (Lassen CCD) agreed to have the Fiscal Crisis and Management Assistance Team (FCMAT) provide management assistance to Lassen Community College. One area of focus was to determine whether the college had developed and implemented a Strategic Enrollment Management (SEM) plan that considers the impact of Student Centered Funding Formula (SCFF) metrics. In the event that Lassen did not have a SEM plan in place, FCMAT was asked to provide the college with a foundational outline and a set of recommendations for a plan.

Study Team

The study team was composed of the following members:

Michelle Giacomini
FCMAT Deputy Executive Officer

Cambridge West Partnership, LLC
Community College Consultant

Laura Haywood
FCMAT Technical Writer

Each team member reviewed the draft report to confirm accuracy and achieve consensus on the final recommendations.

Executive Summary

FCMAT collaborated with the Lassen CCD to assist the college to evaluate its draft Strategic Enrollment Management (SEM) plan and to assess its capabilities to engage in enrollment management work.

Lassen CCD has been through a recent period of extensive turnover in administrative leadership. In April 2020, seven interim appointments to leadership roles were made for a two-year period. Also, enrollment has dropped in recent years at Lassen Community College. As the college faces fiscal uncertainty and to be proactive, it should clearly identify and articulate which populations are reducing and develop an SEM plan to recognize and address the challenges the college faces rather than reacting as past administration did.

Lassen CCD intends to have a new draft SEM plan ready for the 2020 fall term, with rollout of the final plan expected in 2021. This plan will emphasize building an efficient schedule of offerings by making scheduling decisions to benefit student needs prior to making staffing assignments. It is anticipated that this approach will meet with some resistance from faculty members as the college has been accustomed to rolling forward the last schedule of classes and allowing contract faculty members to select the classes they want to teach, with the remaining classes assigned to adjunct faculty members. In light of the fiscal situation and urgency to improve enrollment management procedures at Lassen Community College, FCMAT strongly supports Lassen CCD's initiative to develop the schedule of classes with students as the priority, rather than the faculty.

The onset of the COVID pandemic has forced colleges to trade face-to-face instruction for distance learning. The college has implemented the state-recommended learning management system (Canvas) to support distance education and has attempted to provide basic class support materials for every class in the term schedule. The change to online instruction for all spring classes pushed many faculty members into teaching online for the first time with little or no training. Many faculty members need online pedagogy tutoring and course design assistance to improve the quality of their instruction. An external expert has been retained to provide that professional development assistance over the summer months.

Over the last decade Lassen Community College had steadily increased the number of classes taught through online instruction, particularly from 2012-13 to 2019-20. The requirement to submit a substantive change proposal to the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC) for approval to proceed when offering 50% or more of the required courses in an online program of study had not been fulfilled. Current administration is developing multiple substantive change proposals for ACCJC review.

In April 2020, the board of trustees approved a program revitalization and discontinuance policy and procedure document to begin the process so the entire Lassen Community College community can seriously consider which of the established programs of study are no longer viable. The college offers over 60 Chancellor's Office-approved programs of study that lead to degrees, certificates of completion, and several locally approved certificates of accomplishment. Some of the required discipline-specific courses have not attracted sufficient enrollment to warrant retaining the offerings at a great cost to the college.

Lassen Community College serves several very different populations, each requiring the same level of research, operational management, and institutional planning. This creates a burden far greater than what a traditional-sized college experiences. The college must ensure that it properly manages each population while covering the expenses associated with each group's unique needs. It must develop institutionalized procedures that incentivize a proactive planning environment.

The college is at risk of becoming overreliant on nontraditional enrollments that do not provide predictable year over year Weekly Student Contact Hours (WSCH) based on available data. These enrollments and associated revenues will fluctuate from year to year, creating unmanageable fluctuations in the college budget.

Findings and Recommendations

COVID-19 has delayed fieldwork for the management assistance team until October 2020. The CCCC, Lassen Community College administration, and FCMAT agreed that technical assistance with the SEM plan would occur remotely in spring 2020 so the college could work on the plan prior to the fall 2020 semester. The remaining scope items would occur in fall 2020 or when fieldwork was possible.

