



## *Higher Education Center at Otay Mesa Most Frequently Asked Questions*

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### **1. What is the Otay Mesa Center?**

The Otay Mesa Center will be the third comprehensive educational center for the Southwestern Community College District. Currently, the District has two educational centers, one in San Ysidro and one in National City. The Otay Mesa Center will be located in the community of Otay Mesa, with La Media Street to the east, and Heritage Road to the west, Airway to the South, and Otay Mesa Road to the North.

The Higher Education Center in National City and the Education Center in San Ysidro are defined by the California Postsecondary Education Commission (CPEC) as “off-campus operation” because it serves a population of less than 500 full-time equivalent students (FTES) at a single location. The Higher Education Center at Otay Mesa has “center status,” because the projected population for the area and the facility will have a capacity to serve more than 500 FTES. There are several benefits associated with having “center status” that are addressed in questions 4, 5, and 6.

### **2. When did the planning for Otay Mesa begin?**

California Community Colleges Board of Governors correctly anticipated the need for additional capacity as early as 1991. In examining historical enrollment rates and projections for the border area of the district, the Board of Governors noted in its *1991 Long Range Capital Outlay Plan* the need for a District “southern center” by the mid-term period (1995-2000).

A presentation was provided to the SWC Governing Board in November 1999, establishing the need for the center and authorizing the Superintendent/President to complete negotiations for the site. (*SWCCD, Website*)

### **3. How much land does the District own in Otay Mesa?**

The District purchased 38 acres in 2001. In 2004, Caltrans required an additional 12 acres for construction of the 905 right of way, leaving us with 26 acres.

### **4. What is the CPEC definition of Center Status?**

CPEC first adopted policies relating to the review of proposed campuses and educational centers in 1975. The most recent revision is contained in the Commission’s publication, *Guidelines for Review of Proposed University Campuses, Community Colleges and Educational Centers* (CPEC, 92-18). These guidelines define the criteria by which Commission staff analyzes new campus proposals, focusing particularly on the issues of enrollment demand, geographic location, possible alternatives, and projected costs. Academic planning, service to disadvantaged students, and the effect on other institutions are also part of the Commission’s analysis. An educational center with “center status” is defined as follows:

***An educational center is an off-campus enterprise owned or leased by the parent district and administered by the parent college. The center must enroll a minimum of 500 full-time equivalent students, maintain an on-site administration (typically headed by a dean or director, but not by a president, chancellor, or superintendent), and offer programs leading to certificates or degrees to be conferred by the parent institution. (Source: CPEC, 1992)***

**5. What requirements were necessary in order for the Otay Mesa Center to be granted “center status”?**

The Higher Education Center at Otay Mesa was officially designated as a state-approved center in 2001 by California Community Colleges Board of Governors. In 2002, CPEC recommended to the Office of the Governor and the Legislature, pursuant to its statutory responsibilities contained in Sections 66903 and 66904 of the Education Code, that the State authorize the development of the Higher Education Center at Otay Mesa as a state-supported educational center of the Southwestern College campus.

The California Community Colleges Board of Governors stated that “the site [HEC, OM] must be capable of generating at least 500 full-time equivalent students (FTES) and must achieve this level of attendance by the third year of operation.” (***California Community Colleges Board of Governors, September 2001***)

**6. What are the benefits of having “center status”?**

In terms of benefit to the District, it means that the Otay Mesa Center will be able to apply for state-supported funding, which includes funding for construction, maintenance, and equipment.

