

The Verde Valley District Governing Board Advisory Committee (VVBAC, Committee) was formed in the fall of 2014 by a vote of the District Governing Board (DGB) at the request of Board members Herald Harrington and Al Filardo. The committee is comprised of seven members each representing one of five incorporated municipalities and two unincorporated areas of the eastern portion of Yavapai County known as the Verde Valley. Including our organizational meeting held on November 7, 2014, the Committee has met a total of 14 times. Recognizing the importance of establishing credibility with the DGB and the communities of the Verde Valley, the Committee embarked on a period of “discovery” to learn from the important contributors to post-secondary education and the governing councils of the Verde Valley communities.

VVBAC has received presentations from:

1. Superintendents of three local school districts: David Lykins, Sedona-Oak Creek Unified; Barbara U’Ren, Cottonwood-Oak Creek; Amber Marchant-Lee, Camp Verde Unified
2. Tim Carter, Yavapai County Schools Superintendent
3. John Morgan, YC-CTE Executive Dean
4. James Perey, YC-Verde Valley Executive Dean
5. Dennis Garvey, YC Dean of Lifelong Learning, Jim Gandee, and Shri Srikath, Sedona and Verde OLLI Council Chairs
6. Steve Walker, Yavapai College Foundation Executive Director
7. Alexandria Wright and Kurt Haskell, YC Rural Economic Development Center director, and Small Business Development Center directors

8. Lois Lamer, Valley Academy For Career and Technology Education Executive Director
and
9. Dr. Clint Ewell, YC Vice-President of Finance and Administrative Services

Representatives from the VVBC have made presentations to the governing councils of Yavapai-Apache Nation, Cottonwood, Clarkdale, Sedona, and Verde Valley Intergovernmental, Big Park, and Lake Montezuma associations.

At the District Governing Board's May 19, 2015 meeting, four recommendations from the Committee were presented:

1. Delay approval of the capital improvement portion of the 2015-2016 budget until the DGB has the recommendations of the Verde Valley strategic plan currently being developed.
2. Increase the marketing and recruitment efforts in the Verde Valley by implementing a program of continuous and direct interaction with students and their parents to seek students' wants and aptitudes.
3. Amend the Campus Master Plan to remove all language about divesting of the Sedona Campus.
4. Do not raise property taxes this year.

In the interests of providing to the DGB some additional recommendations to be considered for inclusion in the Verde Valley Strategic Plan currently in development, the Committee held a 3 ½ hour retreat on May 20. The outcomes of that process are included here for consideration.

Our process of discovery continues and the Committee is committed to continue to meet on behalf of the District Governing Board's desire to receive objective analysis and feedback from the Verde Valley communities.

The agreed upon goal statement for this recommendation report is as follows: **Affordable, relevant, and quality post-secondary education available in the Verde Valley.**

Toward achieving this goal the VVBAC recommends the importance of focusing on three objectives: **Access, Sustainability and Structure.**

Access

Access to quality education in the Verde Valley must incorporate the following:

- a. Adopt county-wide distance learning model
- b. Hybrid centralized model of main campuses combined with remote learning centers
- c. Provide core transfer courses
- d. Provide multiple pathways of 2+1, 2+2, certification, and CTE
- e. Centralized CTE campus or modified centralized CTE model
- f. Verde specific marketing and recruitment
- g. Enhanced scholarship and financial assistance, and affordable tuition rate
- h. Broadband

Distance learning as described in its various formats appears to be an essential component of the future of post-secondary education not only for the Verde Valley communities, but Yavapai county-wide. Our recommendation incorporates the belief that state-of-the-art technology in the delivery of distance learning is of the highest priority county-wide and especially so for the Verde Valley. In your considerations of capital expenses involving bricks and mortar projects that require the physical presence of students, we encourage that revenues derived from property taxes, tuition, and fees be applied to programs, state-of-the-art technologies for distance education, operations and maintenance. Funding for capital projects involving new construction and major renovations better reflect the support of the voters in the County when funded through appropriate bonding mechanisms. This recommendation is not intended to discourage future bricks and mortar projects, but encourages that the College place a priority county-wide on access to state-of-the art distance learning delivery systems.

