



# The Board of Governors of the California Community Colleges

PRESENTED TO THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS  
 DATE: January 20-21, 2015

SUBJECT: Approval of Los Rios Community College District's Elk Grove Educational Center		Item Number: 2.3	
		Attachment: No	
CATEGORY:	College Finance and Facilities Planning	TYPE OF BOARD CONSIDERATION:	
Recommended By:	 Daniel J. Troy, Vice Chancellor	Consent/Routine	
		First Reading	
Approved for Consideration:	 Erik Skinner, Deputy Chancellor	Action	X
		Information	

**ISSUE:** This item requests state approval of the Elk Grove Educational Center in the Los Rios Community College District.

**BACKGROUND:** The Los Rios Community College District was officially formed in 1965 and serves over 80,000 students annually in its 2,400 square mile service area. The district consists of four colleges: American River College, Sacramento City College, Cosumnes River College, and Folsom Lake College. In addition, the district includes four state-approved educational centers: the El Dorado Center, the Natomas Educational Center, the West Sacramento Center, and the Davis Center. The district also has educational outreach operations in various locations, including Bella Vista High School, the former McClellan Air Force Base, Elk Grove, and Rancho Cordova. Together these locations allow the district to meet its goal of being an accessible source of higher education in the Sacramento region.

The district submitted a Letter of Intent to the Chancellor's Office in May 2006 requesting approval to establish a center in Elk Grove. A Needs Study was submitted to the Chancellor's Office in July 2007 and the Board of Governors granted Conditional approval for the center on November 4, 2008. Based on the conditional approval, the district submitted a revised Needs Study in July 2014 once the center generated over the 500 annual full-time equivalent students (FTES) required for full center approval.

**RECOMMENDED ACTION:** It is recommended that the Board of Governors approve the Elk Grove Educational Center as a state-approved educational center.

**ANALYSIS:** California Code of Regulations, title 5 section 55180(b) defines an educational center as “a postsecondary operation established and administered by an existing college or district at a location away from the campus of the parent institution” which:

- Is planned to continue for 10 or more years;
- Generates at least 500 full-time equivalent students annually;
- Has an on-site administrator;
- Offers programs leading to certificates and/or degrees conferred by the parent institution; and
- Has been approved by the Board of Governors.

Cosumnes River College has provided course offerings in Elk Grove since 2009. The Elk Grove outreach center offers students an introduction to a community college’s wide range of educational opportunities while creating highly accessible learning facilities and localized services to serve as a gateway to Cosumnes River College.

Demographic data support the need for an educational center in the Elk Grove area to meet the current and future higher educational needs of the residents. The Elk Grove Educational Center serves as Cosumnes River College’s only outreach center and is located within a master development plan recently approved by the City of Elk Grove. The center and its convenient access to Elk Grove and Laguna area residents is a major component of the City’s master development plan.

The Elk Grove Educational Center’s programs are an expansion of the already tested and proven programs offered at Cosumnes River College. An expanded selection of credit courses will be offered from a greater variety of departments. This will provide students with the opportunity to complete their transfer curriculum entirely at the center. Comprehensive student services are already provided with plans for expansion as the population grows.

The Los Rios Community College District passed a local bond in 2002 which provided the resources needed to acquire the 13.4 acres of land and build the first phase of the Elk Grove Educational Center. The facility consists of 25,000 total square feet including eight academic classrooms/labs, one instructional computer lab, a learning resource center, faculty and staff offices, e-Services, a bookstore/student lounge, and counseling space. There is also wireless accessibility throughout the building.

### **Population and Enrollment Projections**

The demographic profile of Elk Grove supports the need for the existing Elk Grove outreach location to become an educational center. Elk Grove is one of the fastest growing cities in Northern California. According to the California Department of Finance, the total population within the City of Elk Grove was approximately 76,298 residents in January 2001 and was estimated to reach 159,074 residents by 2013. The city’s rate of growth has far surpassed either that of the county or the state, at 108.5% versus 15.8% and 10.8% respectively.

The California Code of Regulations, title 5 requires that state-approved educational centers exceed 500 full-time equivalent students annually. In 2013, the Elk Grove Educational Center generated 523 full-time equivalent students.

Enrollment at the outreach center is forecasted to continue exceeding the 500 full-time equivalent student threshold requirement. Table 1 shows recent enrollment projections for the center developed by the Los Rios Community College District and approved by the Department of Finance Demographic Research Unit. The number of existing full-time equivalent students and the projected growth in the service area show the center will continue to be a viable institution.

