

Peer Team Report  
On  
Institutional Advancement & Foundation Office

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Spring 2010

**Peer Team Report  
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Institutional Advancement and Foundation Office Program Review**

**Mission**

*Findings:*

The mission of the Institutional Advancement and Foundation Office is “to advance and promote Antelope Valley College, enriching lives of community members and involving them in Antelope Valley College’s future.” The peer team has found that the office strives to follow their mission through continued fundraising and searching for the best means of communicating with the community.

The Institutional Advancement and Foundation office follows their mission through four areas:

1. Development – in which funds are raised through donations and grants to give back to Antelope Valley College
2. Alumni Programs – in an effort to raise money while also maintaining a connection with the community after they have left the college.
3. Public Relations – to ensure that Antelope Valley College’s interests are advanced in the public realm, and to convey the college’s position on local issues.
4. Marketing and Communications – which provides publications on the Antelope Valley College, including the newly redesigned website.

**Operational Outcomes**

*Findings:*

The Institutional Advancement and Foundation Office clearly states their goals within Section I of their program review, which are identical to their Operational Outcomes. Attainment of these eleven goals/outcomes is mentioned throughout the report and will be highlighted throughout the following sections of this peer review.

Specific outcomes/goals worth mentioning are 5 and 9, which are about the creation of an alumni program and the use of technology to communicate with local stakeholders, respectively. Building an alumni program is also part of the Office’s mission, but it is hindered by a lack of staff to take on the responsibility. By increasing the positions as outlined in the program review and below in this report, an alumni relations program could be developed and provide additional funding sources for the college.

Goal/outcome 9 discusses the use of technology for communication, something tying directly into continued training for the Webmaster position, discussed below.

**History**

### *Findings:*

Despite an 80 year history, the Antelope Valley College Foundation was not formed until 1993. Since then, the office has brought in increasing donations and funds for scholarships and educational support. Donations have increased from \$121,069 in fiscal year 2000 to \$918,912 in fiscal year 2008, despite a decrease in the number of donors. The Foundation provided \$291,911 for program support in FY08 and assisted in awarding 182 scholarships that year.

## **Student Support and Development**

### *Findings:*

The Institutional Advancement and Foundation Office is not directly responsible for student learning and outcomes, but they provide opportunities for students in three primary ways.

1. The office is responsible for student publications like the schedule of classes and college catalog.
2. The office has also provided a growing number of scholarships to students each fiscal year, rising from 96 in FY98 to 182 FY08.
3. The office also supports faculty through AVC Foundation Grants, which provide funding for instructional equipment.

## **Data Analysis and Environmental Scan**

### *Findings:*

The Program Review highlighted the *Magellan Report*. Magellan is a consulting company that specializes in community college foundations and advancement offices. In an assessment of community colleges around the state, the Magellan Report gave a baseline for size of staff and office structure for advancement and foundation offices. Its findings were that the larger the office staff, the greater the funds raised. This lends credence to the staffing needs posed by the Program Review.

Further, the Institutional Advancement and Foundation Office has done a good job providing metrics of both the fundraising and public relations. As mentioned above, scholarships and donations have trended upward within the last decade, though the office staff expresses concern that they cannot keep this up with the limited staffing. Public relations has had a decline in press coverage within the last five years, though they provide qualitative evidence that the newspaper industry's own troubles has led to the reduction in column inches dedicated to Antelope Valley College.

## **Collaboration with Other Programs**

### *Findings:*

The Program Review states, and the peer review team confirmed, that the Institutional Advancement and Foundation Office suffers from a lack of awareness and support from some departments. They attribute this to misconception and not fully understanding the scope of their office. Their main role is to raise funds. They fund different events through donations which are

in turn awarded to students, but the office staff hear complaints like “another party by the Foundation.” The office feels that this is not extravagant and wasteful spending, but rather a means to generate money for students and the college. Obviously, the office needs to address such a negative image to ensure that their mission is supported by other departments at Antelope Valley College.