Collaboration for the SEM scope item began in April 2020 and continues to the date of this report, although the pandemic has limited the collaboration to conference phone calls and email exchanges without the benefit of a campus on-site visit. The college points of contact have been the dean of instruction and the director of technology and institutional effectiveness; both are long-term employees of the district and are referred to in this report as the team leaders. It is critical to involve other campus personnel in drafting an SEM plan and in a review and implementation effort, as the effort will not be successful otherwise.

The team leaders provided FCMAT with a draft 2018-2020 SEM plan in spring 2020. Based on discussions with college staff, no further action has been taken since the plan was initially drafted nor has it been widely distributed for campus comment. FCMAT's review of the draft plan found that while it captures a number of worthy goals and promising activities under the objectives column, it does not adequately address the college's needs.

Lassen team leaders received a generic outline for an SEM plan from FCMAT to assist with developing a more thorough plan (Appendix A). The outline contains seven core components as follows:

1. Outreach (clarify paths)
2. Matriculation (enter a path)
3. Curriculum and Scheduling (clarify paths, stay on a path)
4. Student Support Services (stay on a path, ensure learning)
5. Professional Learning and Development (ensure learning)
6. Plan to Complete the Experience and Transition
7. Budget and FTES Generation

The outline reflects the belief that enrollment management is far more than the development of a schedule of classes. It should include the institution's efforts to manage its environment and consider the paths and pitfalls in students' efforts to navigate and complete the college experience. The provided outline draws on the guided pathways framework and assumes a connection can be made to the college's strategic goals. Existing college efforts should promote student success and can be incorporated into the enrollment management plan in support of efforts to ensure that students stay on the path and move to completion.

The overarching longer-term outcomes from any SEM plan are:

1. Maximize the volume of students who enroll, have course success, complete programs of study, and transition into the workforce or a four-year institution.
2. Increase revenues to the college as a result of the increased student volume. If managed efficiently, economically and successfully, the results should help ensure a college's viability.

For each of the seven core topics in the generic outline, a series of prompts was developed and forwarded to the team leaders to encourage the articulation of goals (Appendix B).

In addition, the team leaders were offered a series of research questions, directions for data sources, and analytical methods for each of the core topics.

For the core topic of curriculum and scheduling, an extensive set of example reports was identified and sent to the college team. Many of these examples were taken from Lake Tahoe Community College District, which is another small, rural community college.

Lassen CCD leadership was asked to provide a trend analysis displaying the sources of annual FTES and examples of reports they use in conjunction with enrollment management activities, which are provided in Appendix C.

Engaging in Enrollment Management

Lassen CCD has been through a period of extensive turnover in administrative leadership. In April 2020, seven interim appointments for a two-year period were made in leadership roles.

Staffing in Lassen is like most small, rural colleges in which administrative assignments are doubled up. A single individual has multiple, sometimes dissimilar, responsibilities. For example, the director of technology also is responsible for institutional research, with no one to assist him with the research responsibility.

Enrollment management reporting at the college is somewhat limited. Senior academic leaders are provided a daily report sorted by class location that is limited to the classes with additional seats available. It provides a count of the used and available seats. A schedule profile report that can be run at will lists a range of details about all sections in the schedule of classes, organized by location and mode of instruction, with a count of the enrolled students. Only 12% of the fall 2020 classes had more than one section in the schedule. To improve these two reports to support enrollment management the college might consider:

- Grouping on-campus (face-to-face and hybrid) offerings with the online offerings by course so that enrollment counts in courses with multiple sections can easily be compared.
- Flagging classes with very low enrollments to initiate decisions regarding discontinuing the class.

To support planning future schedules of classes it would be helpful to have:

- A report that provides a history of enrollments for a course over several terms indicating any course section that was discontinued for lack of sufficient enrollment.
- A study that shows the role of each course in degree and related certificate programs of study.
- A trend analysis of enrollments disaggregated by key population groups served by the college.

The dean expressed an interest in the following example reports shared with the college:

- The zip code analysis of enrollments illustrating the extent to which residents of Lassen and Modoc counties were enrolled at other community colleges.
- The Lake Tahoe Community College web-based SEM Dashboard that is interactive.
- The schedule planning tools developed by the Los Angeles City College staff.