Table 1: Department of Finance Enrollment, WSCH, and FTES Growth Driven Projections

Year	Fall Enrollment	WSCH/Enrollment	WSCH	Annual FTES
2013-14	1,458	4.26	6,221	528
2014-15	2,264	7.14	16,165	1,047
2015-16	2,332	7.14	16,650	1,078
2016-17	2,402	7.14	17,150	1,111
2017-18	2,474	7.14	17,665	1,144
2018-19	2,548	7.14	18,195	1,178
2019-20	2,676	7.14	19,105	1,237

### Alternatives

The Los Rios Community College District considered a number of alternatives to pursuing and establishing a state-approved educational center, and the district’s Board of Trustees has determined that a center is the most educational and financially feasible alternative. The alternatives evaluated as part of the needs study include the following:

#### Remain an Outreach Center

Remaining an outreach center would limit the ability of the Elk Grove Educational Center to receive state funding to expand its offerings, strengthen its programs, and serve more students. This scenario would pose a challenge considering the success achieved at this particular location and the population growth of Elk Grove. According to the Needs Study, the Department of Finance estimates that from 2001 to 2013 the population in Elk Grove increased 108.5 percent. With continued population growth, funding for the center will be instrumental in serving the growing enrollment while providing strong educational programs and services to students.

#### Expansion of Existing Institutions within the Region

The Los Rios Community College District Board of Trustees determined in 2000 that educational services would be delivered to the region through four comprehensive colleges and the development of educational centers affiliated with those colleges. The establishment of the Elk Grove Educational Center is consistent with this long-range planning policy. The establishment of the Elk Grove Educational Center will provide students with a localized higher education option and increase accessibility to higher education in the area.

### Increase the Utilization of Existing Institutions

The Los Rios Community College District has increased the utilization of existing space by offering educational services throughout the instructional day, evening and on weekends. These steps to increase utilization have strained Cosumnes River College's ability to provide student services and to support faculty. As enrollment continues to increase, the waiting lists at existing institutions continue to grow. Thus, increasing course offerings on the main campus would not have served the population attending the Center.

### Shared Use with Other Postsecondary Institutions

Cosumnes River College is the only public postsecondary institution within close proximity to the proposed Elk Grove Educational Center. The college is located north of the City of Elk Grove off Highway 99. The city of Elk Grove suffers from substantial traffic congestion along the Highway 99 corridor and the various arteries leading to this highway. Having an approved educational center within the city will allow local residents the opportunity to receive an education and gain training without having to travel out of the area while alleviating some traffic congestion. The two other public universities – the University of California, Davis and California State University, Sacramento – are over 15 miles from the Elk Grove Educational Center campus.

### Utilization of Non-traditional Delivery Methods

The Los Rios Community College District provides both traditional and non-traditional delivery methods for educational courses, including TV, interactive TV, online courses, and hybrid courses. However, the district does not offer all courses in distance education mode and not all students prefer, are capable of, or have the resources to take distance education courses. The Elk Grove Educational Center was planned specifically to offer students the ability to complete their entire general education pattern for a degree at the Cosumnes River College or to transfer to the University of California or California State University system.

### **Academic Planning and Program Justification**

Chancellor's Office staff in the Academic Affairs Division reviewed the needs study for the Elk Grove Educational Center and found: 1) no significant inter-district concerns, 2) that the proposed delivery system is reasonable, and 3) that the Los Rios Community College District provided adequate information to support the academic program offerings.

The Elk Grove Center is affiliated with Cosumnes River College and offers courses required for the general education component of the college's associate degrees and transfer degree to the California State University. General education courses to be provided will include: humanities, languages and rationality, living skills, natural sciences, social and behavioral sciences, and ethnic/multicultural studies. Mathematics courses are also offered at the center, including beginning algebra to help students prepare for the math requirements of the college's degree and certificate programs. The district also plans to offer English courses one level below university

transfer level at the Elk Grove Educational Center. As the center becomes more established, other basic skill and/or ESL courses may be offered depending upon the needs of the community.

### **Student Services and Outreach**

Chancellor's Office staff from the Student Services and Special Programs Division reviewed the student support services described in the needs study and concluded there is sufficient justification for the proposed educational center in the identified geographic area. In addition, the information provided regarding the delivery of educational services meets the guidelines for approval.

In general, the narrative in the Student Services and Outreach section in the needs study is thorough and complete and sufficiently addresses how support services are planned, staffed and evaluated. Services currently provided include: orientation services, counseling and advising, admissions and records, financial aid, assessment, disabled students programs and services (DSPS), extended opportunity programs and services (EOPS), CalWORKs, tutoring, transfer and articulation, veterans services, and library and academic support. Most services are provided on-site with some support coming from the main campus. The narrative also provides detailed information about staffing levels and schedules, and satisfactorily details methods of service delivery. Lastly, the study identifies methods for ensuring that the services provided and staffing levels meet student needs.

