Draft for discussion

Conceptual Comprehensive Enrollment Management Plan
Adams State College
President Svaldi

There are 8 ingredients in my comprehensive approach to stabilizing and increasing enrollment at ASC over the next 4 years.

1. Effective pre-collegiate disciplinary interaction among relevant ASC disciplines and relevant San Luis Valley High School disciplines.

Relationships with Supers and Building Principals are necessary, in order to have an opportunity to influence in a positive way the qualifications of High School teachers as well as content-area knowledge and effective instruction. This relationship-building is a responsibility of the President and the Provost. However, regular positive interaction among content area teachers and ASC Professors is a prerequisite to meeting the needs of Valley high school students. Chairs and program coordinators need to take the lead in this interaction with ASC providing incentives, both personal and Departmental. While technically many high school instructors meet the definition of “highly qualified,” practically many do not.

For example ASC could provide scholarship incentives to in-service Valley teachers to enroll in appropriate content courses (and thus move up the salary scale) as recommended by Departments thus improving the preparation of in-coming Valley students.

Additionally, a “5th year program” (legislation pending) delivered in high schools or in the evening on the ASC campus as part of the Evening/Weekend program would provide an opportunity to improve student preparation, particularly in reading, writing and math, while increasing ASC enrollment. Our Statutory mission allows us to deliver our 2-year programs anywhere in the Valley for resident credit. There are obviously challenges here with faculty load, qualifications of adjunct instructors etc. but if ASC has the will, a variety of effective approaches can be developed including emerging technology as well as actual travel by ASC Personnel to a high school or community site. The PR, good will and recruiting effect of this kind of program should not be underestimated.

Objective here is start up –to do something in year 1 which starts a conversation about the needs and issues. Year 2-4 Benchmarks need to be set after the initial conversations.

2. Continue traditional recruitment activities targeted at incoming freshmen. To stabilize on-campus enrollment, SCH, we need 4 additional years at the 10 year average for a Freshmen class—approximately 525-550 new frosh each year
enrolled in at least 12 CH. Current Junior and Seniors are remaining from 2 very small incoming first time freshmen.

Responsibility here lies with VP for Enrollment Management and the Director of Admissions to determine best practices and implement them. Again involvement of Chairs and Program coordinators or their representatives as advisors and role models is crucial. Any significant growth in this student population needs to be carefully planned for, as Departments are already barely covering freshmen courses with some areas utilizing classes which are too large (Psychology, HGP, general education science courses). A Freshman from Limon or Hohne does not understand that a class of 50+ students is a “Small” class. ASC needs to explore ways to decrease class size via grant writing, fund raising, so we walk the talk.

3. Increase out of state recruitment activities

This strategy operates by targeting specific states where there are not enough slots to serve Community college students transferring to 4 year institutions or where the in-state tuition is higher than ASC’s out of state tuition (California, East Coast institutions). Specific program involvement is necessary as the students need excellent transfer information as well as Admission representatives specially trained in a personal selling approach to recruitment. This would be a new program and needs careful design, funding support, incentives for departmental involvement and training for ASC recruiters.

4. Recruitment of Upper Division transfer students from Colorado Community Colleges. Specific programs with available capacity (small classes at the upper division level), would be provided incentives to target specific community college with excellent lower division preparation in their discipline. Goal would be to recruit a few qualified students each year (2-4) with a clear agreement on transfer credits and remaining ASC requirements. Again involvement of program coordinators or their representatives is crucial as they best understand their programs and appropriate personal and departmental incentives would be necessary.

5. A comprehensive approach to improving retention/persistence of ASC students is necessary if we are to really claim we are fulfilling our mission “to provide opportunity and access for all students.”

While it can be said that “everyone is responsible for student retention,” most do not understand what that statement means. Shared responsibility often means that nothing changes as ASC’s 3 year freshmen to sophomore retention has bounced from below 50% to near 60% and our 6 year graduation rate remains around 30%. Recent changes reengineering business practices in Admissions/records and financial aid will eventually improve customer service in that area. Additionally a new approach is being implemented with the First year experience which may assist in improving student development. However, it remains unclear what
steps can be taken to dramatically improve ASC’s student retention. A knowledgeable individual with an understanding of best practices in this area needs to be hired and given the appropriate authority across institutional areas/silos to study and, working with all stakeholders, implement needed changes. For example, one approach at another institution which had a dramatic impact on student retention was enforcement of mandatory student attendance at the Freshmen and sophomore level accompanied by intrusive advising to identify quickly at risk students and take necessary measures to address their issues. Not all students were saved, but they were provided an opportunity.

6. An International program on a small regional campus provides an opportunity to broaden the viewpoint of local students while providing increased diversity and added resources to the campus. This idea needs development and careful consideration given the current international climate.

7. Careful increase of quality distance degree programs with Academic Program personnel working closely with the Extended Studies Division. Any ASC distance degree must be delivered through the Division of Extended Studies per the outcome of the HLC focused visit. A variety of incentives are currently offered by Extended Studies for Program development and for added income by Chairs and/or their designees. Participation in these programs should be voluntary. Appropriate yearly benchmarks need to be determined.

8. Development and Diversification of graduate programs.

Over the last 10 years the only real growth in ASC overall enrollment has been at the graduate level. While there may be some room for additional growth, it is more realistic to maintain past enrollment while diversifying ASC graduate offerings.

The majority of ASC Graduate enrollment is in two programs: Teacher Education and Counselor Education with much smaller enrollments in HPE and Art. TED has had the most rapid growth but with increased competition and expiration of many of the grant-funded cohorts, future growth seems unlikely. Counselor Education has maintained a consistent enrollment in their off-campus cohorts over the last ten years. Recently a cash-funded on-line program was developed and initial enrollment has been very strong with a 3rd cohort already scheduled to begin next January. The model used is an effective model for graduate program development with appropriate incentives and significant funds destined to come to the institution starting with the 3rd cohort. An identical model has been suggested for HPE faculty who have experience with internet instruction. Both of these programs are cash funded programs but they will eventually bring significant resources to the College as well as to their home departments. The Art department has recently begin significant recruitment for their MA in Art with Art MA heads increasing from 8 to 22.
Future issues for Graduate enrollment concern which programs to include as Fee For Service reimbursement and which should be delivered as cash funded and how to set appropriate growth benchmarks.

**Overall Objective for this enrollment conceptual plan is an 8% increase in COF eligible students or roughly 160 students enrolled in at least 12 CH/semester or 24 CH/year.** Meeting this objective would help balance the General Fund budget currently being supplemented through extended studies earning at approximately 588,000. Items 2, 4 & 5 above (and eventually 1) would have the most significant effect on COF eligible students. Should legislation pass that attaches a stipend to Graduate Student programs as seems possible, item 8 could also have an enrollment effect over the remaining 3 years.