

COLLEGE OF MARIN NEEDS ASSESSMENT

A Report to Inform the 2006 Educational Master Planning Process

**PREPARED FOR
COLLEGE OF MARIN**

PREPARED BY



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TABLE OF CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	3
OVERVIEW	3
METHODOLOGY	3
FINDINGS	3
BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT	6
PURPOSE OF THE NEEDS ASSESSMENT	6
SELECTION OF SFSU FOR INCLUSION IN THE NEEDS ASSESSMENT	7
METHODOLOGY	7
FINDINGS FROM THE SFSU INTERNET SURVEY WITH SAN FRANCISCO STATE UNIVERSITY STUDENTS.....	9
METHODOLOGY	9
GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS	9
PLACE OF RESIDENCE AND COMMUTE PATTERNS.....	10
HISTORIC INVOLVEMENT WITH COMMUNITY COLLEGES	11
AREAS OF STUDY AT SFSU.....	11
FACTORS OF CONSIDERATION WHEN CHOOSING A COLLEGE OR UNIVERSITY	12
LEVEL OF INTEREST IN BACHELOR’S DEGREE PROGRAMS AT THE COLLEGE OF MARIN.....	13
Bachelor’s Programs at the Kentfield Campus.....	14
Bachelor’s Programs at the IVC	15
Bachelor’s Degree Areas of Interest.....	17
BARRIERS TO COMPLETEING A BACHELOR’S DEGREE	17
LEVEL OF INTEREST IN GRADUATE PROGRAMS AT THE COLLEGE OF MARIN.....	18
Graduate Programs at the Kentfield Campus.....	18
Graduate Programs at the IVC	20
Graduate Degree Areas of Interest.....	21
LEVEL OF INTEREST IN CERTIFICATE PROGRAMS AT THE COLLEGE OF MARIN	21
FINDINGS FROM THE COM IN-CLASS SURVEY WITH COLLEGE OF MARIN STUDENTS ..	23
METHODOLOGY	23
GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS	23
Place of Residence and Commute Patterns.....	24
Primary Reasons for Attending College of Marin	25
FACTORS OF CONSIDERATION WHEN CHOOSING A COLLEGE OR UNIVERSITY	26
LEVEL OF INTEREST IN BACHELOR’S DEGREE PROGRAMS AT THE COLLEGE OF MARIN.....	28
Bachelor’s Programs at the Kentfield Campus.....	28
Bachelor’s Programs at the Indian Valley Campus	29
Bachelor’s Degree Areas of Interest.....	30
BARRIERS TO COMPLETEING A BACHELOR’S DEGREE	31
INTEREST IN GRADUATE PROGRAMS AT THE COLLEGE OF MARIN	32
Graduate Programs at the Kentfield Campus.....	32
Graduate Programs at the IVC	33
Graduate Degree Areas of Interest.....	34
LEVEL OF INTEREST IN CERTIFICATE PROGRAMS AT THE COLLEGE OF MARIN	34

FINDINGS FROM THE KENTFIELD CAMPUS FOCUS GROUP.....	35
STUDENT NEEDS	35
Enrollment in Courses.....	35
Course and Program Offerings.....	36
Reasons for Transferring to another School.....	36
INTEREST IN SATELLITE DEGREE PROGRAMS AT THE COLLEGE OF MARIN.....	37
Satellite Bachelor Degree Programs	37
Satellite Graduate-Level Programs.....	38
Satellite Certificate Programs	39
SUMMARY OF KENTFIELD CAMPUS STUDENT RECOMMENDATIONS.....	39
FINDINGS FROM THE INDIAN VALLEY FOCUS GROUP	40
STUDENT NEEDS	40
Enrollment in Courses.....	40
Course and Program Offerings.....	41
Reasons for Transferring to another School.....	42
Considerations for Choosing a Bachelor’s Program.....	42
Barriers to Pursing a Bachelor’s or Transferring to a Bachelor’s Program.....	43
Lack of On-Campus Resources.....	43
INTEREST IN SATELLITE DEGREE PROGRAMS	44
Satellite Bachelor’s Degree Program.....	44
Satellite Graduate-Level Programs.....	45
Satellite Certificate Programs	45
SUMMARY OF IVC STUDENT RECOMMENDATIONS	46
KEY STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS	47
PARTICIPANTS	47
WORKFORCE NEEDS IN MARIN COUNTY/CAREERS IN DEMAND.....	47
CHALLENGES IN MEETING WORKFORCE NEEDS.....	49
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR MEETING WORKFORCE NEEDS	50
CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....	51
RECOMMENDATIONS.....	53

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

OVERVIEW

This report, prepared by Harder+Company Community Research for the College of Marin (COM), is intended to inform COM's 2006 Educational Master Plan. The research in this report is meant to assist COM in identifying potential expansions in programs, and to provide details on some of the specific needs and interests of current and potential COM students.

In its Educational Master Plan, COM proposed to establish a partnership with San Francisco State University (SFSU) and other universities to bring additional bachelor's degree, graduate degree, and/or certificate programs to one or both of the COM campuses. COM commissioned this Needs Assessment to better inform their planning for partnerships, and to learn more generally how to grow in the long term.

METHODOLOGY

Primary data for this Needs Assessment was collected in four ways:

- An SFSU Internet survey was distributed online to more than 750 current San Francisco State University students.
- A COM In-Class survey was administered to current College of Marin students at both the Kentfield Campus and the IVC.
- Two focus groups were held with COM students, one on the Kentfield Campus and one on the IVC.
- Key Stakeholder interviews were conducted by telephone with individuals representing Marin County businesses, government agencies, and community-based organizations (CBOs).

FINDINGS

In general, students reported being highly satisfied with the education they were receiving at COM. This was especially apparent among students attending the Indian Valley Campus (IVC). One IVC focus group participant asserted, "The teachers are excellent here and they are of the highest caliber." Another student commented, "Out of California, this is one of the top three Court Reporting schools for passing students." Another Court Reporting student agreed, adding, "I know that a lot of Court Reporting students who don't go to this school talk about how lucky we are."

Several students emphasized that the quality of education at COM matched that at any other community college in the area. Students reported that the school has an excellent reputation and feel lucky to be able to attend the program at COM.

Through their participation in the COM In-Class survey, the SFSU Internet survey, and two focus groups, COM and SFSU students shared their opinions, preferences, and needs, providing insight into questions such as:

- Which group(s) of COM students should new programs target?
- What is the level of interest in a partnership between COM and SFSU or another college or university?
- What are the reasons behind students' interest or lack of interest in such a partnership?
- What factors are most important to students when choosing a 4-year college or university?
- What are some of the largest barriers students face when trying complete a bachelor's degree?
- What areas of study are in most high demand among current COM students?
- What majors would students like to see offered in a potential partnership between COM and SFSU or another college or university?

The major findings of this report include:

- ✓ Survey participants cited location (either distance or proximity) as a driving force in their level of interest in enrolling in potential degree or certificate programs at one of the COM campuses. Distance/proximity was the most frequently reported reason—among both SFSU survey respondents and COM survey respondents—for students' strong interest and for students' lack of interest.
- ✓ When choosing a bachelor's degree program, the quality of the institution, availability of a student's preferred major, cost, times of day that classes are offered, and a school's commute distance from home were all rated "Very Important" by both COM and SFSU students.
- ✓ Cost was a "Large Barrier" to completing a bachelor's degree for the greatest proportion of both SFSU and COM students, with more IVC students concerned about cost than Kentfield Campus students. Students' work schedules, the times of day classes are offered, and commute distance also posed large barriers to many COM and SFSU students.
- ✓ A greater proportion of COM students expressed strong interest in the possibility of satellite bachelor's programs at the COM campuses than did SFSU students. The reasons given point to the importance of students' current place of residence and the resulting commute time. Nevertheless, interest on the part of SFSU students was not insignificant.
- ✓ Business, Health (particularly Nursing), and Psychology/Criminal Justice/Child and Adolescent Development/Sociology repeatedly came up as the most popular areas of study. These were the most frequent areas of study among current SFSU students, the most requested bachelor's degree majors to be offered in a potential COM-SFSU

partnership, and the most desired graduate areas of study by both COM and SFSU survey respondents.¹

- ✓ COM and SFSU students were at least as interested, if not more interested, in graduate programs on the COM campuses as they were in bachelor's programs.
- ✓ The offer of additional certificate programs at either COM campus seemed to be a less popular option. However, students' lower level of interest in certificates may be due in part to a lack of knowledge about the many types of certificate that exist.
- ✓ According to Kentfield Campus students, more instructors and course offerings are needed to alleviate the crowded classes, such as evening Real Estate. In addition, students would like to see a course offered more than once a week on different days and times to accommodate working students' schedules and so that they can fulfill required coursework in a reasonable amount of time. They also suggested extending the library and learning center hours to make these facilities more accessible during the weekends.
- ✓ IVC students suggested offering the same courses across both campuses to increase student enrollment, and recommended hiring additional instructional staff to teach the classes in high demand. They also requested that on-campus resources, such as a library, bookstore, and cafeteria, be made available at IVC. Moreover, students asked COM to take a proactive role in advertising the programs and courses that are available at IVC to stir community interest and support.

Please refer to the "Conclusions and Recommendations" section of this report for a more detailed discussion of its findings and suggestions for how to incorporate these findings into the COM's educational planning and decision-making processes.

¹ COM students also expressed interest in graduate work in the field of Education.

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

PURPOSE OF THE NEEDS ASSESSMENT

This report, prepared by Harder+Company Community Research for the College of Marin (COM), is intended to inform COM's 2006 Educational Master Plan. The research in this report is meant to assist COM in identifying potential expansions in academic and non-academic programs, and to provide details on some of the specific needs and interests of current and potential COM students.

In its Educational Master Plan, COM proposed to establish a partnership with San Francisco State University (SFSU) and other universities to bring additional bachelor's degree, graduate degree, and/or certificate programs to one or both of the COM campuses. COM commissioned this Needs Assessment to better inform their planning for partnerships, and to learn more generally how to grow in the long term. Some of the questions addressed by this Needs Assessment include:

- ✓ Which group(s) of COM students should new programs target?
- ✓ What is the level of interest in a partnership between COM and SFSU or another college or university?
- ✓ What are the reasons behind students' interest or lack of interest in such a partnership?
- ✓ What factors are most important to students when choosing a 4-year college or university?
- ✓ What are some of the largest barriers students face when trying complete a bachelor's degree?
- ✓ What areas of study are in most high demand among current COM students?
- ✓ What majors would students like to see offered in a potential partnership between COM and SFSU or other college or university?
- ✓ What are the labor market trends and needs that College of Marin should consider when creating new programs?

It is our hope that answers to the above questions will help COM officials make decisions and set priorities when planning future changes.

SELECTION OF SFSU FOR INCLUSION IN THE NEEDS ASSESSMENT

The choice to pursue the investigation of a partnership with SFSU is based partly on the trends among students transferring away from the College of Marin. In Fall 2003, transfer students made up 23% of the COM student population.² Between the 1996-97 and 2004-05 academic years, the number of students transferring from COM to universities in the University of California (UC) system declined from 119 to 86, a decrease of 28%. The number of students transferring into the California State University (CSU) system from COM also declined, from 233 in 1996-97 to 164 in 2004-05, a reduction of 30%.³

However, when analyzing the number of students who transfer to SFSU separately from those who transfer to other CSU schools, a new pattern develops. Between 1996-97 and 2004-05, the number of students transferring from COM to SFSU rose slightly from 81 to 85 students, a marginal increase of 5%. This suggests a trend of slow growth among transfers to SFSU, or at least a steady rate of transfer. Declining transfers to SFSU could also be linked to declining enrollment at COM.

When comparing this trend to the number of student transfers to other CSU schools, it is clear that COM students are more frequently choosing to go to SFSU: the rate of COM transfers to all other CSUs declined by 48% between 1996-97 and 2004-05, from 152 students to only 79.⁴ These data indicate that SFSU would be a worthwhile institution with which to enhance and strengthen partnership. As supported by the educational master plan, COM and SFSU already have a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) in place to partner in educational programs as mutually agreed upon. This MOU is not exclusive. The data in this report will support decision-making about future partnerships with SFSU and other universities.

METHODOLOGY

Primary data for this Needs Assessment were collected in four ways:

- An SFSU Internet survey was distributed online to current SFSU students. The sample consisted of students who had transferred to SFSU from Sonoma State University or from community colleges in Marin or Contra Costa counties, as well as SFSU students who currently reside in Marin or Contra Costa County. The survey solicited information about students' commute patterns; historical involvement with community colleges and COM specifically; important factors of consideration when selecting a bachelor's degree program; level of interest in satellite bachelor's degree, graduate degree, or certificate programs located on

² Lapkoff & Gobalet Demographic Research, Inc., *Demographic Analysis for the College of Marin*, August 2004, p. 22.

³ California Postsecondary Education Commission, *Transfer Pathways: Full-Year Transfers 1989/90 to 2004/05, College of Marin to Campuses of the University of California and California State University*, 2005. Available online at <http://www.cpec.ca.gov/>

⁴ Ibid.

COM's Kentfield Campus or IVC; reasons behind students' level of interest in such programs; degree areas of interest; and barriers to enrollment in bachelor's degree programs. Survey responses were coded, entered into a database and analyzed.