Access to post-secondary education in the primarily rural Verde Valley communities will be best provided through a modified de-centralized model. In addition to the main campuses in the more concentrated population areas, a system of remote learning centers utilizing spaces in community centers, educational institutions, and governmental facilities will address access challenges resulting from limited public transportation availability and minimum class size requirements.

While a long range vision for post-secondary education in the Verde Valley might encompass multiple highly specialized destination programs, there is a minimum level of education

pathways that comprise our short term goals. First of all a student in the Verde Valley must be able to complete a core curriculum that fulfills the basic requirements for the first two years of post-secondary education that can be transferred to four-year institutions within and outside of the State of Arizona. Secondly, students must have access to pathways of 2+1, 2+2, and certification in employer desired skills and technical education. For example, a 2+1 program in nursing would allow two years of core subjects plus a third year in conjunction with a four year institution. This would provide for the completion of a Bachelors of Nursing Science entirely on Verde Valley campuses of Yavapai College.

Career and Technical Education (CTE) is best served through a centralized or modified centralized model. Yavapai College is strongly encouraged to partner with the local CTE programs to assist with their transition to more centralized models as quickly as possible.

The Committee acknowledges the College's increasing efforts towards marketing and recruitment consistent with our earlier recommendation, and seeks to reinforce the importance of working with the local elementary and secondary school districts to raise the positive brand associations and program awareness beginning with basic brand awareness at the grade school levels beginning as early as the 3rd grade expanding to summer and break special programs at the high school level. Continued concurrent and dual enrollment programs are highly encouraged.

Heightened access through continued fee waivers and instructor compensation for dual enrollment plus enhanced scholarship and financial assistance is strongly encouraged by the Committee.

Vigorous support of countywide and regional efforts to bring state-of-the art broadband to the Verde Valley campuses and satellite locations is strongly recommended.

Sustainability

Sustainability of resources that include physical plants, programs, staffing, and faculty include, but may not be limited to the following:

- a. Advocacy
- b. Recruitment
- c. Workforce Demand Focus
- d. Housing
- e. Allocation of Resources – Investment
- f. Foundation Model

The VVBAC strongly recommends that the District Governing Board recognize and give direction toward the importance of Verde Valley-centric advocacy. The communities of the Verde Valley both incorporated and unincorporated while having separate and unique identities also share a common sense of self. Our needs while diverse in many aspects are communally rural. Our best solutions to the challenges we encounter are derived from a regional perspective. The single most important component for enduring quality, efficient, and accessible post-secondary

education in our region is to have an advocate who can identify and address our unique challenges with solutions that reflect our complicated diversity and identity. That advocate must have the ability to garner the trust and transference of the public and private sector leaders of the Verde Valley communities and have the authority to advocate effectively for resources within the College as well as within the local communities.

Sustaining programs requires students. The smaller population base of the Verde Valley presents challenges to maintaining required student numbers to justify continued programs. Getting the word out locally regarding the availability and benefits of College offered programs is essential. Recruitment of students from outside of our region will supplement the natural ebbs and flows of local student potential.

Incorporating the workforce demand analysis currently being undertaken by Yavapai College is a very effective and beneficial course for sustainable post-secondary education programs in the Verde Valley region. Identifying the needs of current employers to maintain and grow their businesses and creating education programs to provide those skills is the smart way to grow and sustain College programs. Identifying products and services currently being imported into the region is a business development and job creation strategy that warrants partnerships with the College. Our committee strongly supports and encourages the ongoing support of this effort as a component of post-secondary education in the Verde Valley region.

Affordable housing as a responsibility of the College is relevant from the perspective of sustainability of programs. As mentioned previously, attaining and maintaining the number of students necessary to justify on-going programs is a challenge in the Verde Valley region. Supplementing the fluctuating supply of program specific local students with those from outside of the region could ensure greater sustainability of programs. The supply of local affordable housing becomes essential in this scenario. It is at this juncture that supplying affordable housing to students might become in the interest of the College and consequently a subject for serious consideration.