The college has implemented the Hobson Corporation Starfish Educational Planning software module and proposed to train counselors on its use during summer 2020. That data will be an important resource to support planning for future schedules of classes.

The college recognizes that it lacks working-level research assistants. That need may be underscored when the ACCJC releases its action letter and the spring 2020 ACCJC visiting team’s report in late June or July 2020. Research assistants are needed for support to enrollment management and for a host of state and campus initiatives that depend on data analysis.

The interim dean of instructional services has indicated an intent to have a draft SEM plan ready for the fall 2020 term. Some college personnel attended an enrollment management workshop/seminar last year and another group, including all four department chairs, attended the same workshop/seminar in late June. The workshop emphasized an approach to scheduling in the following order:

1. Build the schedule of offerings with an eye to efficiency.
2. Make scheduling decisions to benefit the students’ needs.
3. Make staffing assignments.

Division chairs will meet with the dean to develop a proposed set of course offerings for the spring 2021 term, at which time the department heads will receive that schedule and be asked to recommend staffing assignments. The team anticipates that this approach will meet with some resistance from the faculty members because the college has developed future class schedules by rolling forward the most recent schedule of classes and allowing contract faculty members to select when classes meet and which classes they want to teach. Any unclaimed classes are assigned to adjunct faculty members.

The dean has shared that counselors are being consulted to acquire insights to student course needs. Many counselors have been using the Ellucian Student Planning module to capture electronic copies of student education plans. Also, the college is implementing the Hobson Corporation Starfish software product degree planner module. That module contains data that is being used to anticipate future course needs based on student declared programs of study. The college has been using the Starfish early alert module software to provide faculty a means to refer students who are having difficulties in a course to tutoring and other support services.

The dean has conceptualized four distinct student populations or groups that the college serves. They are: (1) campus, (2) online (internet), (3) local inmate populations (prison correspondence), and (4) remote inmate populations (prison face-to-face). A fifth population, which had stronger enrollments in the past, is public safety personnel engaged in in-service training classes organized through an instructional service agreement (ISA). Accordingly, the fall 2020 schedule was developed with 364 classes organized into these four locations:

Lassen Community College Fall 2020 Schedule

Group	Location	No. of Classes	Percentage
1	Campus Full-Term (157) Short-Term (53)	210	57.7%
2	Internet	31	8.5%
3	Prison Correspondence	72	19.8%
4	Prison Face-to-Face	51	14.0%
Total		364	

Source: Lassen Community College Office of Instruction; analysis by Cambridge West Partnership, LLC

The most common full-term classes have met for three, six, or nine hours per week each semester. The most common short-term classes, which last for varying numbers of weeks but always for less than 18 weeks, meet for a total of 39 hours. Within both full-term and short-term classes are work experience classes for which the total hours of instruction vary. Additional details about the fall 2020 schedule are found in Appendix D.

Calculating FTES

The college provided an incomplete accounting of unduplicated headcounts by source of FTES from 2014-15 to 2018-19. Because some students may enroll in face-to-face, hybrid and online classes, it would be easier to account for enrollment or seat counts rather than unduplicated headcounts over a period of time. It was not clear from the college information if noncredit enrollments and FTES were incorporated into the face-to-face counts. The college may want to organize the trend information around the four or five categories of key populations suggested by the dean, with some subtotals if desired, and establish institutionalized reporting to provide a historic seat count and FTES trend with the data.

Because of the incomplete accounting, and FCMAT's need to project attendance, based on the units of credit awarded, type of instruction and length of the class, FCMAT estimated the most likely mode of attendance collection as weekly census attendance since the greatest number of classes in the fall 2020 schedule are most likely using the same. The calculation for weekly attendance is the product of the count of active students on census day times the number of weekly contact hours of classroom instruction. That product is multiplied by the term length multiplier (17.5 for Lassen Community College) then divided by 525 to determine the units of FTES. Although classes do not meet on a declared holiday date, the college nevertheless is allowed to claim those hours of instruction.

As a note of caution, a small percentage of weekly census course offerings consists of the standard 3-4 unit course meeting the traditional 3-5 hours per week. This suggests the college has become overreliant on class sections that produce very little WSCH. The additional expense of managing this mode of delivery should be evaluated.