- A COM In-Class survey was administered to current COM students at both the Kentfield Campus and IVC. The 12 classes to which the paper survey was distributed were selected by COM administrators and represented a variety of subject areas, several courses with a high percentage of transfer-track students, and included both daytime and evening courses. The COM In-Class survey asked COM students about their place of residence, location of workplace, and commute patterns; their primary reasons for attending College of Marin; factors of consideration when choosing a college or university; level of interest in satellite bachelor's degree, graduate degree, or certificate programs located on COM's Kentfield Campus or IVC; reasons behind students' level of interest in such programs; degree areas of interest; and barriers to enrollment in bachelor's degree programs. Variables from completed surveys were then coded and entered into a database for quantitative analysis.
- Two focus groups were held with COM students, one on the Kentfield Campus and one on IVC. The purpose of the focus groups was to assess students' needs regarding courses offered at the College of Marin; to explore their interest in satellite bachelor degree, certificate, and graduate-level programs offered on campus by SFSU or other four-year universities; and to identify barriers they face in pursuing a bachelor's degree. Flyers advertising the focus groups were posted around campus, and classroom announcements were made inviting students to participate in the focus group. Participating students received a \$20 cash incentive for their time.
- Key Stakeholder interviews were conducted by telephone with individuals representing Marin County government agencies, CBOs, and businesses. Stakeholders were interviewed to identify the workforce needs of Marin County and to explore how COM might assist in meeting those needs through the development and implementation of their Educational Master Plan. Stakeholders were selected by COM administrators based on their organization's relationship to and involvement with the College, as well as an assessment of the relevance and usefulness of these individuals' or organizations' perspectives.

More detail on sample sizes and other methodological considerations are included at the beginning of each section of this report.

FINDINGS FROM THE SFSU INTERNET SURVEY WITH SAN FRANCISCO STATE UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

METHODOLOGY

The SFSU Internet survey was distributed to 766 San Francisco State University students. A nonprobability sample was chosen, intended to target students who might have a greater likelihood of interest in the proposed programs. Students in the sample were identified by SFSU administrators and consisted of individuals who had transferred to SFSU from Sonoma State University or from community colleges in Marin or Contra Costa counties, as well as SFSU students who currently reside in Marin or Contra Costa County. An impressive 595 people, or 78% of the sample, responded to the survey.⁵

The survey was distributed by email, and students were directed to a web-based form with a combination of open-ended and closed-ended questions. Students completed the survey anonymously and submitted their answers via the Internet to Harder+Company Community Research. Variables were then coded and entered into a database for quantitative analysis.

GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS

Of the 595 SFSU Internet survey respondents, a full 70% were under the age of 25; of those, 27% were aged 16 to 20 and 43% reported ages of 21 to 25 years. An additional 14% of respondents were 26 to 30. Only 2% were over 50 years old (see Table 1). The mean age of all respondents was 25.2 years old.

Table 1. Age of Internet Survey Participants

Age Group (in years)	Number	Percent	Cumulative %
16 – 20	158	27%	27%
21 – 25	254	43%	70%
26 – 30	84	14%	85%
31 – 35	31	5%	90%
36 – 40	21	4%	94%
41 – 50	27	5%	98%
Over 50	10	2%	100%

Among all respondents, 32% reported their race/ethnicity as White/Caucasian, 38% as Asian or Pacific Islander, and 12% as Latino or Hispanic. Combined, these three categories made up 82% of the survey population. An additional 6% reported being multi-ethnic, 4% African-American or Black, and 6% declined to state a race or ethnicity (see Table 2).

⁵ Two of these students indicated that they were enrolled at a school other than SFSU.

Table 2. Ethnicity of SFSU Internet Survey Participants

Ethnicity	Number	Percent
Asian/Pacific Islander	226	38%
White/Caucasian	190	32%
Latino/Hispanic	70	12%
Multi-Ethnic	34	6%
African American	22	4%
Native American	1	2%
Other	10	2%
Decline to state	37	6%

The vast majority of students (89%) reported attending college full-time, while the remaining students were enrolled part-time. Most students (64%) also reported that they were employed at the time of the survey, concurrently with their school activities.

PLACE OF RESIDENCE AND COMMUTE PATTERNS

The majority of SFSU survey respondents (65%) reported living in San Francisco County. The second most frequently reported county of residence (12%) was Contra Costa. An equal number of students reported living in Marin and San Mateo counties, giving each county 7% of all responses. Sonoma was home to only 3% of respondents (see Table 3).

Table 3. Place of Residence

County	Number	Percent
San Francisco	377	65%
Contra Costa	67	12%
Marin	42	7%
San Mateo	42	7%
Sonoma	19	3%
Alameda	18	3%
Solano	11	2%

Among students who reported commuting to school from outside of San Francisco, (n=186), 36% commute from north of San Francisco, with 23% coming from Marin, 8% from Sonoma County, and 5% commuting from Solano. Another 45% commute from the East Bay, with the majority of this group (34%) commuting from Contra Costa County and the remainder (10%) coming from Alameda County. A third group of respondents (19% of the total) reported commuting from the Peninsula and South Bay, with nearly all of them (19%) coming from San Mateo County and less than 1% commuting from locations in Santa Clara County (see Table 4).

Table 4. County From Which Students Commute

County	Number	Percent
Contra Costa	64	34%
Marin	42	23%
San Mateo	35	19%
Alameda	19	10%
Sonoma	15	8%
Solano	10	5%
Santa Clara	1	1%

HISTORIC INVOLVEMENT WITH COMMUNITY COLLEGES

More than three quarters of respondents (77%) reported having taken classes at a community college sometime in the past. Within this group, 54% said that they had taken classes at City College of San Francisco, 14% at Diablo Valley College, 13% at COM's Kentfield Campus, 12% at Santa Rosa Junior College, and 4% at the COM's IVC. Other community colleges mentioned by more than 1% of students include Contra Costa College, Solano Community College, College of San Mateo, and Skyline College.

When asked how recently they had attended community college, more than a third of students (37%) reported attending two years ago, and another 30% reported taking classes at a community college within the last year. Both of these groups of students, comprising two-thirds of survey respondents, likely transferred from community college to SFSU in order to obtain a bachelor's degree. Some students also reported taking their community college courses three to four years ago (22%), and 4% had last attended community college five or more years ago. At the time of the survey, 7% indicated that they were currently enrolled at a community college in addition to their coursework at SFSU (see Table 5).

Table 5. Most Recent Enrollment at a Community College

Number of Years Ago	Number	Percent	Cumulative %
Currently taking	31	7%	7%
In the last year	139	30%	37%
2 years ago	170	37%	74%
3 or 4 years ago	100	22%	96%
5 or more years ago	18	4%	100%

AREAS OF STUDY AT SFSU

Among the students surveyed, 91% were currently enrolled in a bachelor's degree program. In order to create a profile of students' interests, these students were asked about their major or area of concentration at SFSU. Of students who reported a major (n=522), the most popular areas of study were those related to Business. Twenty percent

reported a major in Business or in a Business-related field such as Accounting, Business Management, Business Marketing, Finance, International Business, or Economics.

The second most commonly reported area of study was Health or Health-related fields. This group—comprising 16% of all students who reported a major—included Pre-Med students and those in pre-medical fields such as Biology and Physiology.⁶ It also included specific Health disciplines such as Nursing, Nutrition, Audiology, Speech Pathology, Kinesiology and Dietetics. The Behavioral Sciences of Psychology, Sociology, and Child and Adolescent Development were another popular area of study, with 13% reporting these majors.

Other disciplines representing more than 5% of reported majors include Arts (9%, including Art, Music, Theater, Film, Industrial Arts, and Design), English (7%, including English, Creative Writing, Journalism, Speech, and Communications), and Political Science (6%, including Political Science, History, International Relations, and Geography). Many other fields of study were named, including Mathematics/Engineering/Physics, Liberal Arts Studies, Language/Ethnic/Cultural studies, and Computer Science/Computer-Aided Design. A number of students were also engaged in a variety of specialized areas such as Broadcast Communications, Hospitality Management, and Interior Design.

FACTORS OF CONSIDERATION WHEN CHOOSING A COLLEGE OR UNIVERSITY

Students responding to the SFSU Internet survey were asked about the importance of various factors when choosing a college or university at which to enroll. Students had the choice of rating each possible consideration as “Not Important,” “Somewhat Important,” or “Very Important.” The factor that the greatest percentage of respondents considered to be “Very Important” (88%) was the availability of the students’ preferred major at a given school. The second most important consideration for students was the quality of the academic institution, with 85% rating it as “Very Important.”

Students also reported feeling strongly that cost is a very important factor in their decision making. Cost, an area in which the COM has a distinct advantage over many other colleges and universities, gathered the third highest number of “Very Important” designations (74%). The majority of students (63%) also felt that it was very important for a school to offer classes at students’ preferred times during the day. This may be related to students’ work schedule, given that 64% of all SFSU Internet survey respondents reported working at the time of the survey. However, students’ preferred time of evening and weekend classes was rated as less important (35% and 13% “Very Important,” respectively).

⁶ Based on the recommendation of COM officials, the subject area of Biology is included in the category of Health-related fields throughout this report. The categorization of Biology as distinct from the rest of the physical sciences, such as Chemistry and Physics, is based on the belief that many students study Biology with the specific intention of entering medical or health-related career tracks.

The fifth most important consideration was a school’s distance from a student’s home, with just over half (53%) of respondents reporting this as a “Very Important” factor in choosing a bachelor’s degree program. Distance from work was rated as less important, with 36% identifying it as a “Very Important” consideration (see Table 6).

Table 6. Considerations When Choosing a College or University

	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Not Important
Availability of major	88%	11%	1%
Quality of institution	85%	14%	1%
Cost of education	74%	24%	2%
Preferred time of daytime classes	63%	30%	8%
Commute distance from home	53%	42%	6%
Commute distance from work	36%	44%	20%
Preferred time of evening classes	35%	45%	20%
City vs. suburban campus	24%	46%	30%
Availability of distance learning	21%	42%	37%
Availability of weekend classes	13%	39%	47%

LEVEL OF INTEREST IN BACHELOR’S DEGREE PROGRAMS AT THE COLLEGE OF MARIN

Students who responded to the SFSU Internet survey were asked about their potential interest, or the interest level of other students like them, in bachelor’s degree programs located on the COM campuses and taught by SFSU faculty or faculty from another college or university. Survey participants were also asked to share the reasons why they might or might not be interested in enrolling in such programs. Questions asking students for a reason behind their interest level were open-ended, so that they could write whatever they wanted. Responses from the 595 survey participants were then grouped and coded into categories to allow for quantitative analysis. For example, answers relating to a long distance between the campus and home or work were given a code of “1,” answers having to do with the cost of tuition were coded “2,” answers such as “I don’t have a car,” “BART doesn’t go there,” or “No public transportation” were coded “3,” etcetera.

Because the questions were open-ended, students could give as many reasons as they wanted. Students usually mentioned only one response category, and very few cited more than two reasons. The first two reasons given by any student were coded for analysis. Because respondents could name more than one reason, percentages will not add to 100.

Bachelor's Programs at the Kentfield Campus

Seventeen percent of students reported themselves to be “Very Interested,” and another 30% as “Somewhat Interested” in enrolling in a bachelor’s degree program if it were located on the Kentfield Campus (see Table 7).

Table 7. Interest in Bachelor Degree Offered at Kentfield Campus

	Number	Percent	Cumulative %
Very Interested	96	17%	17%
Somewhat Interested	169	30%	47%
Not at All Interested	308	54%	100%

Among those who gave a reason for being “Very Interested” (n=52), the most frequently cited reason was the proximity or shorter commute time from home or work. Nearly three-quarters (73%) of the “Very Interested” group gave this reason as the basis of their interest in attending the Kentfield Campus. As described throughout the rest of this report, the distance between campus and a student’s home and the resulting commute time was repeatedly cited as the primary reason for student’s interest or lack of interest. Table 8 illustrates this pattern by looking at students’ county of residence and their level of interest in bachelor’s degree programs at the Kentfield Campus. This pattern persists when looking at the connection between the location of students’ homes and their level of interest in bachelor’s programs at the College of Marin’s IVC.

Table 8. County From Which Students Commute by Interest in Bachelor Degree Offered at Kentfield Campus

County	Not At All Interested		Somewhat Interested		Very Interested	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Marin	2	5%	8	21%	29	74%
Sonoma	1	7%	4	27%	10	67%
Solano	6	60%	2	20%	2	20%
Contra Costa	33	52%	20	32%	10	16%
Alameda	8	44%	9	50%	1	6%
San Mateo	25	69%	10	28%	1	3%
Santa Clara	0	0%	1	100%	0	0%

The second most common reason students reported for being “Very Interested” was reducing the cost of their commute (17%). Some of these students mentioned the cost of gas, and many mentioned the five-dollar toll on the Golden Gate Bridge.

The third most frequent reason for being “Very Interested” was students’ hope that it would be easier to enroll in or get their desired courses at COM compared to SFSU, or that COM might have more or different options to offer students, such as the time of day

classes are offered, the availability of different programs and majors, or simply more sections of certain classes. A couple of people from this group said they were “Very Interested,” but only if a degree were offered in their desired major.

Among students who reported a reason for being “Somewhat Interested” in enrolling in a bachelor’s degree program on the Kentfield Campus (n=67), the most common reason once again was the proximity or shorter commute time from home and/or work (31%). However, the second most frequently cited reason was the distance or long commute time (22%). Like students who were “Very Interested,” the third most common reason given by “Somewhat Interested” students was hope for increased availability of courses, or simply having a wider variety of options (18%).

Students who reported being “Not at All Interested” in enrolling in a bachelor’s degree program on the Kentfield Campus (n=211) were very clear about their reason: a full 72% said that it was because of the distance or long commute time from home or work. Many of these students currently live in San Francisco and saw no reason to leave the city for something they could access closer to home. Others live in the East Bay and said that it is faster for them to take BART into San Francisco than to travel to Marin.

The second most common reason, reported by a much smaller 14% of those who were “Not at All Interested,” was the fact that they were nearly done with their studies. A third group of students (12%) explained that public transportation was one of the reasons for their lack of interest. Some responded that they do not own a car, others noted that BART does not run to Marin, and some worried that it would take too long or was too complicated to get there by bus.

