

# Cabrillo in Watsonville surpasses expectations

## Demand grows for more classes at center

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APTOS — A survey of Cabrillo College students who take classes at the Watsonville Center shows that the demand for classes is on the rise. The trend, college officials say, could eventually lead to a new vision for the downtown center.

"The original intent of the Watsonville Center was to provide a way of introducing south county residents to higher education, with the idea that they would ultimately transfer to the campus here at Aptos to complete their degrees," said John Hurd, college president.

The growth of the Union Street campus, which enrolled 12,850 students last spring, has surpassed many people's expectations, he said.

Students participating in the survey, taken last fall, had the option of completing it in English or Spanish. In all, 692 students completed the survey.

Sixty-seven percent of those students said they wanted the Watsonville Center to be more than just the starting line for their educational goals.

"Students want to take their classes in Watsonville, and the

reason they do is that it's more convenient and more accessible to do so," said Rachel Mayo, director of the Watsonville Center.

By eliminating the time that would be used to commute to the main campus, find parking, and in many cases make child care arrangements, the center can reduce a student's time spent at the college by half, Mayo estimates.

That added convenience is also having an impact on the ethnic mix of the Cabrillo College student body. The Watsonville Center has

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contributed to a 30 percent rise in the Hispanic population at the two-campus college, Mayo said.

"A lot of students are taking classes who wouldn't just because we're more accessible, but a lot of those folks go into the main campus ... so it's diversifying the main campus," she said.

In all, Hispanics comprise 71 percent of the center's students, compared to 18.5 percent at both campuses combined. Seventy-six percent of the students at Watsonville Center are minorities, compared to just 28 percent at the entire college.

Thirty-six percent of students surveyed plan to transfer to a four-year university and 24 percent plan to get a two-year degree or vocational certificate. Fifteen percent are taking a class required for their job or recommended by their employer.

The survey also found:

- Spanish is the first language of 55 percent of students surveyed.

- A majority of students, 53 percent of those who returned a survey in Spanish and 85 percent of those surveyed in English, take all their classes at the Watsonville Center.

- Being close to home or work was cited as the primary reason 71 percent of English-survey respondents take classes at the

Watsonville Center. For Spanish respondents, the subject matter or class time they want is offered only in Watsonville.

- Child care was a major concern for many students. It kept 45 percent of students from taking more classes.

College trustees, who discussed the survey at last night's board meeting, said the results reflect a sign of the college's success.

"I'm delighted that they're demanding more and more classes here," trustee David Weiss said. "The fact that it's changing show its a living college and things grown and change.

College officials, students and community members will have a chance to give input on any

potential changes. In the coming year, the college is devising a master plan that will spell out long-range goals.

"There's certainly a demand there that we're going to have to address one way or another," Hurd said.

In other business, the board voted unanimously to extend the college president's contract for four years. John Hurd, who will begin his fifth year as Cabrillo president this fall, earns an annual salary of \$97,000, plus medical and dental benefits and travel and community service allowances. Trustees also authorized salary adjustments equal to those made for other administrators should they arise.