## **Outreach Activities**

### *Findings:*

The one aspect of outreach performed by the Institutional Advancement and Foundation Office that needs work is the Alumni Relations Program. The office itself has a vision for what the program should become, including offering benefits like library cards and a mentorship program, but cannot implement any changes due to staffing shortages.

## **Goals and Objectives**

### *Findings:*

#### *Goal 1: Understanding of the office’s role in the college*

Interviews with office staff confirmed that one of their biggest concerns is that the college as a whole does not know what the Advancement and Foundation Office does. The office is a revenue-generating function of the college and is an auxiliary foundation. The executive director has made presentations to the Administrative Council and academic divisions to promote understanding of the office’s role. It would be beneficial to the office if college leadership supported (“stood behind”) the program.

In conjunction with the item, the college community needs to understand that if staff in the program was larger, the area could be generating more revenue and showcasing the college more effectively. College of the Canyons, for example, has an athletic fundraiser, five employees in the marketing area, and five to seven employees in the development role. The public relations function is separated from those areas.

#### *Goal 2: Collection of data to determine program effectiveness*

The office collects data about funds collected and disbursed and then disseminates this information to the college. The data are displayed in bar graphs and charts in the program review. In addition, the office submits quarterly and annual reports to the Board of Trustees and reports annual accomplishments to SPBC. The office receives letters and testimonials from students who have received scholarships and receives notes and emails of thanks from faculty and staff whose programs have been the beneficiary of grants and gifts. However, the office could improve its use of qualitative data by disseminating more of the information from faculty and staff to show how the office made a difference in their programs.

### *Goal 3: Diversifying the Foundation Board of Directors*

The Board is involved in advising the advancement and foundation office. The Board meets regularly and has a governance committee that recommends potential members. The Board has representation from ethnic groups in the Antelope Valley. Representation is not in proportion to the diversity of the community, and the executive director recognized that this is an area to work on. The Board is not representational of the age strata of the community, as the members predominantly are in their 40s to 83 years old. The executive director stated that the governance committee will be discussing the need to look for younger and entrepreneurial members of the community to join the Board.

### **Short and Long Term Resource Planning**

#### *Findings:*

Both the program review report and visits by the peer review team to the Institutional Advancement and Foundation Office demonstrated the need for additional space. The current spatial layout of the office does not feel inviting, as there is no actual reception area. The proper furniture and if possible, additional space should be allocated to ensure potential donors, students, and employees all feel welcome and comfortable in the office.

In the next three to five years, the Institutional Advancement and Foundation Office should work toward hiring employees to staff the scholarship and marketing functions of the program. These employees will also need the proper space and equipment to complete their job duties.

Over the next ten years, the executive director, utilizing the Magellan Report, has suggested the following vision for the office. The positions of Write/Editor, Advancement Assistant for Public Relations, Grants Manager, Director of Alumni Relations, and Director of Marketing and Communications should be filled. The Peer Review Team heard repeated needs for staffing to fully realize the vision of the office. Each of those positions would fill a logical role in the Institutional Advancement and Foundation office, and the Program Review cites the finding that for every development officer hired, an additional \$350,000 can be anticipated in private giving.

Again, with new employees comes the need for additional office space and equipment for those employees.

### **Recommendations and Comments**

1. Fill the vacant position of Communications Design Coordinator
2. Provide adequate space for office staff, including a reception area.
3. When budget allows, implement the Advancement and Foundation Staffing Plan as recommended in the Program Review.
4. Provide annual training opportunities to the webmaster to ensure the website is a cutting edge resource and marketing tool for the Antelope Valley College community.

5. Purchase adequate computers for all staff positions to ensure ability to run relevant software
6. Purchase color copier for Advancement and Foundation office
7. Make effort to better communicate Advancement and Foundation mission and outcomes to faculty and staff.