Other reasons students gave for being “Not at All Interested” include liking SFSU’s main campus and its “university feel,” liking living in the city, and wanting to be somewhere familiar within their “comfort zone.” Other students said that they were not interested in living in a rural environment, or were not interested in the College of Marin or in a community college environment. Alternatively, some students liked the idea of living out of the city in a quieter environment, expressed positive feelings about Marin, or liked the idea of a change of scenery. A few students expressed feelings of stigma towards community colleges in general, and several others were concerned about the impact such a partnership might have on the main campus on SFSU, whose resources they felt were already stretched thin.

Bachelor’s Programs at the IVC

Students were asked next about their level of interest in bachelor’s degree programs taught by SFSU or another college or university’s faculty, but located on the College of Marin’s IVC rather than the Kentfield Campus. Whereas 17% of students had indicated they were “Very Interested” in this type of program if it were located on the Kentfield Campus, this number declined to 11% expressing strong interest in the IVC location (see Table 9). The number of moderately interested students also dropped: 30% were

“Somewhat Interested” in the Kentfield Campus location, while 24% were “Somewhat Interested” in pursuing a bachelor’s degree on the IVC.

Table 9. Interest in Bachelor Degree Offered at IVC

	Number	Percent	Cumulative %
Very Interested	63	11%	11%
Somewhat Interested	134	24%	35%
Not at All Interested	366	65%	100%

Similar to interest in the Kentfield Campus, proximity or short commute time from students’ home or work persisted as the most compelling reason for interest in IVC. Among those who reported a reason for being “Very Interested” in the IVC location (n=45), 76% cited this as the primary reason for their interest. The second most frequently reported reason among “Very Interested” students (18%) was the appeal of having another option to choose from, or the hope that a bachelor’s program at IVC would offer students additional sections of high-demand classes, or more choices of classes or majors. Cited by 11% of the “Very Interested” students who gave a reason was the benefit of reducing the cost of their commute.

Among students who indicated a reason for being only “Somewhat Interested” in the IVC option (n=52), the most common reason given (33%) was concern about the long distance or commute time. Mentioned second most frequently, by 19% of students, was the interest in having another bachelor’s program to choose from or the possibility of being able to access additional classes and majors. Seventeen percent of “Somewhat Interested” students who explained their reasons noted that they liked the IVC location because of its proximity to their home and work, down from 31% of students somewhat interested in Kentfield Campus.

Students who responded as “Not at All Interested” in a bachelor’s program at IVC overwhelmingly cited the distance or long commute time (75% of 233 students giving a reason). Ten percent of students stated that they were not interested because they had almost completed their studies. Nine percent of students commented that they liked being in the city or liked the environment or familiarity of SFSU’s main campus, and an additional 9% explained that not owning a car and/or poor public transportation was a factor in their lack of interest.

Students gave a wide variety of reasons for their level of interest in addition to the most common ones described above. Among students who were “Very Interested” in bachelor’s degree programs at either campus, additional reasons included a hope for smaller class sizes or more individualized attention, as well as liking Marin, a more rural environment, or the COM campus(es) in particular. Those respondents who felt “Not at All Interested” in enrolling in a bachelor’s program located at either Kentfield Campus or IVC mentioned reasons such as not wanting a bachelor’s degree, or not ever having heard of the College of Marin or not knowing where the campuses are located. Students who were “Somewhat Interested” echoed some reasons from both of these lists. In addition, a

number of students who may not have felt strong interest themselves voiced their approval of the idea, saying that it was a good idea for others, particularly for people who still live in Marin or Sonoma. Nineteen people expressed this sentiment with regard to bachelor's programs at the Kentfield Campus, and 13 with regard to bachelor's programs at IVC.

Bachelor's Degree Areas of Interest

Because COM at the moment is primarily focused on revitalizing the IVC, students were asked a second more in-depth question about the topic areas in which they might be interested if pursuing a bachelor's degree at IVC. Students were given a list of possible majors to choose from, and were allowed to select all that they might be interested in.⁷ Students were also given the option of writing in any areas of study not on the list.

The most popular degree areas parallel students' current majors reported at the beginning of the survey, with 121 students (20%) expressing interest in Business Administration, 100 students (17%) interested in Nursing, and 86 students (15%) interested in Child and Adolescent Development. Other areas of study in which more than 10% of respondents expressed interest are Criminal Justice, Holistic Health, and Environmental Studies. Thirty-one percent of students were not interested, regardless of the topic area.

BARRIERS TO COMPLETEING A BACHELOR'S DEGREE

San Francisco State University students responding to the SFSU Internet survey were asked about barriers they may face when trying to complete a bachelor's degree. Students had the choice of rating each item as "Not a Barrier," a "Small Barrier," or a "Large Barrier." Responses to some of these questions mirrored students' responses to their important considerations when choosing a college or university.

The item identified as a "Large Barrier" by the greatest percentage of students (53%) was cost (see Table 10). Although tuition at COM is cheaper than at most other academic institutions, tuition and fees for bachelor's degree programs located at either campus would likely match those of the four-year college or university, as this would be the matriculating institution. Therefore, although nearly half of students felt cost was a significant barrier to completing their bachelor's degree, degree programs at COM will not be able to capitalize on this. Because very few people mentioned cost as a reason for either their interest or lack of interest in programs on either COM campus, respondents were either cognizant of this perhaps subtle fact, or else distance from home in actuality trumps cost as a consideration when making real-life decisions.

⁷ Because this question was a "check all that apply," percentages will not add to 100.

Table 10. Barriers to Completing a Bachelor Degree

	Not a Barrier	Small Barrier	Large Barrier
Cost (n =521)	10%	37%	53%
Time day classes offered (n =514)	14%	41%	45%
Public transportation availability (n =524)	32%	29%	39%
Work schedule (n =517)	25%	38%	37%
Commute distance from home (n =525)	30%	37%	34%
Prerequisite classes (n =519)	24%	42%	34%
General Education requirements (n =511)	36%	39%	25%
Commute distance from work (n =518)	43%	33%	24%
GPA requirements (n =513)	49%	32%	19%

The potential barrier determined to be “Large” by the second highest percentage of responding students (45%) was the time of day classes are offered. Like important factors of consideration when choosing a college or university, the students’ desire to have classes at their preferred time of day may be related to their work schedule, given that 64% of all SFSU Internet survey respondents reported working at the time of the survey. Students’ work schedule was reported to be a “Large Barrier” by 37% of survey respondents.

The third largest barrier among all students was public transportation availability. More than a third (39%) of students rated this as being a “Large Barrier.” Prerequisite classes and school’s distance from home each constituted “Large” barriers for 34% of respondents (see Table 10).

Items determined to be less of a barrier include students’ grade point averages, the commute distance between work and school, and General Education requirements.

LEVEL OF INTEREST IN GRADUATE PROGRAMS AT THE COLLEGE OF MARIN

In addition to the questions about bachelor’s degree programs, respondents to the SFSU Internet survey were asked about their interest in graduate programs at the two COM campuses. Students were told that, as with the bachelor’s programs, graduate courses would be taught by faculty from a four-year college or university and students would matriculate from that institution. Survey questions asked about students’ level of interest and the reason(s) for their feelings.

Graduate Programs at the Kentfield Campus

When asked whether they would be interested in graduate degree programs located on the Kentfield Campus, 73 students (13% of the total) reported that they were “Very Interested.” This percentage is somewhat lower than that of students “Very Interested” in

bachelor’s degree programs at the Kentfield Campus (96 students, or 17% of the total). However, the percentage of students “Somewhat Interested” in graduate programs at the Kentfield Campus is higher than the percentage of students somewhat interested in bachelor’s programs in the same location (37% versus 30%, respectively) (see Table 11).

Table 11. Percent of Students Interested in Degree Programs Offered at Kentfield Campus

	Graduate	Bachelor’s
Not at all interested	50%	54%
Somewhat interested	37%	30%
Very Interested	13%	17%

When asked for the reasons behind their level of interest, the majority of students who were “Very Interested” cited the same reason as those very interested in bachelor’s degree programs: Among students who gave a reason for their level of interest (n=29), 16 (55%) said the option appealed to them because of the proximity or possibility of a shorter commute to the Kentfield Campus. Once again, this variable of commute time persisted as the driving force behind students’ level of interest. As shown by Table 12, students who live closer to COM campuses are more likely to be interested in graduate programs located there. This pattern holds true for those interested or not interested in graduate programs at IVC.

Table 12. County From Which Students Commute by Interest in Graduate Degree Offered at the Kentfield Campus

County	Not At All Interested		Somewhat Interested		Very Interested	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Marin	9	24%	9	24%	20	53%
Sonoma	2	13%	9	60%	4	27%
Solano	5	50%	3	30%	2	20%
Contra Costa	30	49%	23	38%	8	13%
Alameda	11	61%	5	28%	2	11%
San Mateo	18	41%	14	41%	2	6%
Santa Clara	0	0%	0	0%	1	100%

Another five students (17%) who were “Very Interested” described the appeal of living in Marin, liking a more rural location or a change of environment, and liking somewhere less crowded with easier parking. Four “Very Interested” students mentioned the cost of tuition as an influencing factor, although again, the matriculating college or university would determine tuition costs.

There were 202 students who maintained that they were “Somewhat Interested” in graduate programs at the Kentfield Campus, and 60 of those reported a reason. Among students who explained their partial interest, the greatest number (15 students, or 25%)

asserted that it depends on whether their desired degree is offered at the Kentfield Campus. Another 12 students (20%) who were “Somewhat Interested” stated that they had no current plans to get a graduate degree. Nine respondents (15%) liked the idea of living in Marin or having a change of environment.

Among the 278 students who were “Not at All Interested” in graduate programs on the Kentfield Campus, 114 cited a reason for their lack of interest. As was true with bachelor’s programs, the most frequent reason given (by 60 students, or 53%) was the distance or long commute to the Kentfield Campus. The second reason for not being interested, mentioned by 29 students (25%), was currently having no plans to pursue a more advanced degree. Additionally, seven students (6%) remarked that not having a car and/or poor public transportation contributed to their disinterest.

Graduate Programs at the IVC

Students were also asked about their potential interest in graduate programs taught by SFSU or another college or university’s faculty but located on the IVC, rather than the Kentfield Campus. Sixty-eight students, or 13% of those responding, said that they would be “Very Interested” in this possibility. This is essentially the same proportion of students expressing strong interest in graduate programs at the Kentfield Campus.

A slightly higher percentage of students was “Very Interested” in graduate programs at IVC compared to bachelor’s programs at IVC (13% versus 11%, respectively). The proportion of “Somewhat Interested” students was higher as well (29% somewhat interested in graduate programs at IVC versus 24% somewhat interested in bachelor’s programs at IVC) (see Table 13).

Table 13. Percent of Students Interested in Degree Programs Offered at IVC

	Graduate	Bachelor’s
Not at all interested	55%	65%
Somewhat interested	32%	24%
Very Interested	13%	11%

Although 68 students reported themselves to be “Very Interested” in graduate programs at IVC, only 24 of these cited a reason. When asked for their rationale, the most common reason given by this group was once again proximity or a shorter commute time (13 students, or 54% of those citing a reason). The next most common statement from “Very Interested” students was that their strong interest is dependent on the degree of choice being offered (6 students, or 25%). No other response category was cited by more than two “Very Interested” students.

Fifty-four out of the 170 “Somewhat Interested” students explained the reason for their moderate interest. The most frequently given answer was that a student did not have any current plans to attain a graduate degree (13 students, or 24% of those giving a reason). The next most common response, cited by 12 students or 22% of those who gave a reason for being “Somewhat Interested,” was that it depends on whether or not the program

offers a degree in their desired area of study. Ten students (19%) who were moderately interested expressed concern about the distance or long commute between IVC and their home.

Of the 292 survey respondents who maintained no interest at all in graduate programs at IVC, 125 gave an explanation. As with the other questions, the overwhelming reason that students were “Not at All Interested” was the feeling that the campus was too far away (reported by 74 students, or 59% of those who gave a reason). The second most frequent response for why students lacked interest, cited by 22 students (18%), was not having plans at the time of the survey to attend graduate school. Twelve students (10%) again pointed to not owning a car or poor public transportation.

Graduate Degree Areas of Interest

Survey respondents were asked, if they might be interested in graduate programs at the College of Marin, which topic areas they might choose. This was an open-ended question, meaning that students could write in any subject area. Responses were categorized and coded, grouping items such as “English,” “Writing,” and “Journalism” together for the purpose of quantitative analysis. Because many students named more than one area of interest, percentages do not add to 100.

Some 181 students responded to the question, identifying a graduate degree in which they might be interested. Of these, 31% named a Health-related field: 21% specifically cited Nursing as a degree they would like to pursue, and another 16% mentioned other Health areas such as Public Health, Biology, Holistic Health, Nutrition, or Kinesiology.

Consistent with SFSU students’ current majors and the areas of interest for Bachelor’s degree programs at IVC, 27 % of the 181 students named specific fields within the Behavioral Sciences, including Psychology, Criminal Justice, Child and Adolescent Development, Sociology, Master’s in Family Therapy, and Social Work.

The third most popular graduate degree, named by 22% of students responding to the question, was a master’s in Business Administration, or another similarly related Business area.

