

Overview of the College

A Short History and Overview

Antelope Valley College held its first classes on Sept. 10, 1929 as an extension of Antelope Valley Joint Union High School in Lancaster. Then known as Antelope Valley Junior College, the College was established by high school officials as a way to provide local residents with access to the first two years of a college education in what was then a remote, rural area. The average daily attendance at the college was 13 during the 1929-30 school year. The stock market crash in October 1929 and subsequent Great Depression led to challenging times for the new institution. The College shared classrooms on the high school campus where the existing Antelope Valley High School stands.

Average daily attendance (ADA) at the college reached 100 by 1939. However, with the outbreak of World War II, attendance plummeted to the same level as the first year of the college. Thankfully, enrollment began to grow steadily after the end of the war, partly due to the GI Bill of Rights that provided higher education opportunities to veterans and partly because Antelope Valley began developing an aircraft industry. At that time the College launched its first vocational programs as it moved toward becoming the comprehensive community college it is today.

In 1957 the College's first president was hired as a growing step away from directors who oversaw the College prior to that time. Groundbreaking was held in September 1959 for a new college campus designed to accommodate 1,500 students. Located on 110 acres at Avenue K and 30th Street West, the new campus opened two years later.

In December 1961, local voters approved creation of a separate community college district. July 1, 1962 marked the official start of the new college district. In the 1970s, the campus added a black-box theater, music building, consumer education building and arts building surrounding what is known as the Fine Arts Quad. Other buildings were added on the north side of the campus to accommodate technical programs such as automotive technology, welding and electronics.

As student enrollment grew during the 1980s, officials secured state money in the early 1990s to construct a library in the heart of the campus and an administration building. More construction followed including a Child Development Center, a two-story Applied Arts Building, a three-story Business Education Building, and a Technical Education Building. Officials continue to expand and update labs and classrooms to serve students. A Theater building started construction in 2009. A massive Health and Science Building broke ground in 2010. Over the years the College expanded from 110 to approximately 135 acres through land purchases. Overall fall 2014 enrollment at Antelope Valley College now exceeds 14,000 students.

California State University, Bakersfield-Antelope Valley, which has had its own satellite facility at AVC's Lancaster campus since 1995, offers upper division and graduate level programs for over 600 students.

Palmdale Center

AVC responded to the needs of south valley residents by establishing a Palmdale Site, currently operated from approximately 18,000 square feet on the third floor of a building at 1529 E. Palmdale Blvd., Palmdale. The Center is approximately 10 miles from the main Lancaster campus. In fall 2015 approximately 2,700 students were served at the Palmdale Site. The Palmdale Center provides students with access to key support services including academic tutoring and counseling, financial aid, open computer lab, Office for Students With Disabilities (OSD) program, and library services. There are nine lecture classrooms, one web science laboratory, and one computer instructional classroom/laboratory.

The College has acquired a facility at 2301 East Palmdale Blvd., 2.2 miles east of the current Center location. A more comprehensive facility of 50,7000 square feet is being renovated to open for instruction in fall 2016.