The second highest number of classes were those organized by the alternative or per unit method. The per unit method is required for online, hybrid, and correspondence classes. The calculation for the alternative per unit attendance is the product of the count of active students on census day times the number of units of credit for the course. That product is multiplied by the term length multiplier then divided by 525 to determine the units of FTES. Unless the per unit course has some laboratory instruction, the resulting FTES will be the same as a weekly census class. Although classes also do not meet on a declared holiday date, Lassen Community College is allowed to claim those hours of instruction.

Classes using the daily census attendance method are those credit courses that have been scheduled for five or more days of instruction but less than the full length of the term. The calculation for daily census attendance is the product of the count of active students on census day times the number of class meetings, multiplied by the length of instructional time for the meetings, which should be uniform. That product is then divided by 525 to determine the units of FTES. Unlike weekly census or the per unit method, if a class using daily census attendance is scheduled to meet on a declared holiday, the college may not claim the missing instructional time.

Positive attendance is used for noncredit courses or classes that meet for fewer than five meetings. The calculation for positive attendance is the sum of actual instructional time attended by all students divided by 525 to determine the units of FTES. The college may not claim instructional hours for declared holidays or for any time when the student is ill or not actually attending instruction.

Lassen Community College Fall 2020 Schedule

Attendance Type*	No. of Sections	Percentage
Alternative - per unit	130	35.7%
Daily	63	17.3%
Positive	6	1.6%
Weekly	165	45.3%
Total	364	

*Attendance type is estimated by Cambridge West Partnership, LLC

Source: Lassen College Office of Instruction; analysis by Cambridge West Partnership, LLC

The FTES trend data provided by the Lassen CCD showed that FTES from off-campus community sites had diminished as of 2016-17. That is because the college had offered preservice fire science instruction off campus but moved it to an on-campus location that year. Additionally, public safety employees, primarily fire service personnel, had been receiving instruction through an ISA. Since 2014-15 the FTES from this source has declined because the program director retired. A new director for those in-service course offerings has been retained with the hope that the program can be invigorated and the FTES from that source will increase in the future. (see Appendix A)

The onset of the COVID pandemic forced colleges to abandon face-to-face instruction in favor of distance learning. The college had implemented the state-recommended Canvas learning management system to support distance education and provided basic class support materials for every class in the term schedule. That change pushed many faculty members into teaching online for the first time with little or no training. Over the last decade Lassen Community College has steadily increased the number of online classes, particularly from 2012-13 to 2019-20. When a college offers 50% or more of the required courses in a program of study online, it is required to submit a substantive change proposal to the accrediting commission that requests approval to proceed. While the current team leaders thought past academic administrators had submitted those proposals, it was discovered that did not happen. In spring 2020 the college made three inquiries with ACCJC regarding programs of study that could be completed with 50% or more of the program courses provided through distance education. A total of two certificates of achievement, 13 associate degrees for transfer, and eight associate degrees were approved for distance learning.

The team leaders also recognize that many faculty members urgently need online pedagogy tutoring and course design assistance to improve the quality of their instruction. An external expert has been retained to provide that professional development assistance over the summer months.

In April 2020, the board of trustees approved a program revitalization and discontinuance policy and procedure document. That action paves the way for the Lassen Community College community to seriously consider which established programs of study are no longer viable. The college offers over 60 Chancellor's Office-approved programs of study that lead to degrees, certificates of completion, and several locally approved certificates of accomplishment. Among the degrees offered are 17 associate degrees for transfer (ADT) that are intended to facilitate a student's transition to a California State University (CSU) campus. Seventeen ADTs is more than any of the other colleges in California generating less than 2,000 annual FTES offer. Each of the ADTs is built on a transfer model curriculum in which the recognized courses have content and requirements approved by both community college and CSU faculty members. Each ADT requires at least 15 semester units in a discipline and related disciplines for a total of 18 semester units plus the CSU general education pattern of courses. While each ADT cannot require more than 60 semester units of credit, some of the required discipline-specific courses have not attracted sufficient student enrollment to warrant retaining the offerings (class sections). The team leaders have initially identified four ADTs for immediate discontinuance review: anthropology, art history, geology, and English.