LEVEL OF INTEREST IN CERTIFICATE PROGRAMS AT THE COLLEGE OF MARIN

Seven percent of SFSU Internet survey respondents were “Very Interested” in certificate programs located on the Kentfield Campus, and slightly fewer were “Very Interested” in pursuing a certificate at IVC. Although a greater proportion were “Somewhat Interested” (30% if offered at the Kentfield Campus and 26 if offered at IVC), the possibility of additional certificate programs was less popular than the possibility of bachelor’s or graduate degree programs: 63% were “Not at All Interested” in certificate programs at the Kentfield Campus and 68% expressed no interest in certificate programs at IVC. The

only other question receiving as many “Not at All Interested” responses was the option of bachelor’s degrees at IVC (65% “Not at All Interested”).

The lower level of interest in certificate programs among SFSU Internet survey respondents might be explained by the fact that the majority of respondents (91%) reported being currently enrolled in a bachelor’s degree program. In general, once students have completed a bachelor’s degree they are more likely to be interested in pursuing a graduate degree than a certificate. In addition, a list of possible certificates was not provided to students, and thus some respondents may not have been aware of the wide variety of certificate programs in existence for degree holders.

Very few students gave a reason for being “Very Interested” in certificate programs. Of the ten students who explained their interest in certificate programs on the Kentfield Campus, six of them said their interest was dependent on the type of certificate offered. Four out of the seven responses to the parallel question about IVC gave the same answer. A similar pattern also appears with those who were “Somewhat Interested” in certificate programs at either campus: the majority said that it depends on what certificates are offered.

Among students who gave a reason for being “Not at All Interested” in certificate programs at the Kentfield Campus (n=119), 48% once again cited the distance and/or long commute time. Another 36% simply said that they were not interested in obtaining a certificate. These reasons held true for the 108 students who gave a reason for being not at all interested in certificate programs at IVC, with 51% citing the distance and 35% saying their goals did not include earning a certificate.

FINDINGS FROM THE COM IN-CLASS SURVEY WITH COLLEGE OF MARIN STUDENTS

METHODOLOGY

The COM In-Class survey was distributed to 176 College of Marin students, 139 of whom identified themselves as attending the Kentfield Campus, and 39 of whom attended the Indian Valley Campus at the time of the survey.⁸ The 12 classes to which the survey was distributed were selected by COM administrators, and consisted of the following:

Kentfield Campus:

- Advanced ESL: Words IV
- Early Childhood Administration
- Introduction to Business
- Nursing Role: Perinatal
- Reading & Composition (1A) (two sections)
- Real Estate Practice
- Real Estate Principles

Indian Valley Campus:

- Auto Collision Repair Technology
- Beginning Machine Shorthand
- Intensive English Level III
- Print and Packaging Design

The survey was administered to a nonprobability sample—all students attending the above courses on the day(s) of survey administration—by Harder+Company staff. Students completed the paper survey, which included a series of open-ended and closed-ended questions as well as basic demographic information, anonymously. Variables on completed surveys were then coded and entered into a database for quantitative analysis.

GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS

Of the 176 students who completed the COM In-Class survey, 79% (139 students) indicated attending the Kentfield Campus and 23% (39 students) reported attending IVC.⁹ Of all respondents, 39% were under the age of 25: 20% were aged 16 to 20, and another 19% reported ages of 21 to 25. In addition, 34% of respondents reported to be older than 40 years old (see Table 14). The mean age of all respondents was 34, and the median age

⁸ Two students indicated that they attended both campuses.

⁹ Because of the relatively small sample size, the following analysis of students' interests and preferences, while useful and valid, does not necessarily reflect the interests and preferences of the whole COM student population in all cases. Particularly because of the small number of IVC students for whom survey data is available, readers should be careful about generalizing IVC survey findings to the entire IVC student body.

was 30 years old. Age did not vary significantly by campus. Interestingly, the age distribution between campuses is very similar across all categories.

Table 14. Age of COM In-Class Survey Participants¹⁰

Age Group (in years)	Kentfield (n=131)		Indian Valley (n=35)		All Students (n=167)	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
16 – 20	27	21%	6	16%	33	20%
21 – 25	26	20%	7	19%	32	19%
26 – 30	17	13%	5	14%	23	14%
31 – 35	7	5%	4	11%	11	7%
36 – 40	7	5%	4	11%	11	7%
41 – 50	25	19%	6	16%	30	18%
Over 50	22	17%	3	14%	27	16%

Among all COM In-Class respondents, White/Caucasian was the largest racial or ethnic group represented, with 62% reporting this as their race. Students reporting themselves to be Latino/Hispanic made up an additional 17% of the survey population, and 6% were Asian or Pacific Islander. Five percent of students responded that they were Multi-Ethnic, 2% Native American, and 1% were Black or African American. After recoding, 9% continued to have a race or ethnicity of “Other,” and 3% declined to state their racial background (see Table 15). The proportion of students reporting themselves to be White/Caucasian was higher at the Kentfield Campus than at IVC (64% versus 54%, respectively), and the percentage of Latino/Hispanic students was greater at IVC (28% versus 13% at the Kentfield Campus). The other racial and ethnic categories varied only marginally between campuses.

Table 15. Ethnicity of SFSU Internet Survey Participants

Ethnicity	Number	Percent
White/Caucasian	107	62%
Latino/Hispanic	29	17%
Asian/Pacific Islander	11	6%
Multi-ethnic	8	5%
Native American	3	2%
African American/Black	2	1%
Other	15	9%
Decline to state	5	3%

Place of Residence and Commute Patterns

Not surprisingly, the majority of all survey respondents attending COM reported living in Marin County (83%). An additional 8% reported residing in the City and County of San Francisco, and 7% in Sonoma County. Three people (2%) indicated that Contra Costa

¹⁰ Some of these cells do not sum properly because a few students did not indicate a campus.

County was their home, and one person reported living in Alameda County (see Table 16).

Table 16. Place of Residence

Ethnicity	Number	Percent
Marin	144	83%
San Francisco	13	8%
Sonoma	12	7%
Contra Costa	3	2%
Alameda	1	1%

A greater percentage of Kentfield Campus students who completed the survey live in Marin (91%) compared to IVC students (58%). Likely due to its easier accessibility from Sonoma County, more IVC students claimed Sonoma as their place of residence: nine IVC students (24%) live in Sonoma County, compared to only three students (2%) who attend the Kentfield Campus. Although small, the proportion of IVC survey respondents who reported living in San Francisco is equal to the proportion of Kentfield Campus students who are San Francisco residents. This is somewhat surprising given the longer commute distance from the city.

Out of the 176 survey respondents, 113 (64%) reported a work zip code. Of these, 82% reported a zip code in Marin County. Seven students (6%) stated that they work in San Francisco, five students (4%) work in Sonoma County, three students (3%) work in Contra Costa, two in Alameda, and one each in San Mateo, Santa Clara, and Mendocino Counties. Students at the Kentfield Campus reported working in Marin at a higher rate than students at IVC (86% versus 59%). Four out of the 17 IVC students who listed a work zip code worked in Sonoma County, compared to only one Kentfield Campus student out of 95.

Primary Reasons for Attending College of Marin

College of Marin students were asked to share their primary reason for attending the College overall, as well as their reason for taking the course in which they were administered the survey. Among all students surveyed, the most common reason for attending COM was personal enrichment, cited by 28% of students at both the Kentfield Campus and IVC (see Table 17).

Preparing for a bachelor's degree and earning a certificate were the next most common motivations for attendance, each mentioned by 23% of all COM students. However, within each of these reasons there are between students at the two campuses. At the Kentfield Campus, 30% of surveyed students reported to be preparing for a bachelor's degree and 20% stated that they were earning a certificate. At IVC these proportions were much different, with 44% of surveyed students reportedly earning a certificate and only 3% responding that their primary reason for attending COM is preparing for a bachelor's degree.

Pursuing a professional degree and working towards an associate’s degree were two additional reasons students reported to be attending COM, each identified by 14% of all surveyed students.

Table 17. Primary Reason for Attending College of Marin

Ethnicity	Number	Percent
Personal enrichment	49	28%
Preparation for bachelor degree	41	23%
Earn a certificate degree	41	23%
Pursue a professional degree	25	14%
Earn an associate’s degree	25	14%

Students were also asked to share the specific reason for being enrolled in the course where they received the COM In-Class survey. The most frequently reported reason among all students (32% of the total) was that they were taking the course to train for a new job. Ten students (26%) at IVC and 46 students (34%) at the Kentfield Campus identified this as their reason. Similarly, 16% of all students (3 students at IVC and 24 students at the Kentfield Campus) stated that their reason for enrolling in that course was to improve their work skills for their current job.

The second most common reason for enrolling in a particular class was to fulfill a requirement for transfer to a four-year college or university, cited by 19% of all surveyed students. This reason did reveal a difference between students at the Kentfield Campus and IVC: while only one IVC student (3%) was taking his or her course in order to transfer to a four-year school, 33 students (24%) were doing so at the Kentfield Campus.

Other reasons, reported by fewer students, included taking the course to fulfill a requirement for an associate’s degree (15% of all students), taking the course for fun and personal growth (13%), and taking the course to improve one’s English skills (11%).

FACTORS OF CONSIDERATION WHEN CHOOSING A COLLEGE OR UNIVERSITY

Students responding to the COM In-Class survey were asked about issues that might be important to them when choosing a college or university. They were asked to rate each possible factor as “Not Important,” “Somewhat Important,” or “Very Important.” The top four factors and their order of importance among COM students, ranked according to the percentage of students identifying each factor as “Very Important,” turned out to be nearly identical to the ranked order among SFSU students who took the SFSU Internet survey. It is important to note that the data below represent the important factors of consideration among students who are already attending COM. Until data are collected from potential students, we can not be sure of the deciding factors that are most important to them.

The factor considered to be “Very Important” by the greatest percentage of students at COM was the quality of the institution or program (87%). Second in the order of

importance was the availability of a student’s desired major at a particular school, named “Very Important” by 76% of survey respondents (see Table 18).

Table 18. Considerations When Choosing a College or University

	Not Important	Somewhat Important	Very Important
Quality of institution	3%	11%	87%
Availability of major	3%	21%	76%
Cost of education	5%	29%	66%
Commute distance from home	3%	32%	65%
Preferred time of evening classes	16%	35%	50%
Preferred time of daytime classes	9%	43%	48%
Commute distance from work	12%	42%	46%
Availability of distance learning	30%	44%	26%
Availability of weekend classes	35%	36%	29%
City versus suburban campus	39%	38%	24%

As was true with SFSU students, cost was an important consideration among COM students (66% “Very Important”) when choosing a college or university. This variable, however, was not equally prioritized among students at the two campuses. At IVC, cost was rated as equally important as these students’ first most important consideration, the quality of the institution or program (86% “Very Important”). Sixty-one percent of Kentfield Campus survey respondents indicated that cost was “Very Important” to them when choosing a college or university.

Among all students, commute distance from home was another deciding factor, receiving nearly as many “Very Important” votes (65%) as cost. A greater percentage of IVC students identified commute distance from home as very important (77%) compared to Kentfield Campus students (61%).

COM survey respondents rated having a student’s preferred time of evening classes as the fifth most important consideration when choosing a college or university (50% “Very Important”). Although this factor received somewhat fewer “Very Important” designations than the fourth most important consideration, it is still notable, particularly because more students rated their preferred time of *evening* classes as “Very Important” than they did their preferred time of *daytime* classes (50% versus 44%). One likely reason for this outcome is the fact that surveys were administered to three evening classes on the Kentfield Campus, both of which were very large.¹¹ Since students attending evening classes are more likely to feel that evening classes are very important, there is some bias in the sample with regard to this question. However, it is important to note that the difference in the size of daytime classes versus the size of evening classes is an

¹¹ Another indicator pointing toward this being the reason is the breakdown of this variable between the two campuses. At the Kentfield Campus, 54% of students indicated that their preferred time of evening classes is “Very Important,” while only 26% of IVC students did the same.

important indicator in and of itself. The number of students in the *three* evening classes given the survey at the Kentfield Campus was slightly greater than the number of students in the other *nine* daytime classes (51% surveyed in evening classes).

The least important consideration among COM students was whether a school’s campus is urban or suburban, identified as “Not Important” by 39% of survey respondents.

LEVEL OF INTEREST IN BACHELOR’S DEGREE PROGRAMS AT THE COLLEGE OF MARIN

Students who were administered the COM In-Class survey were asked about their potential interest, or the interest level of other students like them, in enrolling in bachelor’s degree programs located on one of the College of Marin campuses and taught by SFSU faculty or faculty from another college or university. Survey respondents were also asked to identify the reasons why they might or might not be interested in enrolling in these types of satellite degree programs.

Questions aimed at eliciting students’ reasons for interest or disinterest were open-ended, so that respondents were not limited by pre-determined response categories. Responses from the 176 survey participants were grouped into categories and coded to prepare them for quantitative analysis. Because the questions were open-ended, students could give as many reasons as they wanted. Students usually mentioned only one reason, and very few cited more than two reasons. The first two reasons given by any student were coded for analysis. Because respondents could name more than one reason, percentages will not add to 100.

Bachelor’s Programs at the Kentfield Campus

When asked if they would be interested in enrolling in bachelor’s degree programs located at the Kentfield Campus, 38% of all COM In-Class survey respondents said that they would be “Very Interested” (see Table 19). This percentage is higher than either the percentage of students who said they would be only “Somewhat Interested” (29%), or those who said they would be “Not at All Interested” (33%). This percentage is also significantly higher than the percentage of SFSU students expressing a high level of interest in this possibility (17%).

Table 19. Interest in Bachelor Degree Offered at Kentfield Campus

All Respondents	Number	Percent	Cumulative %
Not at all interested	57	33%	33%
Somewhat interested	49	29%	62%
Very interested	66	38%	100%

Looking at the breakdown between campuses, only nine out of 37 students (24%) at IVC expressed a strong level of interest in bachelor’s programs at the Kentfield Campus. As

would be expected, the level of interest was higher among students already attending the Kentfield Campus, with 57 students (43%) indicating that they were “Very Interested”.

