

Temecula's Creative Solution to a Lack of Higher Education:

Project- MSJC

Decade-2010-2019

Is the project/program still going? If the project/program has ended, what went well and what could have been improved?

With 113,826 residents within the Southwest Riverside sub-region of over a half million people, the city of Temecula is in one of California's fastest growing regions. But, the nearest public university is more than 30 miles away, an unusually large distance for densely populated Southern California.

The city's leaders wanted the state to build a new California State University campus in Temecula around the time the recession began. Not a chance, they were told. And the California State University System couldn't afford to even open a branch campus there.

That meant the best option for residents to attend a public university would remain a commute of more than 30 miles to the University of California at Riverside or, in the other direction, to CSU at San Marcos. And we're talking about California driving.

So the City got creative. They created a new campus location in Temecula in 2009 with a \$3 million contribution (using Redevelopment funds) from the city, which also included a former elementary school building for a rental price of \$1 per year. The neighboring city of Murrieta -- also with a population of more than 100,000 -- kicked in another \$200,000 to renovate the facility. Private donors contributed as well.

After five years of operation, a total of about 1,000 students have enrolled in programs at the Temecula Higher Education Center, which offers five undergraduate and two master's degree programs. The center is graduating roughly 200 students per year.

The Temecula campus then moved on with a phase two, which higher education experts say is a novel spin on an articulated two-plus-two degree track.

Mt. San Jacinto College, a community college located 35 miles from Temecula, has partnered with CSU San Marcos to offer a guaranteed transfer pathway -- featuring both an associate and bachelor's degrees in business administration -- to students at a joint educational facility in Temecula.

Moving on to phase 3 of the project. The hand played by the City of Temecula's Office of Economic Development was to facilitate the discussion between Abbott (former building owner) and MSJC about the purchase of two, five-story office buildings totaling 350,000 sq. ft., matching the current MSJC Menifee Campus size. At the time of the transaction, Abbott had not listed their facility for sale. Christine Damko, Economic Development Manager, knew the

building was unoccupied and Abbott had no future plans of moving into this facility, so she contacted Abbott to inquire about their interest in maintaining ownership of the facility. The transaction was successfully completed in March 2018 and MSJC announced shortly after that they had purchased the facility for more than \$56 million. The facility will be renovated to accommodate the school setting of classrooms and laboratories.



Explain, in detail, how the project/program has had an impact on employment, expansion of local tax base & diversification of the area's economy? (500 Words Max)

MSJC is the only community college in our region and will be able to educate 12,000 students a year at this new facility. These students will be commuting to the facility from all over the City and from surrounding cities, bringing opportunities for sales tax revenues through restaurants, retail, and gas stations. These students will also bring the possibility of new employment seekers as they are in school and following graduation from MSJC. This is the first higher education center of this size and magnitude to come to Temecula and will play host to other colleges looking to expand into our area or grow, such as California State University San Marcos. Additionally, this new campus will drive development for affordable housing in and around the immediate area. Plans are already in place for future affordable housing near the campus as well as expanded public transportation and walking/biking paths. This facility is located minutes away from the Promenade Temecula, the City's largest shopping center and

highest sales tax contributor, making shopping, eating, and entertainment easily accessible to MSJC's new campus.

If the project/program has not ended, please explain what phase it is in and what will come next.

"Phase 3" of our quest for higher education will be completed in Fall 2020 for immediate opening to the public. MSJC plans on offering late start classes in Fall 2020 to the community. The project is currently in the build out phase and MSJC is lobbying for funds for future expansion.

What advice would you give other communities who want to replicate this project/program?

Bringing higher education to a region is no small task. It takes years of patience, consistency and talking to leaders who are open to innovation and change. Temecula's Economic Development Department's strong knowledge of the local market, available buildings and relationships within the community was invaluable throughout this entire project. In our case, we have been working in this concept since 2008- and over a decade later, we have seen success...but are not done yet! Quoting Irish Author and Poet, W.B. Yeats "Education is not the filling of a pail, but the lighting of a fire". Other communities must give up on their quest to bring/expand higher education to their community.

Please list any social media usernames and website addresses so that other members can connect with you.

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