Investment as a function of sustainability has to the VVBAC several aspects. While we have not been able to obtain the applicable information, it can be assumed that there is a segment of Verde Valley students who have the resources available to them to take advantage of the facilities and programs available on the Prescott, Prescott Valley, and Chino Valley campuses. Accordingly, some allocation of the resources generated in the Verde Valley are justifiably applied there. At issue for Verde Valley residents is the percentage of locally generated revenues being allocated for programs and facilities outside of our region. We recommend that a far greater percentage be allocated within the Verde Valley.

It is important, too, that programs initiated in the Verde Valley at existing, future, and or remote sites have the necessary level of resources to ensure their greatest possibility of success. Students must believe that the programs being considered have the quality of

experience and a reasonable assurance of continued existence in order to dedicate their time and resources to that endeavor.

The criteria utilized in evaluating the need for initial investment and continued operation of facilities and programs must be appropriate for the more rural model of the Verde Valley region. Using a one size fits all evaluation criteria across the County predisposes the more rural areas to failure if those criteria are designed to evaluate programs in a more urban community college model. The further an asset is removed from the center of resources, the more expensive and less efficient it will be to operate. The Committee encourages that this understanding be embraced as a cost of doing business rather than as a rationale for the withdrawal of resources.

The Committee recognizes that the Yavapai College Foundation is a separate legal entity and that the District Governing Board has limited if any direct influence on the decisions of that body. The history of the Foundation in the Verde Valley lends itself to the consideration that the current model does not adequately serve the College's full spectrum of needs in this region. Consequently, the Committee recommends that the District Governing Board encourage the exploration of alternative models or structures for foundation related activities in the Verde Valley region.

Structure

The inclusion of the separate objective of structure as a means to achieving our stated goal came after much discussion by the committee. Originally it was included as an aspect of sustainability and the case for the importance of structure in sustainability is easily made. The Committee felt strongly that the concept of structure defined as “. . . **the establishment of effective and efficient local decision making.**” is so important that it warrants equal standing with the objectives of access and sustainability.

Tangential to structure may be a future recommendation from the Committee regarding the DGB's interpretation of the Carver Model. The Committee in its discussions have wondered whether the current interpretation embraced by the DGB serves the interests of the Verde Valley due to its emphasis on establishing “ends” and the de-emphasis of tracking the “means” being employed towards those “ends”. There are concerns that the interests of the Verde Valley may suffer if under-represented groups or areas within the College do not have a fully empowered advocate with intact avenues of communication to the DGB. The Committee wishes to further understand the design and intent of the Carver Model and asks that the DGB seriously consider any future requests for the resources necessary to do so.

The Verde Valley Board Advisory Committee wishes to thank the District Governing Board for the opportunity to be recognized as the Verde Valley's voice for constructive and collaborative dialog to promote improved access to quality and affordable post-secondary education in the Verde Valley. We believe that the recommendations included in this report describe an overarching structure ensuring accessible and sustainable delivery of that goal. We are

committed to continuing this effort with the intent of further discovery, evaluation, and discussion resulting in continued support of your mission.

A summary statement is in progress, to be submitted at a later date.

Respectfully Submitted: The Yavapai College District Governing Board Verde Valley Advisory Committee. June 3, 2015.

Paul Chevalier, Chair - Sedona

Bill Regner, Vice-Chair - Clarkdale

Janet Aniol – Unincorporated District 2

Carolyn Fisher – Unincorporated District 3

Randy Garrison – Cottonwood

Amber Marchant Lee * – Camp Verde

Leona Wathogoma – Yavapai Apache Nation

*Ms Marchant-Lee participated in the presentations and discussions prior to her resignation from the Committee due to her relocation away from the Verde Valley. She did not participate in the formation nor approval of the recommendations included with this report.