Students’ reasons for their level of interest were several. Of the 50 students who reported a reason for being “Very Interested,” 44 (88%) said that their interest was due to the proximity or short commute time to their home or work. Eight students (16% of those who gave a reason) mentioned that they like the feeling of Marin or the Kentfield Campus. Four students each said that they were “Very Interested” because of the cost of tuition and the reduced cost of commuting.

Students who cited a reason for feeling “Somewhat Interested” in the possibility of bachelor’s programs at the Kentfield Campus (n=34) also said that they liked the idea of a campus close to home with a shorter commute (12 students, or 35%). Seven “Somewhat Interested” students (21%) indicated that they already have a bachelor’s degree, and six students (18%) reported not being sure if they would pursue a bachelor’s.

The most frequently reported reason for being “Not at All Interested” (n=49 listing a reason at all) was already having completed a bachelor’s degree (53%). The second most common reason, mentioned by seven students (14%) was not having any plans to pursue a bachelor’s degree. Six students (12%) said they were not interested unless their desired area of study was offered, or that there is no bachelor’s degree in their current area of study (for example, Court Reporting).

An analysis of interest level by age category revealed no pattern of statistical significance. Responses of no interest, partial interest, and strong interest each show an equal distribution of ages within each interest level.

Bachelor’s Programs at the Indian Valley Campus

Overall, COM In-Class survey respondents were less interested in the possibility of bachelor’s programs at IVC. The percentage of students “Very Interested” in this option dropped to 18%. However, this is still a higher proportion of “Very Interested” students than those surveyed at SFSU (11%). An additional 33% of all COM respondents were “Somewhat Interested,” and 49% were not interested at all (see Table 20).

Table 20. Interest in Bachelor Degrees Offered at IVC

All Respondents	Number	Percent	Cumulative %
Not at all interested	81	49%	49%
Somewhat interested	54	33%	82%
Very interested	29	18%	100%

Interestingly, unlike the Kentfield Campus option, the differences in the level of interest in bachelor’s programs at IVC varied little between students at the two campuses. The proportional differences were small, with 7 students (20%) at IVC expressing strong interest compared to 22 students (17%) at Kentfield Campus; 13 survey respondents

(37%) at IVC stating that they were “Somewhat Interested,” versus 42 students (33%) at Kentfield Campus; and 15 students (43%) reporting no interest, compared to 63 respondents (50%) on the Kentfield Campus saying they were “Not at All Interested.”

When asked for the reasons behind their strong interest, “Very Interested” students once again overwhelmingly voiced the appeal of a campus close to where they live and work, with a shorter commute time. Every one of the 19 students “Very Interested” in bachelor’s programs at IVC who gave a reason for their interest mentioned this reason (100%). Any other reason was mentioned by no more than one or two people.

“Somewhat Interested” survey respondents who listed a reason for their feelings (n=40) also mentioned proximity of the campus more than any other reason (14 students, or 35%). The second most frequently cited reason by this group, however, was the longer distance of IVC from their home or work. Of the 11 students (28%) who stated that this was one of their hesitations, a number added the caveat that although they would prefer the Kentfield Campus to IVC because of its proximity, IVC would still be closer than traveling to San Francisco to attend SFSU’s main campus, and they would likely still enroll at IVC if the Kentfield Campus was not an option. Several others explained that it takes just as long to get to Novato as it takes to travel to San Francisco from where they live, so they would probably not enroll at the IVC campus. Six students (15%) simply said that they prefer the Kentfield Campus to IVC.

Of the 67 students who gave a reason for being “Not at All Interested,” the number one reason was the longer distance or the commute to Novato, cited by 42%. Twenty-two students (33% of those who listed a reason) said that they already have a bachelor’s degree, and seven students (10%) reported no current plans to pursue a bachelor’s.

Bachelor’s Degree Areas of Interest

Once again, students were asked about their desired majors if bachelor’s programs were to be offered on the Indian Valley Campus. Students were not asked about the Kentfield Campus since COM hopes to focus its efforts on revitalizing IVC. However, it is unlikely that there is a significant variation, if any, between what students would like to study at the Kentfield Campus and what they would like to study at IVC.

Students were given a list of possible majors to choose from, and were allowed to select as many as they might be interested in. Students were also given the option of writing in any areas of study not on the list.¹²

The most popular degree areas mirror the responses from SFSU students on the SFSU Internet survey, with 24% of COM In-Class survey respondents who listed a major (n=42) indicating that they would be interested in Business Administration, 17% expressing interest in Nursing, and 14% interested in Child and Adolescent Development. Sixteen students (9%) said they would be interested in a bachelor’s program in Criminal Justice. Students had the option to write in other areas of study in which they might be

¹² Because this question allowed students to “check all that apply,” percentages will not add to 100.

interested. The only one of these “write-in” areas receiving a vote of more than 5% was Real Estate, with 13 people (7%) desiring this as a major.

Students at the two COM campuses showed no large differences in their interest in Business Administration and Nursing. At the Kentfield Campus, 26% (35 students) reported interest in Business administration compared to 15% (six students) at IVC. A greater percentage of Kentfield Campus survey respondents were interested in a bachelor’s in Nursing (19%, or 26 students) compared to IVC survey respondents (8%, or three students), in part because of the distribution of COM In-Class surveys to a Nursing class on the Kentfield Campus.

BARRIERS TO COMPLETEING A BACHELOR’S DEGREE

Students were given a list of possible barriers to completing a bachelor’s degree, regardless of the location, and were asked to indicate whether each item was a “Large Barrier,” a “Small Barrier,” or “Not a Barrier” at all. Among all survey respondents, the item that received the greatest percentage of “Large Barrier” votes was cost (51%) (see Table 21). Cost was reported to be a large barrier for more IVC students than Kentfield Campus students (74% versus 46%, respectively). More survey respondents from the Kentfield Campus described cost as being a “Small Barrier” (39% at the Kentfield Campus versus 14% at IVC).

Table 21. Barriers to Completing a Bachelor’s Degree

	Not a Barrier	Small Barrier	Large Barrier
Cost (n=155)	14%	35%	51%
Work schedule (n=155)	17%	39%	45%
Time classes are offered (n=154)	12%	46%	42%
Commute distance from home (n=156)	15%	54%	31%
Commute distance from work (n=152)	24%	51%	25%
Prerequisite classes (n=154)	25%	53%	22%
GPA requirements (n=153)	34%	46%	20%
General Education requirements (n=154)	34%	46%	20%
Availability of public transportation (n=155)	24%	51%	25%

The item that garnered the second most “Large Barrier” responses was students’ work schedule (45%). Work schedule was a large barrier to an equal proportion of Kentfield Campus and IVC students (43% and 47% respectively). The third greatest barrier, closely related to work schedule, was the time of day classes are offered. This constituted a “Large Barrier” for 42% of all survey respondents. More students at the Kentfield Campus (45%) indicated that this was a large barrier for them compared to IVC students (27%), although like important factors of consideration when choosing a program, this is likely a result of the large class sizes of the evening classes receiving

surveys. Again, the difference between daytime and evening class sizes is noteworthy in and of itself.

Public transportation availability was “Not a Barrier” to more students than any other item, with 55% reporting it as not a problem. Nevertheless, commute distance from home was cited as a “Large Barrier” by 31% of all survey respondents.

INTEREST IN GRADUATE PROGRAMS AT THE COLLEGE OF MARIN

In addition to questions about bachelor’s degree programs, COM In-Class survey respondents were asked about their interest in graduate programs at the two COM campuses. Students were told that, like the bachelor’s programs, courses would be taught by faculty from an outside university and students would matriculate from that institution. Survey questions again asked students about their level of interest and the reason(s) behind their feelings.

Graduate Programs at the Kentfield Campus

Among all COM In-Class survey respondents, 34% reported that they would be “Very Interested” in enrolling in a graduate degree program located on the Kentfield Campus. This percentage is higher than the proportion of SFSU students (13%) indicating that they would be “Very Interested” in that same option. It is also nearly the same percentage that reported strong interest in bachelor’s degree programs at the Kentfield Campus (38%) (see Table 22).

Table 22. Percent of Students Interested in Degree Programs Offered at Kentfield Campus

	Graduate	Bachelor’s
Not at all interested	27%	33%
Somewhat interested	39%	29%
Very Interested	34%	38%

A slightly higher proportion of Kentfield Campus students reported being “Very Interested” in graduate programs at the Kentfield Campus (36%) compared to the proportion of IVC students expressing strong interest (23%). Related to this, the proportion of students claiming no interest at all was higher at IVC (49%) compared to the proportion of Kentfield Campus students who were “Not at All Interested” (21%).

Of the students who responded that they would be “Very Interested” in graduate programs on the Kentfield Campus, 25 shared the reasons for their interest. Eighteen of these 25 (72%) described liking the proximity of the campus to their home and place of work, and the convenience of the commute. Five students (20% of “Very Interested students who gave a reason) stated a topic they would like to study, or implied that their strong interest was dependent on the availability of their desired area of study.

Among survey respondents who indicated why they felt “Somewhat Interested” in enrolling in a graduate program at the Kentfield Campus (n=28), 12 students (43%) indicated that they had no plans to get a graduate degree or were currently focusing on a bachelor’s, and six people (21%) liked the short distance between the campus and work or home. Students who gave a reason for being “Not at All Interested” (n=33) primarily explained that at the time of the survey they had no plans to pursue a graduate degree (17 students, or 52% of those who cited a reason). Other respondents who were “Not at All Interested” mentioned already having a graduate degree (six students, or 18%). A few students (a total of five students, or 15% of the “Not at All Interested” group) stated that they preferred to transfer, worried that their degree would be less valid, or simply stated that they didn’t like the College of Marin.

Graduate Programs at the IVC

At 18%, the number of COM In-Class survey respondents “Very Interested” in graduate degree programs located at IVC is lower than the interest in graduate programs located on the Kentfield Campus. This percentage, however, is equal to the percentage of students “Very Interested” in enrolling in a bachelor’s degree program offered in the same location (also 18%) (see Table 23). The percentage of COM survey respondents “Very Interested” in graduate programs at IVC is also higher than the percentage among SFSU survey respondents (13%).

Table 23. Percent of Students Interested in Degree Programs Offered at IVC

	Graduate	Bachelor’s
Not at all interested	46%	49%
Somewhat interested	36%	33%
Very Interested	18%	18%

Overall, IVC respondents’ interest in graduate programs remained somewhat low, with nearly the same number holding no interest in either location (49% “Not at All Interested” in the Kentfield Campus location and 46% “Not at All Interested” in the IVC location). Among IVC students who were interested in graduate programs, they were indifferent about the location (23% “Very Interested” and 29% “Somewhat Interested” in programs on the Kentfield Campus, and 26% “Very Interested” and 29% “Somewhat Interested” in the IVC location).

As would be expected, Kentfield Campus survey respondents were more interested in graduate programs at the Kentfield Campus (36% “Very Interested”) than at IVC (16% “Very Interested”). Forty-three percent of Kentfield Campus students specified that they were “Somewhat Interested” in graduate programs on the Kentfield Campus, and 39% were moderately interested in programs at the IVC location.

When explaining the reasons behind their strong interest, most “Very Interested” students (13 out of 14 students who gave a reason, or 93%) mentioned liking the convenience and proximity of the location. Convenience and proximity of the IVC to respondents’ homes

and work was also the most frequently cited reason for students who were “Somewhat Interested” (10 out of 29 students citing a reason for being “Somewhat Interested,” or 35%). Seven “Somewhat Interested” students (24%) thought the IVC was too far away, and five students (17%) expressed moderate interest while also indicating that they did not currently have plans to pursue a graduate degree.

The majority of survey respondents who were “Not at All Interested” in graduate programs at IVC once again said that their reason was the distance to that campus (26 out of 47 giving a reason for their lack of interest, or 55%). Ten students (21%) explained that they were not interested because they had no plans to get a graduate degree, and six students (13%) stated that they did not like the College of Marin, they prefer another school, or simply that they plan to transfer.

Graduate Degree Areas of Interest

Survey respondents who were interested in graduate degree programs at COM located on either campus were asked what program(s) they might be interested in.¹³ Consistent with earlier findings from both the SFSU Internet and COM In-Class surveys, the greatest number of students (32 students, or 37% of the 87 listing a degree area) listed a Business field or an MBA as the graduate degree they would like to pursue. The second most popular topic listed was Nursing, named by 13 students or 15% of the sample.¹⁴ Ten students (12%) were interested in Education, nine students (10%) were interested in Art, Music, or Theater, and another nine specified English, Writing, or Journalism.

LEVEL OF INTEREST IN CERTIFICATE PROGRAMS AT THE COLLEGE OF MARIN

Students were asked about what certificate programs they might be interested in if such programs were offered by SFSU or another university at IVC. Approximately half of both Kentfield Campus and IVC survey respondents expressed no interest in certificate programs: 50% of all respondents reported no interest, with 46% of IVC students feeling this way and 52% of the Kentfield Campus students uninterested. This lower level of interest may be due in part to a lack of knowledge about the wide range of certificates available, especially the numerous professional certificates with high employer demand, such as a certificate in Medical Translation. Because a list of possible certificates was not provided to students, some respondents may not have been aware of the variety of certificate programs in existence.

Among the 64 students who did list a certificate program that might interest them, 16 students (25%) listed Business or Accounting. Real Estate was the second most frequently mentioned, with 15 students (23%) interested in this type of certificate. Thirteen students (20%) wanted a certificate in Education, eight (12%) wanted a Nursing certificate, and another six (9%) were interested in certificates in other Health-related areas, such as Medicine, Biology, Dentistry, and Health Science.