The team leaders have also identified recruiting practices among the coaches for the seven intercollegiate sports in which college teams compete that impact student enrollment. Three of the sports, basketball, soccer, and rodeo, host both men's and women's teams. Baseball and wrestling are offered for men; softball and volleyball are offered for women. Lassen Community College therefore has 10 intercollegiate athletics teams. Recruiting of out-of-state and international students in some sports has not occurred, curtailing those enrollments. Recruiting a smaller pool of participants (e.g., only locally) has reduced the FTES generated from some team sports.

As a result of guided pathways work at Lassen Community College the faculty members have prepared program advisory documents that list the required courses for degrees and certificates. The advisories also provide a chart indicating, over a two-year period, the term in which each course will be offered. Those advisories are posted to the college website to guide the students in scheduling their classes. This is unusual but very positive and helpful.

Significant Non-Fiscal Challenges for Lassen Community College

Long-term projections to 2060 from the Department of Finance (DOF) Demographic Research Unit for both Lassen and Modoc counties suggest a decline in population, including youth and college-age young adults. Between 2020 and 2060 the combined decline in the counties is projected to be 7,400 people, or 19%. Among the traditional college-going age range (age 15 to 24) the projected decline is 1,109, or 21%. Therefore, the pool of prospective students is projected to decline.

The mid-range projections to 2028-29 for high school graduates in both counties developed by the Demographic Research Unit also indicate a decline. Between 2017-18, which had 485 high school graduates, and 2028-29, projected at 357 high school graduates, the combined decline in both counties is projected to be 128, or 26%.

The near term projections to 2024 from the Environmental Systems Research Institute (ESRI) point to a decline as well. Between 2019 and 2024 the combined decline in both counties is projected to be 859 people, or 2%. Among the high school and traditional college-going age range the projected decline is 310, or 6%. The two state prisons in Susanville and a federal prison in Herlong collectively have a population of approximately 8,300 or roughly 18% of the estimated 2019 population. No information was available regarding the population projection for those institutions.

A series of fall term (2014-2018) summary data files obtained from the CCCCCO was used to conduct a zip code analysis. For each community college in the California system the fall term files contain a distinct student headcount by zip code where a student was living at the time of enrollment. A set of zip codes in Modoc and Lassen counties was assembled.

From fall 2014 to fall 2018, 70% of the enrolled students at Lassen Community College resided in the official service area comprised of those two counties while 30% of the enrolled students were living outside of the official district area.

Over the fall 2014 to 2018 terms 81% of the student enrollment at Lassen Community College came from nine zip codes. Five of those zip codes were inside the official college service area, four were not. The four zip codes outside of the official service area included the communities of Vacaville, Represa, Westwood, and Corcoran. Each of these communities hosts a California state prison.

Lassen Community College has been enrolling students from outside its official service area. (see Appendix E) However, other colleges engage in the same practice. The zip code analysis revealed that 63 other

community colleges had enrolled at least one student who lived in the Lassen Community College official service area while enrolled in another college. The count of students living in the Lassen Community College service area ranged from 304 in fall 2014 to 417 in fall 2018. A total of 1,846 students from 19 zip codes within the Lassen Community College service area were enrolled elsewhere in the fall terms 2014-2018. Most were inmates from the two state prisons in Susanville where zip code 96127 is located. Feather River, Lake Tahoe, Shasta, and Butte colleges are the leading schools where the Lassen Community College service area students were enrolled. (see Appendix F)

Because most of these enrollments are inmates at the two state prisons at Susanville it is important to appreciate the regulatory context that influences these dynamics. Federal financial aid regulations limit the percentage of students at a college who can enroll in a correspondence course. Colleges that exceed the upper percentage limit may lose all of their federal financial aid. Therefore, Lassen has an upper limit on the number of students it can enroll in correspondence education. It had been the practice to allow community members, including Department of Correction employees, to enroll in both correspondence courses and face-to-face campus classes. However, the college discovered that any community student with even one correspondence course enrollment, but two or three on-campus face-to-face classes, counted as a correspondence student and was included in the calculation of the upper limit allowed by the federal government. Lassen CCD therefore stopped allowing community members to enroll in correspondence classes in 2016-17 and began to increase the online offerings. The team leaders believe that many of the community students have switched to the online classes but feel that the Department of Corrections employees have not done so.