From the information provided in the study, the Elk Grove Educational Center appears prepared to provide support services to students. By recognizing the Elk Grove Educational Center as a state-approved educational center, the center will be able to increase its outreach efforts and provide new programs and services that respond to the needs of its service area population.

### **Support and Capital Outlay Budget Projections**

The Chancellor's Office College Finance and Facilities Planning Division has reviewed the needs study for the Elk Grove Educational Center and determined that the Los Rios Community College District's fiscal performance and condition are adequate to meet the future fiscal demands of the proposed center. The district has effectively managed its monetary resources to achieve a fiscal year 2013-14 unrestricted annual fund balance of 11 percent, which is above the recommended minimum 5 percent reserve. The full-time equivalent student potential of the Elk Grove Educational Center should enable the district to take full advantage of any additional system funding available in 2015-16 and ongoing budget years. The district certified that the center achieved 523 full-time equivalent students in fiscal year 2013-14.

In March 2002 and November 2008, the district passed General Obligation bonds of \$265 and \$475 million, respectively, which included funding for Phase I of the Elk Grove Center and related parking (all phases) and matching funds for Phase 2 and 3. The ballot measure language named the school facilities to be funded and included the Elk Grove Educational Center. The construction of the center is planned to be built in three equal phases over a period of approximately 12 years; the first phase is complete. In addition, the district will strive to become eligible and apply for state capital outlay funds.

## **Geographic and Physical Accessibility**

The Elk Grove Educational Center is readily accessible from major freeways and public transportation. The center is located in the City of Elk Grove, less than two miles from Highway 99 and less than 6 miles from Interstate 5. The site is adjacent to a current e-Tran bus stop and a future Sacramento Regional Transit light rail station that will connect the Elk Grove Center to the main campus, Cosumnes River College. The Elk Grove Educational Center will be located on approximately 13.4 acres, four and a half miles south of Cosumnes River College situated near the area high school. The site is south of Whitelock Parkway, east of Big Horn Boulevard, and north of Poppy Ridge Road.

As discussed previously, severe traffic congestion is a major obstacle in the Elk Grove/Laguna area. The area, not so long ago, was agricultural and has developed very rapidly as the population grew. Consequently, expanded infrastructure of major arteries continues to lag behind the area's growth. This site will be easily accessible off of Highway 99 with a future Whitelock interchange off Big Horn Boulevard. The site is estimated to be within a maximum 30-minute commute each way for students.

The master plan for the Elk Grove Educational Center will have approximately 560 parking stalls, which is more than adequate for the size of the Center.



## **Effects on Other Institutions**

The establishment of the Elk Grove Educational Center is consistent with the long-range planning policy of the district to establish centers connected with each of its four main colleges to improve student access. Three of the district's four colleges are located within 20 miles of the center and are either operating at capacity or are impacted in lecture and laboratory space. The center is well positioned to provide additional access to the residents of Elk Grove and its growing population.

The Los Rios Community College District has received letters of support for the Elk Grove Educational Center from neighboring higher education institutions, school districts, and community businesses. These organizations include: San Joaquin Delta CCD, Solano CCD, Yuba CCD, Sierra College, Lake Tahoe CCD, the County of Sacramento Board of Supervisors, the Elk Grove Chamber of Commerce, California State University, Sacramento, Elk Grove Commerce Bank, Elk Grove Community Services District, Smog N Go, Georgia-Pacific, the City of Elk Grove, SMC Accountancy Corp, Elk Grove Unified School District, Elk Grove Ford, the Sacramento City Unified School District, Elk Grove Milling, Inc., and Herburger Publications, Inc.

The Los Rios Community College District has also entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the neighboring district to the south, San Joaquin Delta CCD. The MOU addresses the management of growth, coordination of instructional planning, and the anticipation of some cross-over enrollments.

## **Environmental Impact**

The Los Rios Community College District expanded its services in Elk Grove with a new permanent facility that opened in 2013. The new building is approximately 25,000 gross square feet and is the first of three planned construction phases. The environmental impacts were studied appropriately, and as a result, a Mitigated Negative Declaration was filed with the State Clearing House (State Clearing House # 2009122004) in 2009. The Mitigated Negative Declaration was filed and is compliant with the California Environmental Quality Act guidelines.

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