**7. What academic programs will be offered at Otay Mesa?**

- General Education/Transfer
- Vocational Technical (Signature Programs)
- Basic Skills
- Business/Community Interest

**8. What are the Signature Programs that will be offered at Otay Mesa?**

- Nursing
- Police Academy
- Emergency Medical Technician/Paramedic
- Fire Science
- Environmental Technology
- International Business

**9. Why were these Signature Programs chosen?**

- High demand; excellent career wages and career ladder upon program completion
- Programs with assigned office support staff
- Cohort student groups
- Public sector programs with potential for homeland security and disaster preparedness funding

**10. What student services will be available?**

A similar complement of services available at the Chula Vista campus, but tailored to a smaller facility, will be provided to students. Services will include Admissions & Records, Assessment, Bookstore, Counseling, Computer Labs, Career/Transfer Center, Counseling, DSS, EOPS, Financial Aid, Health Services, Library Services, Student Activities, Student Employment Services, and Tutoring.

**11. Will the Otay Mesa Center accommodate students with disabilities?**

Yes. The Otay Mesa Center will undergo numerous rigorous reviews at the local and State level to ensure it meets or exceeds the new construction requirements of Title III of the Americans with Disabilities Act/Standards for Accessible Design. Additionally, input has been provided by the Disabilities Support Services staff during the initial planning stages of the project, and will continue to be involved in the different phases of this project.

**12. Is there a marketing plan to promote the Otay Mesa Center once it is opened?**

Through the office of Community Relations, a formal marketing plan is currently being developed. However, several internal and external presentations on the project have been conducted.

**13. What is the District's enrollment management plan – that includes the Chula Vista campus, three education centers, and an aquatic center?**

The District will undergo a community marketing study that will provide the necessary data to inform a responsive and effective enrollment management plan for the District.

**14. What is the cost for the construction of the Otay Mesa Center?**

The approximate cost of construction is estimated at \$25 Million.

**15. What resources are being used to pay for construction of the Otay Mesa Center?**

- Prop AA funding approved by voters in November 2000
- \$1,000,000 of State construction funds received from the Department of Finance
- \$3,033,000 in State equipment funds have been approved for the Center

**16. How will operational costs be covered?**

Operational costs will be covered by FTES generation. The District is undergoing a study of enrollment patterns at the Centers and Chula Vista campus to better predict the enrollment at the Higher Education Center at Otay Mesa.

**17. How will the District pay for the staffing needs of Otay Mesa?**

The District will pay for staffing needs by revenue generated through projected FTES enrollment. Refer to Question #16.

**18. Will the District be able to financially support one main campus, three comprehensive education centers, and an aquatic center?**

As the population within the District's service area continues its trend of rapid growth, it is incumbent upon the District to follow the Educational Master Plan by providing portals for higher

education to the communities it serves. Therefore, the District plans to continue its commitment to being a single-college district with multiple centers in an effort to serve the fastest-growing communities within its service area. This growth within the community will translate into growth in enrollment, and consequently growth in FTES. New FTES generation will financially support the district's projected growth.

**19. Can the money from the Otay Mesa Center be used to expand programs on the Chula Vista campus?**

The funding for the Otay Mesa Center is specifically earmarked for this facility and cannot be used for other purposes. Moving several programs that are currently based at the Chula Vista campus to the Otay Mesa Center will allow us to expand several other high-demand, existing programs and courses into the facilities that will be vacated. Essentially, this relocation of programs to Otay provides the ability to effect significant growth in those areas where there is high student demand.

**20. What is the maximum enrollment being planned for Otay?**

The enrollment plan will outline the enrollment projections for the Otay Mesa Center; however, maximum student capacity at the center is 5,000.

**21. Will the Education Center at San Ysidro continue to operate?**

Yes. SWC made a commitment to the San Ysidro community in 1989 to build an educational facility in the San Ysidro community to provide opportunities for higher education, as well as house the memorial of the 1984 McDonald's Tragedy that occurred on the site. The Center serves as a living memorial and symbol of opportunity to the San Ysidro community.

The San Ysidro Center enrolls approximately 1500 students every semester in a facility built to accommodate 1000 students. Consequently, the center has increased its operational schedule to a six-day operation, with expanded Saturday, afternoon and evening offerings. The facility will be rebuilt to accommodate 2000 students and address Department of State Architect building requirements.

