

# Cypress College Mission Review

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## Leadership Team and Survey Findings

**Institutional Research and Planning**

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## **Background**

As part of the College's accreditation, Cypress College periodically reviews its mission statement. As of Spring 2016, the Cypress College mission statement was as follows:

*Cypress College enriches students' lives by providing high quality education for transfer to four-year institutions, associate degrees, career technical education, and certificate coursework, as well as basic skills and opportunities for lifelong learning. The college is dedicated to supporting the success of students and enriching society, embracing diversity, and contributing to both the economic and social development of the surrounding community.*

Thus, the mission had a gap in addressing the new pilot baccalaureate degree program, multiple methodologies for delivering instruction, and the College's intended population.

At a Leadership Team meeting during the Spring 2016 semester, participants engaged in an exercise to modify Cypress College's mission statement to include the new baccalaureate degree in mortuary science, multiple ways of delivering instruction, and the College's intended population, in order to meet ACCJC requirements. A total of twelve proposals were submitted for consideration. President's staff reviewed the proposals and selected *three options* for the campus to review and provide feedback on:

- 1. Cypress College enriches students' lives by providing several high quality educational pathways including transfer to four-year institutions, associate degrees, a bachelor's degree, career technical education, and certificate coursework, as well as basic skills and opportunities for lifelong learning. Courses are delivered in a variety of modes to meet the diverse needs of our students. The college is dedicated to supporting the success of students and enriching society, embracing diversity, and contributing to both the economic and social development of the surrounding community and beyond.*
- 2. Cypress College enriches students' lives by providing high quality education for transfer to four-year institutions, associate and baccalaureate degrees, career technical education, and certificate coursework, as well as basic skills and opportunities for lifelong learning. Courses are offered in traditional, hybrid, or online formats. The college is dedicated to supporting the success of students and enriching society, embracing diversity, and contributing to both the economic and social development of the surrounding community and broader society.*
- 3. Cypress College enriches students' lives by providing premier educational opportunities including transfer to four-year institutions, associate degrees, certificates, and a baccalaureate degree. The college offers comprehensive career technical education programs, basic skills, and lifelong learning. Multiple educational-delivery methods meet the varied needs of our students. The college is dedicated to supporting the success of students, fostering diversity, enriching society, and contributing to the economic development of our community and beyond.*

**Timeline**

The timeframe for modifying the Cypress College mission statement spans from April 2016 and will continue through December 2016. Steps for creating and adopting the College mission include brainstorming revisions, employees voting on potential options, and making recommendations to the President’s Advisory Council and the North Orange County Community College District Board of Trustees based on survey results and employee comments. Detailed steps for mission revision and adoption are outlined in Figure 1.