¹³ Because students could write in more than one area of study, percentages will not add to 100.

¹⁴ An additional six students listed another Health-related area of interest.

FINDINGS FROM THE KENTFIELD CAMPUS FOCUS GROUP

In May 2006, Harder+Company conducted a focus group with 14 students attending the College of Marin's Kentfield Campus. All focus group participants were currently enrolled in courses offered at the Kentfield Campus. The purpose of the focus group was to assess students' needs regarding courses offered at COM; to explore their interest in satellite bachelor degree, certificate, and graduate-level programs offered on campus by SFSU or other four-year universities; and to identify barriers in pursuing a bachelor's degree. Flyers advertising the focus group were posted around campus, and classroom announcements were made inviting students to participate in the focus group. Participating students were given lunch and a \$20 cash incentive for their time.

STUDENT NEEDS

Focus group participants discussed three main issues related to attending the COM Kentfield Campus: enrollment in courses, course and program offerings, and reasons for transferring to another school.

Enrollment in Courses

Students commented that they had difficulty registering for certain courses because enrollment had reached its capacity quickly. Two Speech classes that were specifically mentioned were Speech 120: Interpersonal Communications and Speech 128: Intercultural Communications. One student recalled, "I tried to register for Intercultural Communications but it filled up. I had to drop myself to Interpersonal Communications... [Intercultural Communications] filled up too quickly for me, and it's only offered so many times a day and both classes were filled." A student who was enrolled in the Interpersonal Communication class observed that the instructor had to make some students leave because the class was overcrowded.

Some focus group participants also explained that the time and day when classes were offered and the hours of when school resources were available were a challenge for Kentfield Campus students. One student who worked in the evening related that he had trouble enrolling in a required Chemistry course because both the day and evening courses were held on the same day. He explained, "I usually don't have a problem with classes because I have to work at night so the day classes are great, except for Chemistry, because they have class during the day and night on the same day. Anyone that has to work is going to have a problem with that." Moreover, another student added that she prioritized her classes over her job and missed some days from work because of the course schedule. She remarked, "Sometimes I skip work, sometimes I can only do a part-time job because of the times of my classes."

Students also agreed that the hours of operation for the resources around campus, such as the library and learning center, were limited. Students voiced that they were not able to work on projects and school work at the library and learning center during the weekends because these facilities closed early on Fridays and were not open during the weekends.

One student commented, “I would like to see the library and learning center open because I want to get work done. I want to work on projects but I need those resources.” Another participant remarked that he has to use the library at Dominican University, a neighboring school, to do his school work.

Course and Program Offerings

When focus group participants were asked if the selection of courses offered by COM met their needs, they commented that they would like to see additional and advanced courses offered in their associate’s degree program or in preparation for a bachelor’s degree. Some of the courses mentioned by students include Communications, Engineering, Ethnic Studies, Journalism, Nursing, Psychology, and Theology. One student interested in pursuing his bachelor’s degree in Industrial Art Design shared, “I would like to see more higher up, advanced [Engineering] courses using programs such as SolidWorks and AutoCAD and other advanced courses to get the prerequisites down faster before transferring to a university.” Another student added, and others agreed, “They should have more ethnic studies classes like African American studies, Latino studies, or Native American studies.” Moreover, some students expressed interest in new associate’s degree or vocational programs such as Environmental Studies, Culinary courses and Fashion Design.

A couple of students also communicated that the College has limited programs that help disadvantaged students succeed in school. A student voiced his concerns about the College’s lack of inclusion of students with learning disabilities or those coming from disadvantaged backgrounds. He felt that COM did not participate in discussions on how to reach out to segments of the community who cannot successfully navigate and pass through the system. One student asserted that more resources, programs, and outreach should be done in the community. Yet another student suggested a “college success program” to help students who are doing poorly succeed in their classes.

Reasons for Transferring to another School

Students explained that they factored in the availability and variety of courses and programs offered at COM in their decision to stay or transfer to another school. A Nursing student said she was transferring to Santa Rosa Junior College because it was easier for her to transition to a Registered Nursing program after she completed her Licensed Vocational Nursing (LVN) program. She explained,

The college has something they don’t have here at the College of Marin—the Bridge Program for registered nursing. There, you get to the LVN and then you get to RN. You don’t have to apply anymore over there. You get right through to the RN program. So, I’m thinking of those options. Over there, if you have an LVN, you can go right to the RN program...and they have classes that introduce you to the LVN and RN programs so it’s not like everything is dumped on you, unlike here everything is dumped on you.

In addition to courses offerings, students also cited the quality of instructors and administration, campus diversity, the pursuit of a bachelor's degree as other reasons they would transfer to another school. Focus group participants discussed that students transfer to another school to further their education. One student elaborated, "If I can get an education where I felt good about getting an [associate's degree], I could leave here thinking that an associate's degree is good enough for me... But no where can you go where an associate's degree is enough."

Students were further asked what their most important considerations were in choosing a bachelor's degree program. Students ranked cost and the school's reputation as the most important factors in choosing a bachelor's degree program. Other factors they mentioned include the availability of classes, teacher-to-student ratio, diversity of the campus, and location. Students also identified barriers they face when transferring to a bachelor's program. These barriers include public transportation, conflicting work and class schedules, and availability of classes needed to transfer to a bachelor's degree program.

INTEREST IN SATELLITE DEGREE PROGRAMS AT THE COLLEGE OF MARIN

In addition to assessing students' needs, focus group participants were asked if they would be interested in satellite bachelor's degree, certificate, or graduate level programs offered at COM and taught by a four-year university such as SFSU.

Satellite Bachelor Degree Programs

Students were excited about the prospect of satellite bachelor's degree programs offered on the Kentfield Campus and taught by a four-year university. One student stated that he liked attending the College of Marin because of its location outside of a busy metropolitan city: "I don't like the city at all. The learning environment is greater here." Another student agreed, "I live in San Francisco but I come here for school because the other community college [City College of San Francisco] is so cluttered. At the College of Marin, I can focus on my learning and classes without distractions." Other students mentioned it was more convenient for them if they did not need to go elsewhere because of the commute.

There was a mix of responses, however, when students were asked if they would participate in a satellite Bachelor degree program if it was located at IVC in Novato. Some students welcomed the idea of a bachelor's degree program at IVC because they think the campus is more spacious and quieter. Conversely, others preferred to have a bachelor's degree program at the Kentfield Campus instead of at IVC. They reasoned that they did not know where IVC was located and would rather go to San Francisco, and that most of the classes offered at IVC were geared towards vocational programs. A student described IVC as "an abandoned camp ground that did not receive a lot of attention." Some students suggested that the satellite bachelor's degree program be offered at both the Kentfield Campus and IVC but stressed that the course schedules be organized so that they would not have to travel back and forth between campuses.

Another student proposed the idea of shuttle buses that run between the Kentfield Campus and IVC.

When asked what colleges or universities besides SFSU COM should consider partnering with, students suggested the University of California at Berkeley, UC Davis, UCLA, Dominican University, Sonoma State University, and Stanford University.

Although students reacted positively to the idea of offering a satellite bachelor's degree program, they also stressed some concerns. Some students voiced their concerns about the quality of teaching and level of instruction that would be offered as part of the program. One student suggested that criteria be set when selecting instructors to teach the bachelor's degree program in order to attract prospective students. Another student reiterated, "We want to get the best knowledge and skills we need. If a bachelor's program were to be offered here then it needs to be at the same standard as it is at the four-year university's campus."

Satellite Graduate-Level Programs

Students also responded positively when asked if they would be interested in graduate degree programs offered at COM. They felt such offerings would attract more people to the school and add more variety in the courses offered by the College. One student commented, "Yes, [graduate programs] would attract lots of people. I would love it if I can come here and get my Master's and get everything here." Another student agreed, "It's convenient for people."

Some students speculated that graduate programs might be of interest to the larger Marin community. As one participant explained, "I think the College of Marin would attract more of the community because the community's level of learning has gone way beyond what the College can [currently] offer." This student promoted the idea of COM offering courses that would be desirable to teachers or other people who already have established careers.

Following this line of reasoning, another student hoped that this might draw additional resources to the College of Marin: "If they do that [offer graduate programs] then the community might be more interested. Since the community has a lot of money, maybe then we could get more funding."

One student liked the idea of having graduate level courses at COM but was worried about cost. She responded, "If I had to pay more, I don't know if I would stay here. It would have to be somewhere between a community college price and university level price." This kind of sentiment suggests that COM's marketing efforts should address the fact that graduate programs by nature are more expensive than community college classes.

Satellite Certificate Programs

Students identified Teaching, Computer Programming, Media and Music Production, and Real Estate as certificate programs they would be interested in at COM.

A student shared his approval for adding certificate programs, saying “There are people that come back to school after being on the job force for a long time and they want to increase their level of pay. This would be great for them.”

However, other students were more hesitant about adding additional certificate programs. One student asserted, “There are already certificate programs here, but an AA is better. I don’t know if a certificate does anything.” Another participant contended that COM doesn’t publicize its current certificate programs: “They don’t talk about it, and none of my counselors ever told me about it. I only found out about [certificate programs] through my sister. Just recently, my teachers have been telling me about [these programs].”

Based on their responses, it seemed that some students were not well informed about existing or potential certificate programs that could be made available to them. Students might express a greater level of excitement about certificate programs if they were made aware of the wide variety of certificates that exist in areas such as business, education, health sciences or information science. Partially as a result of student feedback, COM’s marketing of Certificate programs is currently being assessed, and new marketing materials are under development.

SUMMARY OF KENTFIELD CAMPUS STUDENT RECOMMENDATIONS

According to students, more instructors and course offerings are needed to alleviate the crowded classes. In addition, students would like to see a course offered more than once a week on different days and times to accommodate working students’ schedules and to fulfill required courses in a reasonable amount of time. They also suggested extending the library and learning center hours to make it more accessible during the weekends. Moreover, students were interested in satellite bachelor’s degree, certificate and graduate degree programs at the College of Marin but agreed that the level of instruction would need to be similar to the quality of teaching at the partnering university’s campus.

FINDINGS FROM THE INDIAN VALLEY FOCUS GROUP

Harder+Company conducted a second focus group in May 2006 with 19 College of Marin students attending the Indian Valley Campus (IVC) in Novato. Focus group participants at IVC were asked similar questions to those who participated in the Kentfield Campus focus group. The focus group questions elicited information about students' needs at IVC; their barriers to pursuing a bachelor's degree; and their interest in satellite bachelor's degree, certificate, and graduate degree programs taught by a four-year university but held at COM campuses. Flyers advertising the focus group were posted around IVC, and classroom announcements were made inviting students to participate in the focus group. Participating students received lunch and a \$20 cash incentive in appreciation for their time.

STUDENT NEEDS

When discussing the needs of students at IVC, focus group participants voiced similar sentiments as students in the Kentfield Campus focus group. Students spoke about issues related to enrollment in courses, course and program offerings, and addressed reasons for transferring to another school. Additionally, students at the IVC focus group shared other campus concerns about the lack of on-campus resources and low community awareness of programs.

Enrollment in Courses

Similar to the feedback received from the Kentfield Campus focus group, IVC students found it challenging to enroll in certain courses. Court Reporting students explained that their program was not like a traditional class that imparts knowledge; instead their program focuses on skills-building where students must be able to type a certain number of words and be able to read back their notes. Those who are not able to meet the standard are required to re-take the course. However, Court Reporting students claimed that they are not able to register for the skills building class after they have taken it a number of times. A Court Reporting student articulated, "When we try to register for that same class we get booted out of the system because you can't repeat the same class a certain number of times... We are trying to pass the standard set by the State and we have to meet those standards in order to be Court Reporters."

Other students mentioned that courses such as the second half of the Medical Assistant program and the Auto Body and Welding classes were in high demand but they could not enroll in them because they filled up too quickly. Some students shared that only two teachers taught the Medical Assistant course, thus barring a greater number of students from enrolling in the class. An Auto Body and Welding student also shared a similar experience. This person explained, "There's only one instructor for the entire [Auto Body and Welding] program and he's had to turn away students every semester for every class, and there's a waiting list." One student reiterated, "It seems like there is a shortage of teachers but plenty of students for courses we want to enroll in."

In addition to enrolling in classes, students felt additional instructional staff were needed to teach courses that are overwhelmed with students. One example, cited by a Court Reporting student, is a required self-study English program taught by only one instructor. She explained,

There's a self-study program for English here that's required for Court Reporters to take. It's first come, first serve and you can be there all day waiting in line. It's only one instructor [that teaches the course] and sometimes she's not there, and if she is there, sometimes she doesn't know the answer and she has to call Kentfield.

Course and Program Offerings

Students at IVC observed that the courses and programs offered on the Novato campus were limited, and geared towards vocational and technical studies. They noted that this limits students who attend IVC from enrolling in non-technical and associate's degree track courses. One student remarked that he had to drive the extra distance to the Kentfield Campus just to take a non-technical course. Another student agreed that only a few classes and programs were available at IVC, and that students would like to see a greater number of offerings.

More so, students mentioned that not enough day and night courses were offered on the IVC campus. Similar to some students' experiences described at the Kentfield Campus focus group, one IVC student mentioned that the time and day of when classes are offered posed a challenge for students. He recounted when he was looking through the schedule to enroll for classes, "One class is only available on a certain day, and there's only one class. If you can't show up Monday at that time, you can't take the class." Other students agreed and also found it frustrating to travel between IVC and Kentfield Campus because the schedule does not allow for an adequate break between classes. A student explained,

[It's frustrating] if you're taking a full load at the College and you end up having to go between the two campuses. They will have classes that end at Kentfield and the next class you want to take will start five minutes later in IVC. If it's at the same campus, then I can do that but I can't drive from Kentfield to IVC in five minutes.