**22. What will be the administrative structure at Otay Mesa Center and San Ysidro Center?**

The District will undergo a review of its administrative structure; and the administration of the centers will be included in this comprehensive review.

**23. Has the District developed procedures for the education centers and the Chula Vista campus?**

Operational procedures between the centers and the schools are already in place, and were revised in 2002; and in 2006.

The District is committed to further developing multi-center organizational structures and operational procedures that clarify district-wide relationships and practices, and promote equity and consistency for students, faculty and staff throughout the District.

**24. Will Otay Mesa continue to be primarily industrial?**

Currently, the City of San Diego is undergoing a community plan update for Otay Mesa. Planning Commission workshops were conducted in August 2004, which resulted in four major themes of interest to the community. Among them is the interest in careful development of transportation

systems, residential projects, and the maintenance of industrial uses. The planning goals are to ensure connectivity, and minimize conflicts between different interests. **(Source: City of San Diego, Otay Mesa, Community Plan Update, 2004)**

**25. What types of businesses are located in the Otay Mesa area?**

- Maquiladora Management Services
- Consulting (International)
- Custom Brokers/Logistics/Freight Forwarding
- Manufacturing
- Real Estate
- Trucking Services

**26. Is there public transportation planned for the Otay Mesa Center and/or proposed or expected vanpooling/carpooling/bussing?**

The Otay Mesa Center is on a Metropolitan Transportation Service (MTS) bus route linking the Iris Avenue trolley station to the Otay Mesa Port of Entry. This route runs eight times daily in each direction. Travel time from the trolley station to the campus is about ten minutes. MTS has indicated that they would be willing to increase the frequency of this service as demand in ridership increased to the Center. In addition, the District is exploring the possibility of providing a shuttle service.

**27. What is the status of State Route 905?**

Completion of State Route 905 will connect Interstates 5 and 805 to the Otay Mesa Port of Entry project status:

- The completed first phase, SR 905/Siempre Viva Road Interchange, opened the first mile of freeway for traffic in late 2004.
- It is anticipated that upon completion, SR 905 will be designated as I-905.  
**(Source: SANDAG, February 2005)**

**28. When will the 125 Freeway be completed?**

Scheduled to open in the spring of 2007, State Route 125 south is an 11.2 mile highway that will connect the Otay Mesa Port of Entry with the San Diego regional and interregional highway network.

The highway extends from Otay Mesa, near the Mexico border, to State Route 54. SR 125 south will include a state-of-the-art toll way developed by a public/private partnership among the California Department of Transportation, SANDAG, and a private California corporation, California Transportation Ventures, Incorporated. **(Source: SANDAG, February 2005)**

**29. Since a portion of the 125 Freeway will be a toll road, will students/faculty/staff be provided a discount?**

This possibility will be explored with the company financing the toll road.

**30. Is San Diego State University (SDSU) still involved with the Otay Mesa Center?**

Due to financial limitations, SDSU is not currently involved with the Otay Mesa Center. However, future collaboration with SDSU and other educational institutions will continue to be explored.

**31. Why are we building a center in Otay Mesa when we may be partnering with the City of Chula Vista on the University Park project?**

The University Park and Research Center is a project by the City of Chula Vista. The project concept is a collaboration of public and private universities that will be located on a 1,500 acre site in Otay Ranch, near the U.S. Olympic Training Center. The Higher Education Center at Otay Mesa is a Southwestern College project.

Southwestern College has been actively involved in the discussion and planning phase of the Chula Vista project. However, at this point, the project is in the initial stages and is far from implementation. Currently, Point Loma Nazarene, CETYS (Centro de Enseñanza Técnica y Superior), Monterrey Tech (Tecnológico de Monterrey), and Southwestern College have indicated an interest in participating in this partnership.

SWC supports the project and will continue to participate in the future discussion phases of this initiative.

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