As is the case with many colleges endeavoring to serve incarcerated students, Lassen has had some difficulty in recruiting faculty to teach face-to-face at the prisons, and the COVID pandemic has shut down face-to-face instruction. An inmate education program is not an effort that any college can champion alone. A successful program requires vigorous leadership from the prison administrators. Some of the barriers within any prison that the educational program efforts face:

- Classroom space is limited in most prisons.
- A correctional officer needs to be present in the classroom during instruction.
- From time to time there is a lockdown or a change in schedules among the inmates that disrupts the instructional time.

For security reasons online (internet) instruction to the prisons is not allowed. FCMAT has suggested that closed-circuit telecommunications (video conferencing) might be permitted.

Until recently, neither Lassen nor Modoc counties had reported cases of the COVID virus. However, the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation has reported 200 cases at the California Conservation Camp in Susanville, one of two prisons Lassen CCD serves. As of July 7, 2020, the state had reported 2019 COVID cases in Lassen County.¹ These cases are believed to be confined to the California Correctional Center (CCC) in Susanville where the department is reportedly transferring some COVID diagnosed inmates from other fire camps.² The prospect of the virus spreading into the communities is now a genuine concern.

In recent years relationships with the public high schools were broken but the new administrative team is working to repair them. The college purchased teleconference equipment and placed it into five locations to support dual enrollment from the high schools. However, the differences in schedules between the college and high schools has proved to be a challenge. The college offers a number of career and techni-

¹ COVID in California. Retrieved July 7, 2020 from https://public.tableau.com/views/COVID-19CasesDashboard_15931020425010/Cases?:embed=y&:showVizHome=no

² Carie Camacho, Dean of Instruction Lassen College. Personal Correspondence. June 29, 2020

cal education programs that present opportunities to create curriculum bridges for high school students to continue their education and to facilitate enrollment at Lassen. Assembly Bill 288 (Holden), approved in 2015, authorizes community college districts to enter into a College and Career Access Pathways partnership with local school districts and has opened another door for California colleges to collaborate with high schools to promote college enrollment.

Fiscal Challenges

The COVID pandemic has drawn down state revenues and the economic toll is projected to last for many months as the state economy slowly recovers. The state's rainy day emergency fund will likely be depleted. The 2020-21 state budget includes sharp monetary reductions to California community colleges.

Compared to the initial January 2020 budget proposal, the budget defers \$1.5 billion in community college funding to 2021-22. However, Governor Newsom also stated that up to \$791 million of the \$1.5 billion deferral could be rescinded if Congress approves a fourth stimulus package with sufficient funding by October 15, 2020. The 2020-21 Budget Act preserves funding for most college programs at 2019-20 levels. The Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act provides an additional \$120 million in a COVID-19 block grant for the districts, but with payment deferrals to the colleges for both 2019-20 and 2020-21. The colleges will experience a severe decline in operating dollars.

Rural community colleges face unique enrollment challenges that place additional stress on an already small workforce. As mentioned above, the best practice of data-driven decision making is very difficult with the lack of staff in the research department. These challenges are magnified at rural colleges due to the need for many niche programs. A traditional college may have 90% of its students taking traditional semester-length, census-based courses either face-to-face or online. The remaining 10% of students are in nontraditional niche-type programs. These schedules are efficient, easy to manage, and produce reliable financial estimates. Unfortunately, Lassen Community College does not fall into this traditional pattern.

The college serves several very different populations. Each population requires the same level of research, operational management, and institutional planning. This creates a burden far greater than at a traditional-sized college. Lassen Community College must ensure that it properly manages each population and covers the expenses associated with each group's unique needs. It has been shown that if all populations are not purposefully managed in a comprehensive way, enrollments fall, and recognition of what happened only occurs after the damage has been done. Institutionalized procedures that promote proactive planning are needed. Report examples have been sent to the team leaders.