Focus group participants also believed that students, as well as staff, are unaware of all of the courses and programs offered at IVC. A Court Reporting student asserted, "A lot of people are not aware of the Court Reporting program...and there is a huge need for Court Reporters." One of the other participants admitted that she's been a student at IVC for over two years but did not know that such a program existed on campus. Yet another student commented on the classes in general, saying "How do you know what's offered here? I don't know what's offered here, even students that are here don't know...My teacher didn't know there's an Art and Drawing class happening on Tuesdays. It was luck of the draw that he saw it."

Some students contended that the reason they did not know about the programs is because the layout of the course schedule was difficult to navigate. One student explained that he could not find a separate list of courses that were only offered at IVC on the course schedule. He acknowledged, “There might be a way but I couldn’t find a way to get a list of classes that are available only in IVC. When you go to the schedule you have the IVC and Kentfield Campus classes together.”

In addition to discussing their concerns, students were asked about programs that they would be interested in but are not currently offered at the College of Marin. Students suggested a number of courses and programs that they would like to see offered at COM including Forensic Science, Organic Farming, Culinary Arts, Animal Husbandry, Web Development, Language programs and bachelor’s degree programs. One student advocated for the Court Reporting program to offer advanced courses, increasing students’ options of receiving a certificate, associate’s or bachelor’s degree. Students also felt that courses excluded Marin County’s older adult population. One student pointed out the importance of including the County’s older population. He commented, “In respect to the aging population, this whole county is an aged county... The majority is closer to retirement than a new career path.” Another participant agreed and proposed that more personal enrichment classes be offered on campus for these individuals.

Like students at the Kentfield Campus focus group, IVC students felt a support program was needed for students who were not doing well in class. A Court Reporting student observed that her program had a high drop-out rate and felt that a support program would be helpful.

Reasons for Transferring to another School

Unlike students from the Kentfield Campus focus group, the IVC group cited the attainment of a bachelor’s degree as the only reason for transferring to another school and away from the College of Marin. Students were highly satisfied with the education they were receiving at IVC. One student professed, “The teachers are excellent here and they are of the highest caliber.” Another student asserted, “Out of California, this is one of the top three Court Reporting schools for passing students.” Another Court Reporting student agreed, adding, “We are very lucky to have our coordinator. He is excellent...and I know that a lot of Court Reporting students who don’t go to this school talk about how lucky we are.”

Several students emphasized that the quality of education at COM matched that of any other community college.

Considerations for Choosing a Bachelor’s Program

Aligned with their satisfaction with the quality of education they are receiving, IVC students responded similarly as those at Kentfield Campus when asked what considerations they took into account in choosing a bachelor’s degree program. Students

at IVC identified the quality of teaching and cost of education as driving factors in selecting a bachelor's degree program. In addition, some students considered commute distance to be important when choosing a program.

Barriers to Pursuing a Bachelor's or Transferring to a Bachelor's Program

Students were also asked if they faced any barriers in pursuing or transferring to a bachelor's degree program. Working students at IVC shared barriers similar to working students at the Kentfield Campus: their work schedules conflicted with some of the course offerings. One focus group participant who worked during evenings and on weekends stated, "They have classes a night and during the weekends for people that work, but I work in the retail business and that's when I need to work and it's busiest—at night and on the weekend." Students also identified public transportation as a barrier to completing a bachelor's degree.

Lack of On-Campus Resources

Although students were satisfied with the quality of education they received at IVC, they communicated that students at IVC did not have enough resources on campus to support their learning. A couple of international students from the IEP program commented, "Sometimes we want to search for more books to study from but we don't have a library here. We have to go to Kentfield to use the library." Another student compared the resources available at IVC to those at the Kentfield Campus: "It's lousy for students to be here almost all day because we stay here until 5:00 or 6:30. There's nothing available, like a bookstore or café." A Court Reporting student added,

We sometimes need ink, cartridges, paper, tapes, cassettes, and if we forget anything we're out of luck. There are not much resources to get it because we have no bookstore and no way of getting it. Even the Kentfield Campus does not carry Court Reporting supplies.

Like students at Kentfield Campus, IVC focus group participants also mentioned that the hours of operation for existing on-campus resources were limited. One student remarked that they were allowed use of the computer lab only on certain days, thus limiting their time to work on projects and schoolwork that required the use of computers.

Students who stayed on campus into the evening also expressed concern about campus lighting and safety issues. One student explained, "It's fine now because we're in the summer, but in the winter it's scary. The lights in the parking lot—there's only one of them that works. It's quite a walk, and from a safety point it would scare me to death." Another participant agreed, reiterating,

On that same note, a lot of classes have girls in them, and in the classes that end at 9:00 or 10:00 PM, everyone has to wait so they can travel in groups of six people just to feel safe, because huge areas of the campus are just black. If it

meant more patrol or campus security, or of just throwing some more light up—which isn't that expensive to do—that would be great!

In response to students' perceptions about lighting and safety, much of the foliage that had been blocking IVC campus lights has recently been trimmed back. The administration at COM is also working with students to explore adding more lights to the IVC campus.

INTEREST IN SATELLITE DEGREE PROGRAMS

The IVC focus group also elicited students' interest in satellite bachelor's, certificate, and graduate degree programs offered at the College of Marin but taught by SFSU or another four-year college. In general, students at IVC, like those at the Kentfield Campus, expressed interest in enrolling in these programs. In addition to SFSU, IVC participants suggested partnering with Sonoma State University; University of California, Berkeley; Phoenix University; Dominican University; California State University, East Bay and Sacramento campuses; and University of San Francisco.

Satellite Bachelor's Degree Program

Students welcomed the idea of having satellite bachelor's degree programs offered at the College of Marin. They felt it would be beneficial for students who were already taking courses at COM because it meant that they would not have to travel elsewhere, and they were already familiar with the COM environment. One student commented, "It would be a huge advantage if you could transfer to a four-year college and not have to change campuses, especially if you're living at home, or can't afford to move because of finances or kids or a family."

Other students were in agreement. One added, "People would be more encouraged to come because one of the pains of transferring is acclimating to an environment...More people would start here to begin with."

However, a couple of students were worried about the impact it would have on existing programs. One student was a bit apprehensive and asked, "Would the existing programs here, mainly the metals and machine and the automotive, be able to maintain their autonomy as part of the College of Marin?" This person further elaborated,

My concern would be that instead of new life being brought into those programs, as well as the newly introduced programs, what would be done to enrich the existing programs that are at-risk [of being cut] now? Don't allow the other university to offer new programs at the expense of what's already happening.

In comparison to feedback received from the Kentfield Campus focus group, students at IVC also had mixed responses to a satellite bachelor's degree program offered at only one campus. Like Kentfield Campus students, IVC participants proposed offering the

same programs and courses on both campuses, stressing the importance of not having to travel between campuses during the day.

Satellite Graduate-Level Programs

Students also expressed interest in graduate degree programs offered by a four-year university at the College of Marin. Participants suggested adding graduate programs in fields such as Certified Public Accounting, Business, Marketing, Psychology, Forensics, and Criminal Justice. Court Reporting students also proposed offering advanced coursework in their field.

One participant stressed the importance of graduate level programs at IVC, given the demographics of the surrounding community. This student noted,

In addition to targeting prospective high school students, [the College should] have an option for people who have finished four-year degrees, who work during the day and would like to take more classes at night. I know I'm not an anomaly because 15 to 20% of people here have already finished their degrees and work. There are a lot of professionals that return to school.

Satellite Certificate Programs

When asked about adding additional certificate programs, focus group participants suggested offering certificates that reflect emerging and changing industries. Students thought certificate programs in Nursing and Medical Assistance, Database Management, Game Design, and Computer-Aided Design (CAD) would be valuable additions.

For example, one student discussed a new Games course that was recently offered at COM: “A Game Design course [was offered] this year and it was very popular. What was very interesting about it is that we’re starting to be innovative about it. No one else is offering this type of class.”

One participant saw a parallel situation in the automotive industry, commenting, “That industry is now changing—you have electric cars, hydrogen cars. Let’s not wait until there is a demand for it; let’s keep up.”

Several students worried that people would not take advantage of additional certificate programs or other course offerings because they are not informed about the Indian Valley Campus and the programs offered there. One student maintained, “A lot of people are not aware of the IVC campus. If they knew more about IVC and saw the classes offered, they would attend IVC.” To remedy this, several students recommended publicizing current programs more widely:

If you watch TV in L.A., you are likely to see ads for community colleges. I've been up here for 4 months, and I watch a lot of TV and I have not seen any ads for College of Marin, not even Kentfield. This is a beautiful campus. It doesn't have

that community college feel at all; it's a really nice place. If they took advantage of that and advertised out there on TV—you know high school kids watch a lot of TV. You need to tell them about COM and they'll come.

Other students agreed that they had not seen any television advertisements for the College of Marin, or only a limited number that were focused on the Kentfield Campus. One student described his personal experience related to this, sharing, “I would have come to this place if I had known about it. I went to Santa Rosa Junior College to get my Auto Mechanic certificate. ...[Even though] I live in Santa Rosa and I would have come here. [I wish I had seen] a simple commercial showing the campus in wide shot, saying what classes they have, and plenty of parking!”

Because of feedback like this, COM has recently targeted some of its publicity efforts specifically at promoting the IVC campus. As part of this campaign, an IVC-specific schedule was distributed to all of northern Marin County, and advertisements and interviews aimed at drawing attention to IVC were aired on public television.

SUMMARY OF IVC STUDENT RECOMMENDATIONS

Students suggested offering the same courses across both campuses to increase student enrollment. Along the same line, they recommended additional instructional staff be hired to accommodate the high demand for programs and classes at IVC. They also requested that on-campus resources, such as a library, bookstore, and cafeteria, be made available at IVC. Moreover, students asked COM to take a proactive role in advertising programs and courses that are available on campus to stir community interest and support. One student suggested a community board or website to keep the community informed of classes and events happening on campus.

KEY STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS

Throughout May 2006, Harder+Company conducted telephone interviews with nine key stakeholders representing Marin County government agencies, community based organizations, and businesses. Stakeholders were interviewed to identify the workforce needs of Marin County and to explore how COM can assist in meeting those needs through the development and implementation of their Educational Master Plan. This section presents findings from the phone interviews.

PARTICIPANTS

Stakeholders who participated in the phone interviews were selected by COM as members of the Workforce Investment Board representing various private and public organizations at the supervisory and management levels. Some participants also mentioned that they have taken classes at the College of Marin or have had family members who are taking or have taken classes at either the Kentfield Campus or IVC. Stakeholders were selected by COM administrators based on their organization's relationship to and involvement with the College, as well as an assessment of the relevance and usefulness of these individual's or organization's perspectives. Participants included:

- Gene Abbott, ROP Coordinator, Marin County Office of Education
- Clark Blasdell, President and CEO, Northbay Family Homes
- Joan Capurro, Vice President and Director of Community Affairs, Bank of Marin
- Mary Donovan, Program Manager, Marin County Health and Human Services
- Lori Fromm, Manager of Organizational Development, Golden Gate Bridge District
- James Jordan, Executive Director, Northern California Presbyterian Homes & Services, Inc., The Tamalpais
- Ginny Kuhel, Human Resources Manager, Gardeners' Guild Inc.
- Jill Magri, Chief Operating Officer, Kaiser Permanente
- Peter Schiller, Manager, Employment Development Department

WORKFORCE NEEDS IN MARIN COUNTY/CAREERS IN DEMAND

According to interview participants, Marin County is in need of people in the health field and trade industry and building environment. More specifically, stakeholders identified Registered Nurses, Certified Nursing and Medical Assistants, construction managers and workers, Carpenters, Masons, and Automobile Technicians as jobs that are in high demand. One manager stated, "There is a demand in the area for construction jobs. It is estimated that 5,200 jobs are construction-related." Four other stakeholders also confirmed the need for a stronger trade and building workforce in Marin County. One participant emphasized the need for skilled construction workers, in addition to those at the managerial level. He elaborated,

There's another area we keep hearing about regarding the built environment,¹⁵ and the focus that all the colleges are focusing on is construction management. COM is focusing on [management] but no one is looking at the actual skills. So we have all these managers but we don't have the skills.

Moreover, a manager at a social service organization also expressed the need for additional Registered Nurses in the county. She stated, “The other demand in the area is for Registered Nurses (RNs)... Our community is in need of RNs and there is not enough to meet the needs of those interested in the program and for the employer community.” On the same note, other participants stressed the county’s need for other health care workers such as Licensed Vocational Nurses (LVNs) and Medical Assistants. One interview participant asserted, “There is not enough staff to serve the county, to benefit the continuum of care from home health care to assisted living to acute care. There is a present and imminent danger and need for RNs and LVNs in the county.” Another interview participant conveyed hospital settings demand more RNs than LVNs. She explained, “I need more nurses! In the hospital environment we are not expanding our use of the LVNs. There may be increased use of LVNs in assisted living or in home health care but not in the hospitals.”

Additionally, some stakeholders mentioned that skilled employees will be needed in Marin County for the emerging green industries such as environmental sustainability, alternative energy sources, and recycling:

The green industry is compatible with Marin. The jobs in the green industry like alternative energy sources, building, recycling, and effective modes of transportation are a perfect fit with Marin. It could be like what happened to IT in the Silicon Valley.

Other interview participants shared that Notary Publics and Early Childhood Educators (ECEs) are also in demand in Marin County.

