

Community College of the Future

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### Abstract

The following document describes the development of Yesler Community College, which will be found within the Bailey Gatzert neighborhood in Seattle, Washington. The college is committed to providing high-quality academic transfer, professional and technical, basic skills, and continuing education opportunities for all students, in order to serve the educational and cultural needs of the community while also supplementing its existing strengths. The document details the college's primary academic functions, population demographics, student services, financing and administrative services, and physical plant and grounds.

### **Mission, Vision, & Values**

*Yesler Community College is committed to providing high-quality academic transfer, professional and technical, basic skills, and continuing education opportunities for all students, in order to serve the educational and cultural needs of the community while also supplementing its existing strengths.*

The community we serve lies within the bounds of the Seattle University Youth Initiative, primarily serving the Bailey Gatzert neighborhood just south of SU's campus. Because the Youth Initiative is designed to be a pipeline of support for the youth of this community from pre-kindergarten through high school, YCC acts as a continuation of this pipeline by providing direct access to higher education.

Our vision is to tap into community strengths to provide a holistic educational experience for all students. We recognize the challenges that our community faces, and work to provide resources such as childcare, distance learning, and access to technology to allow students to reach their educational and personal goals. We value the open door mission of the community college system, and aim to provide these resources to any student who comes to Yesler Community College.

### **Student Services**

In examining the demographics of the Bailey Gatzert neighborhood, which houses approximately 17,500 residents:

- 35% of the population lives at or below the poverty threshold as defined by the United States government
- 55% are members of racial-ethnic minority groups or mixed race
- 10% are youth under the age of 18

- Growing number of Asian and African immigrants and refugees
- Many do not speak English as their primary language
- Differential academic achievement as a result of socioeconomic background (all statistics found in Seattle University Youth Initiative Action Plan, 2011).

Yesler Terrace, a low-income public housing community, is located within this community; according to the Seattle Housing Authority, all 1,200 residents of Yesler Terrace live at or below the poverty level, and nearly 90% of the residents are members of racial-ethnic minority groups or mixed race. 40% of the residents are youth under the age of 18 years (Seattle University Youth Initiative Action Plan, 2011).

As logically follows from the demographics of this population, the main goal of student services at YCC is to address childcare, language learning needs, access to technology, and cultural community resources. Many organizations already exist to support childcare and education, including the Neighborhood House's Head Start Program, which provides high-quality preschool education to children between the ages of 3-5 (Seattle University Youth Initiative Action Plan, 2011). We plan to partner with the multiple locations of this program to provide free childcare for our students. We will supplement with an on-site childcare center to support children of all ages.

We will make our Office of Multicultural Affairs one of the forefronts of our student services, in recognition of the fact that much of the community is a member of a racial-ethnic minority group. Within this office, services for additional support with learning English will be provided. This support is incredibly important to student success.

Recruitment for YCC will be possible through partnerships with College Access Now, NELA Center for Student Success, the Upward Bound Program, and the College Success

Foundation, which are already community partners within the Seattle University Youth Initiative.

### **Instructional Programming**

#### **Workforce & Basic Skills**

While workforce training is an important component in today's community colleges, YCC is aware that these programs can serve to keep marginalized populations within the confines of the workforce and out of higher education and academic pursuits. YCC does acknowledge the presence of large corporations in the Seattle area, such as Boeing, Microsoft, Amazon, and Starbucks, and is responsive to the needs of these corporation by offering courses and programs that will prepare a skilled and competent workforce; however, the heart of YCC's values lie in bridging the academic achievement gap in this community, and therefore our primary focus is on academic transfer and continuing education.

Adult basic education, particularly ESL, GED, and literacy programming will be at the forefront of our academic program. We will prioritize hiring of faculty who are multilingual in order to facilitate further student success.

#### **Academic Transfer & Continuing Education**

Continuing Education is not a primary focus at YCC due to the supposedly low rates of formal education already in existence within the community; however, it is important that continuing education programs are a source of revenue for the college. It is more apparent that our resources should be used to fund basic skills education. Academic transfer preparation, however, will be a focus of YCC; one of its' goals is to increase racial-ethnic minority access to four-year institutions, while ensuring the students are adequately prepared for the transition culturally, academically, and emotionally.

### **Administrative Services & Financing**

There are many challenges currently facing the community college system when it comes to funding. Among these challenges include the increased competition for decreasing resources, namely the expectation that institutions should do more with less, and the competition from the for-profit sector (Downey, Pusser, & Turner, 2006). To combat these challenges, YCC will embrace partnerships with local businesses and community organizations while reducing dependency on state funding sources. Partnerships with existing structures will allow both parties to maximize resources, physical spaces, and audiences; while financial independence is important to ensure the sustainability of the college, it is important to realize that costs can be minimized by utilizing capital that already exists within the community.

The four main sources of financing for YCC will come in the form of state level funds and taxes, local funds, tuition, grants and contracts. State funds and taxes are currently a disappearing source of funding for institutions of higher education, therefore only 30% of YCC depends on this source. Local funds account for 10% of funding.

Tuition accounts for 15% of funding for YCC. YCC is unique in that it offers a 10% return on tuition for all students that meet their goal in attending the college. For example, if a student's intention is to transfer to a four-year institution, the student will be refunded 10% of all tuition paid over the course of their time at YCC if they reach that goal. This encourages students to manage their goal as it changes over time, so that assessment efforts can more accurately measure success. With this system in place, there is potential for increased state funding due to easily accessible student success data. Additionally, this tuition reimbursement encourages students to attend YCC over other colleges, thus making it a competitor against for-profit institutions.

Grants and contracts account for 45% of funding. With so much of our financial success dependent on this source, we have a team of full-time staff members dedicated to pursuing these opportunities. It is also the team's duty to manage the college's endowment fund and pursue in-kind donations from local businesses and the community at large. Because public community and technical colleges are instruments of government, any contributions are tax deductible under section 170 (c) (1) of the Internal Revenue Code (Solemsaas, 2011).

### **Physical Plant, Grounds, & Facilities**

According to the Seattle University Youth Initiative Action Plan, the Bailey Gatzert neighborhood is home to four community centers, two neighborhood service centers, three community gardens, five public health centers, and five sports recreation sites, among many other additional organizations and community groups (2011). Not wanting to spend funds on physical spaces when it might not be necessary, we plan to utilize these community partnerships and expand the community college beyond our primary physical space. We will have a central location where administrative and student services are housed, including our childcare center, as well as classrooms; however, we plan to utilize other community spaces already in existence, as community members most likely already frequent these spaces. In many cases, the college is coming to the students, instead of the students coming to the college.

## Reference List

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