Maximizing the Student Centered Funding Formula (SCFF)

Lassen Community College was one of the largest financial beneficiaries of the implementation of the SCFF. The initial year increase in apportionment was over 26%. Lassen currently receives more revenue per FTES than any other California community college. There are two primary reasons:

1. The percentage of basic (foundational) allocation compared to overall apportionment is very high.
2. The number of incarcerated students receiving a Promise grant (BOG waiver) is very high compared to the average California community college.

Unfortunately, the niche populations that Lassen serves do not consistently produce the expected student enrollments or student success outcomes. ISAs, for example, often fail to produce any supplemental or success outcomes revenue. Enrollment declines mean decreased revenue. The fire service ISA has suffered losses associated with the retirement of the lead person in that discipline. The college is losing enrollments to other community colleges among the inmate populations, and perhaps among the staff members, in state prisons located in Susanville and in communities throughout both Modoc and Lassen counties. A policy decision, influenced by federal regulations about correspondence education and financial aid, prompted the college to curtail correspondence enrollments from local residents and limit those opportunities to inmates only.

Enrollment at Lassen Community College has dropped in recent years. The college needs to clearly identify and articulate which populations are declining and address this challenge when developing the SEM plan. While unanticipated enrollment fluctuations are difficult for rural colleges to manage properly, the trends and plan must still be developed.

The following chart from the annual 320 apportionment reports sent by Lassen Community College to the CCCCCO and the 2019-20 Period 2 fiscal report provide a high-level snapshot of year-to-year enrollments.

Lassen CCD Attendance

	Actual FTES			
	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20*
Credit	1,038.01	640.43	691.97	685.21
Special Admit	38.50	88.43	86.29	43.13
Incarcerated	497.00	613.04	886.74	563.89
Subtotal	1,573.51	1,341.90	1,665.00	1,292.23
CDCP**	1.62	2.60	3.22	2.71
Noncredit	23.93	12.96	16.94	19.44
Subtotal	25.55	15.56	20.16	22.15
Total	1,599.06	1,357.46	1,685.16	1,314.38

Source: California Community Colleges Chancellor’s Office, Lassen Community College Apportionment Reports; analysis by Cambridge West Partnership, LLC

*Period 2 reporting was used for 2019-20

**Career Development and College Preparation

Recommendations

The district should:

1. Reach beyond its official service area to recruit students given the demographic projections for Lassen and Modoc counties.
2. Redouble its efforts to claim a greater share of the prospective students living in Modoc and Lassen counties based on the extent to which other colleges have enrolled students living in the Lassen service area.
3. Conduct an aggressive public relations media campaign in the community that emphasizes health and safety if on campus face-to-face instruction is to resume in the fall.

4. Rebuild frayed relationships with high schools and develop a more robust dual enrollment initiative.
5. Expand face-to-face instruction in the two state prisons at Susanville and in the federal correctional facility at Herlong due to the federal caps on correspondence enrollments.
6. Provide incentives so it is easier to recruit faculty to teach in the prisons.
7. Research whether a two-way, closed circuit telecommunications system could be used to deliver synchronous instruction from the main campus to the prisons.
8. Curtail expenses so that revenues and expenses come into balance by properly managing each specific population and covering the expenses associated with each group's unique needs.
9. Create institutionalized reports to monitor enrollments for each primary source population so that all populations are appropriately managed in a comprehensive way.
10. Organize the trend information around the four or five categories of key populations and establish institutionalized reporting to provide a historic seat count and FTES trend.
11. Ensure and evaluate whether the college has become overreliant on class sections that produce very little WSCH, causing additional expense with management of this mode of delivery.
12. Determine which populations are reliable enrollees year after year and budget accordingly to reduce the inherent fluctuations in enrollment.
13. Implement new ways to develop the spring 2021 schedule of classes in light of the fiscal situation and urgency to improve enrollment management procedures.

Appendices

The following appendices may be accessed using this link:

[Appendices A-G](#)

Appendix A: Strategic Enrollment Management Plan Outline

Appendix B: Strategic Enrollment Management Goal and Research Question Prompts with Examples

Appendix C: Trends in FTES by Source

Appendix D: Fall 2020 Schedule Analysis

Appendix E: Lassen College Distinct Student Headcounts, Fall 2014-2018

Appendix F: Distinct Students Living in Lassen Zip Codes, Enrolled at Other Colleges

Appendix G: Study Agreement