Furthermore, stakeholders also underscored the need for employee skills development and training. Managers commented that all businesses and organizations, regardless of the type of field, are in need of employees with soft skills that focus on customer service and work etiquette such as dress code, time management, intra-office politics, and dealing with conflict. One interview participant believed that customer services skills should include goal setting, leadership, and a basic understanding of business. She claimed,

The basics of customer service—it's one of the top things because the basics get forgotten. It's a benefit to the company and the person. It's simple things that

¹⁵ The phrase “built environment” refers to the whole range of manmade surroundings that make up the urban environment, including such things as residential and commercial buildings, roads, parks, and utilities. The built environment therefore encompasses not only architecture, but many other professions such as industrial design, civil engineering, construction, interior design, urban planning, traffic engineering, and landscape management.

would make the job better, make you better as a worker and have a sense of value and understanding.

Another manager reiterated the importance of soft skills in her business. She remarked,

We focus on legendary customer service such as “Hi” and “Hello” and “Thank You.” Those are very high on our list. It is a staple of what everyday work requires. You need that mix...and then there are basics [that people need to know] like coming to work on time and knowing what to do at work.

She went on to explain that communication skills were also important:

Communication skills are big. The biggest one is interpersonal relationships. People find it harder to get along today because everyone thinks they are right. I see that as one of the most important areas of need for businesses. They are about internal and external relationships.

CHALLENGES IN MEETING WORKFORCE NEEDS

Stakeholders also identified some challenges for COM in responding to the workforce needs of the county. One interview participant shared that limited instructional staff presented a challenge for the College. She commented, “There are staff there that are most helpful and committed but there is a lack of adequate staffing to be fully responsive to the needs of the potential students we work with.” Another department head pointed out that hiring instructors at COM posed a barrier for the Nursing program. She explained “A major issue is that the College can’t compete with the hospital in terms of salary. Faculty is the limiting factor in the pipeline. They don’t have enough to teach the Nursing courses.” Yet a third interview participant communicated the same needs, “The College of Marin is turning away people from the Nursing program. There is a great demand of people that want to get into the program. They need to recruit more teachers.”

One stakeholder also mentioned that residents of Marin County are not interested in vocational track programs. This interview participant stated,

One of the issues in Marin is that the general population said that they don’t want to send their children to a Junior College. They want them to go to a university. They forget to focus on vocational training. The typical path here is that they go to the East Coast, to an Ivy League school and then they come back but they don’t know what to do so the parents tell them to go back for more school.

Interview participants also specified challenges for students at COM. One interviewer mentioned that students are not able to register for classes because enrollment had reached its capacity. She explained, “People are closed out of classes, especially for students hoping to get into employment, they don’t have time to wait to take the classes.” Similarly, another stakeholder commented,

It appears that you would expect an Associate of Arts (AA) degree is two years but it almost never happens in two years. The courses that are required for an Associate of Arts (AA) degree are over-enrolled. Now, if you want that certificate you can count on three years to get it.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR MEETING WORKFORCE NEEDS

In addition to expanding vocational programs, stakeholders suggested that COM have shorter programs to meet the needs of working students and their employers. One employer suggested,

I would like to see them really update and offer more vocational programs. For our clients who work, 18 months to complete the program is difficult to do. They need a shorter program to cater to students who work. We end up referring clients to Santa Rosa Junior College.

Some stakeholders also suggested collaborating with businesses and organizations, as well as other colleges and universities, to share resources, offer additional courses that are impacted by students, and respond to the high interest in certain programs. One stakeholder commented, “Maybe there can be things that can be done with SFSU and Dominican University. There can be shared faculty between schools, larger attendance and shared resources.”

Moreover, stakeholders noted the importance of retaining COM students to work in Marin County. One stakeholder commented on her experience working with the College’s Nursing program: “We had a huge need for nurses and we worked with the College of Marin to make the Nursing program happen. We ended up training nurses in Marin to stay and work in Marin.” Another stakeholder advocated for a similar program. He reasoned, “Those that are here can’t support the infrastructure, so support comes from people outside the county. It would be great if the College can connect with employers and provide incumbent training and promote the career ladders in the county.” A third stakeholder commented, “If people go to the College of Marin, then they are likely to stay in the area.” He went on to suggest targeting areas in Marin County, such as the Canal and Marin City, and to provide them with training to meet the county’s workforce needs. He proposed, “One of the ways to meet the needs is trying to place itself where the people are, those who need the help.”

Stakeholders also recommended apprenticeships and internships for those who are exploring a career path. One interview participant advocated a school-to-career program similar to ones that target high school students. He proposed, “College of Marin should sponsor similar careers for older individuals who are 18-23 years old and help them figure out what’s out there.”

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The major findings from the primary data collected for this report include:

- ✓ **Location (either distance or proximity) is the driving force for surveyed students**, at least as they report it. This holds true for those who are very interested, somewhat interested, and not at all interested in both bachelor's and graduate degree programs. Distance/proximity was the most frequently reported reason—among both San Francisco State University (SFSU) survey respondents and College of Marin (COM) survey respondents—for students' strong interest and for students' lack of interest, often cited either positively or negatively by three-quarters of respondents within each interest level.
- ✓ COM and SFSU students agreed, for the most part, on the factors they consider important when choosing a bachelor's degree program. **The quality of the academic institution, the availability of a student's preferred major, cost, the times of day that classes are offered, and a school's commute distance from home were all rated "Very Important."** At the College of Marin, cost was very important to a greater proportion of IVC students than Kentfield Campus students. Unlike SFSU students, a greater proportion of COM survey respondents felt that their preferred times of evening classes was "Very Important" compared to daytime classes.
- ✓ SFSU respondents to the Internet survey and COM respondents to the In-Class survey were also in agreement about the barriers they face when trying to complete a bachelor's degree. **Cost** was a "Large Barrier" for the greatest proportion of both SFSU and COM students, with more IVC students concerned about cost than Kentfield Campus students. Students' **work schedules** and the **times of day classes are offered** also both posed "Large Barriers" to many COM and SFSU students. While both groups of survey respondents felt that **commute distance from home** was a "Large Barrier," SFSU students were also concerned about the **availability of public transportation**, a factor COM students considered to be less of a barrier.
- ✓ **A greater proportion of COM students expressed strong interest in the possibility of satellite bachelor's programs at the COM campuses than did SFSU students. The reasons given point to the importance of students' current place of residence and the resulting commute time**, more than the fact that SFSU students are already enrolled in a degree program, or other possible reasons. Nevertheless, interest on the part of SFSU students was not insignificant. Among COM survey respondents, 38% were "Very Interested" in a bachelor's degree program at the Kentfield Campus and 18% were "Very Interested" in bachelor's programs at IVC. Among SFSU students, 17% were "Very Interested" in the Kentfield Campus location, and 11% were "Very Interested" in the IVC location.
- ✓ **Business, Health (and in particular Nursing), and Psychology/Criminal Justice/Child and Adolescent Development/Sociology repeatedly came up as the most popular areas of study.** These were the most frequent areas of study among

current SFSU students, the most requested bachelor's degree majors to be offered in a potential COM-SFSU partnership, and the most desired graduate areas of study by both COM and SFSU survey respondents.¹⁶

- ✓ **COM and SFSU students were at least as interested, if not more interested, in graduate programs on the COM campuses as they were in bachelor's programs.**
 - 50% of SFSU survey respondents expressed any interest in graduate programs at the Kentfield Campus, compared to 47% holding any interest in bachelor's programs there.¹⁷
 - 45% of SFSU survey respondents indicated any interest in graduate programs at IVC, compared to only 35 expressing any interest in bachelor's programs on that campus. The percent "Very Interested" in graduate programs (13%) was also higher than those "Very Interested" in bachelor's programs (11%).
 - 73% of COM survey respondents had any interest in graduate programs at Kentfield Campus, compared to 67% having any interest in bachelor's programs there.
 - 54% of COM survey respondents reported any interest in graduate programs at IVC, compared to 51% reporting any interest in bachelor's programs on that campus. The percent of students "Very Interested" in bachelor's and graduate programs at IVC was equal.

- ✓ **The offer of additional certificate programs at either COM campus seemed to be a less popular option than adding bachelor's or graduate programs.** Half of COM respondents were not interested in certificate programs at all. Only 7 percent of SFSU respondents were "Very Interested" in certificate programs located on the Kentfield Campus, and even fewer were interested in pursuing a certificate at IVC.
 - However, it is important to note that neither COM nor SFSU students were given a list of possible certificate programs. Therefore, students' lower level of interest in certificates may be due in part to a lack of knowledge about the wide range of certificates available.
 - Many students surveyed already had a bachelor's degree, were about to complete a bachelor's degree, or were on a bachelor's degree track. Because of their degree status, these students are likely to be more interested in graduate degree programs than certificate programs. Potential COM students who have not yet begun pursuing a bachelor's degree might express a greater interest in certificate programs.

- ✓ According to Kentfield Campus students, **more instructors and course offerings** are needed to alleviate the crowded classes. In addition, students would like to see a course offered more than once a week on different days and times to accommodate working students' schedules and to fulfill required courses in a reasonable amount of time. They also suggested **extending the library and learning center hours** to

¹⁶ College of Marin students also expressed interest in Graduate work in the field of Education.

¹⁷ "Any interest" refers to those expressing strong interest ("Very Interested") and those expressing moderate interest ("Somewhat Interested").

make it more accessible during the weekends. Moreover, **students were interested in satellite bachelor's degree, certificate and graduate degree programs** at COM but agreed that the level of instruction would need to be similar to the quality of teaching at the partnering university's campus.

- ✓ IVC students suggested **offering the same courses across both campuses to increase student enrollment**. Along the same line, they recommended **additional instructional staff** be hired to accommodate the high demand for programs and classes at IVC. They also requested that on-campus resources, such as a **library, bookstore, and cafeteria**, be made available at IVC. Moreover, students asked COM to take a proactive role in advertising programs and courses that are available on campus to stir community interest and support. One student suggested a community board or website to keep the community informed of classes and events happening on campus.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. College of Marin has an advantage in being cheaper than most other colleges and universities. Knowing that cost is a “Very Important” factor to 74% of SFSU Internet survey respondents and 66% of COM In-Class survey respondents when choosing a program, COM could try to promote this more in their marketing efforts.
2. When choosing a school to attend, commute distance from home is “Very Important” to more than half (53%) of SFSU Internet survey respondents, and more than two-thirds (65%) of COM In-Class survey respondents. COM has an advantage in attracting students from counties north of San Francisco and from the western part of Contra Costa County. COM should not necessarily focus its attention on students outside of these areas.
3. The general, dislike of the IVC campus on the part of some Kentfield Campus students stems from the feeling that it is empty and possibly unsafe, or “creepy.” Attracting more students to IVC will help, and IVC students seem to feel that demand for classes there is greater than the number currently being offered. In addition, the perception that the campus is unsafe “is not based on any crime statistics, merely a sense of emptiness at night. It is possible that a lot of additional lighting could make the campus seem much safer.”¹⁸
4. If COM enters into a partnership with a four-year college or university to offer degree programs on its campus(es), the College should be careful not to split courses between the Kentfield Campus and IVC. Students at both campuses expressed strong apprehension about the possibility of having to travel back and forth between the campuses.

¹⁸ Lapkoff & Gobalet Demographic Research, Inc., *Demographic Analysis for the College of Marin*, August 2004, p. 26

5. Larger institutions have an advantage over College of Marin in being able to offer diverse and more specialized options to students. COM will likely never be able to offer the variety of classes and majors available at schools like SFSU, even through partnering with another college or university. However, COM will be able to attract a number of students to degree programs in Business, Nursing/Health, and Psychology/Criminal Justice/Child and Adolescent Development/Sociology, the most popular areas of study among surveyed students. If COM decides to allow degree programs to be offered on its campus(es), it is recommended that COM push for these degree areas. Nursing in particular was cited by stakeholders as one of the fields most in need of employees. Training a greater number of students in Nursing will fulfill students' desires as well as meet the needs of Marin employers.

6. If partnering with a four-year college or university, offer graduate degree programs rather than either bachelor's degree or additional certificate programs. In addition to COM and SFSU students' greater interest in graduate programs, such offerings might be of particular benefit to the community. As a whole, Marin County is highly educated, and has increasingly become more so. The total number of Marin residents with a bachelor's degree (but no graduate degree) increased from 20% in 1990 to 31% in 2000.¹⁹ In 2000, the proportion of Marin residents with a bachelor's degree or higher was more than 51%, compared to only 14% Statewide and 12% nationally.²⁰ Offering graduate degree programs is more likely to meet the College's mission of serving the Marin County residents.

7. The scope of this report is limited to detailing the opinions and preferences of current College of Marin and SFSU students. It is also important for COM to gather information on *potential* College of Marin students, such as high school seniors and other community members. In order to substantiate the recommendations offered here, to identify the needs and preferences of incoming students over the next several years, and to attract people who are currently choosing not to enroll at COM, more research needs to be done. COM should use the information and insights gained from this report to guide the College's next steps. Ideas for future research that will further inform decision making on these important issues include:
 - Conduct surveys and/or focus groups with Marin high school juniors and seniors, asking about their reasons for and against enrollment at COM, their level of interest in certificate and bachelor's programs at COM, and their preferred areas of study.
 - Develop a survey to gather feedback from community residents. Surveys could be administered to attendees of a lecture series hosted by COM, or to members of Marin Professionals, a group of people in the professional, managerial and technical sectors who are in career transition. In addition, an SFSU Internet survey advertised through flyers, or publicized in local newspapers or other local media could be a cost-effective method of gathering

¹⁹ U.S. Census Bureau, 1990 and 2000 Decennial Census, SF 3 and STF 3 data. In 2000, less than 16 percent of the national population had an educational attainment level of a Bachelor's degree. Statewide, 17 percent of the population has a Bachelor's degree but no Graduate degree.

²⁰ According to the U.S. Census, 32 percent of Marin residents had a Bachelor's degree or higher in 1990.

information from the greatest number and greatest diversity of community residents.