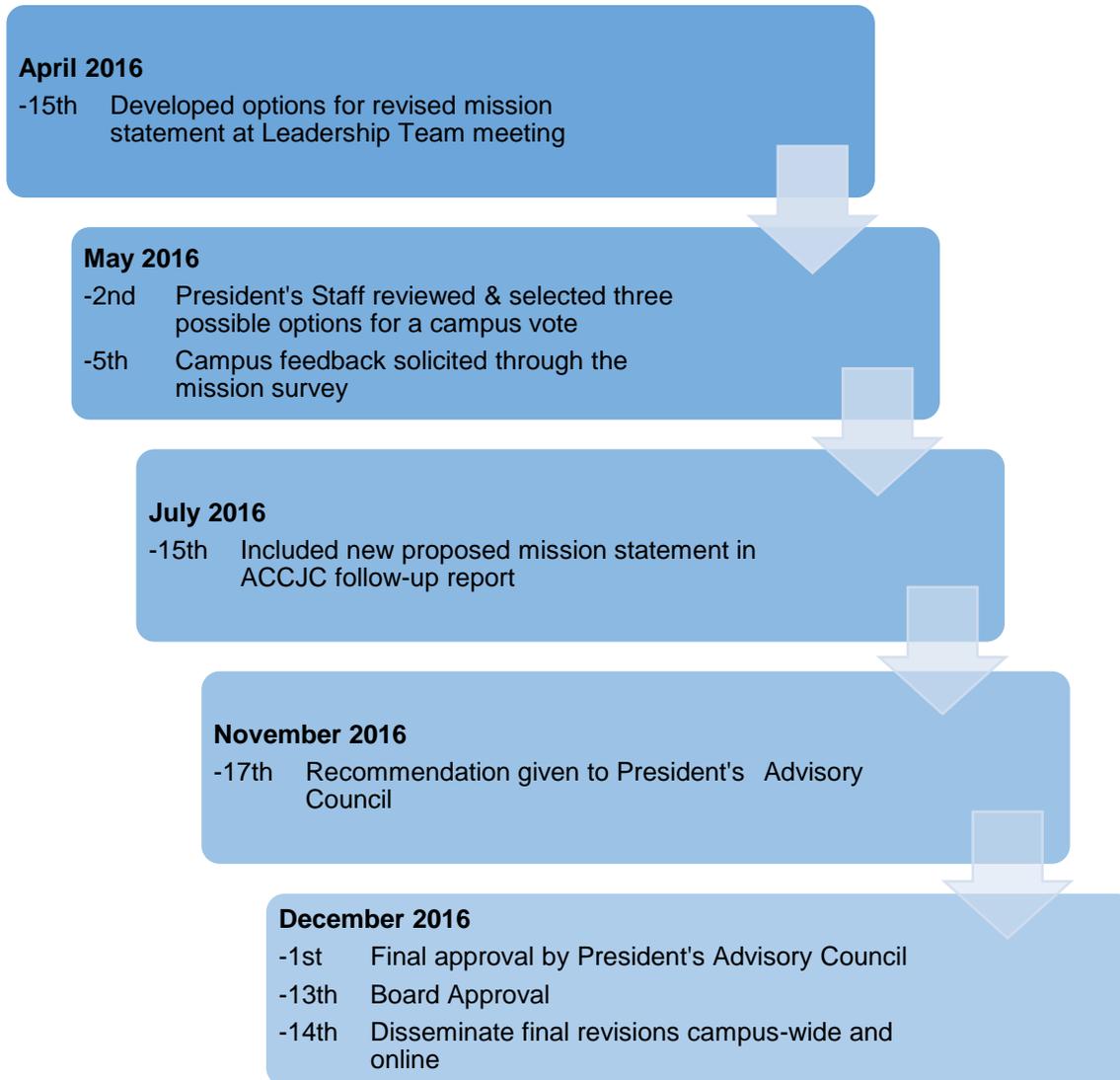


Figure 1. Steps for revising and adopting the Cypress College mission statement

**Results**

Overall, 177 Cypress College employees responded to the Mission Survey and provided feedback on the three proposed mission statements. Of these respondents, two did not select a mission statement that they preferred. Otherwise, 175 employees provided additional feedback and comments alongside choosing a mission statement that they preferred. Nearly half of all employees that responded to the survey reported having a preference for the third mission

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statement option (45.7%,  $n = 80$ ). Otherwise, employees had a fairly equal preference between options one and two (see Figure 2). Thus, through the leadership team revisions and campus feedback, the following mission statement (option 3) was chosen for adoption. The chosen mission statement is reported below, with changes from the previous mission noted in red:

*Cypress College enriches students' lives by providing premier educational opportunities including transfer to four-year institutions, associate degrees, certificates, and a baccalaureate degree. The college offers comprehensive career technical education programs, basic skills, and lifelong learning. Multiple educational-delivery methods meet the varied needs of our students. The college is dedicated to supporting the success of students, fostering diversity, enriching society, and contributing to the economic development of our community and beyond.*

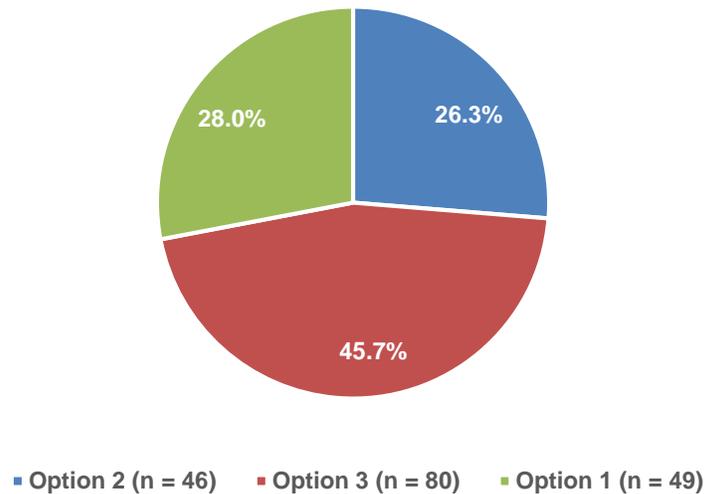


Figure 2. Cypress College employees' mission statement preferences

**Mission Statement Option #1 Feedback**

Employees provided the following comments regarding the first mission statement option:

- *I like the first statement, because in the first sentence it mentions that Cypress offers several educational pathways....I think that this is an important point to make, and that it shows off Cypresses modernity and flexibility.*
- *I feel that the first choice best exemplifies Cypress College.*
- *1) I think it needs to be reviewed by the English department for grammar.It is wordy, uses passive voice too frequently, and could better state the mission grammatically. 2) I think basic skills should be eliminated and replaced with non-credit or another synonymous phrase. The mission should encourage prospective students to enroll in classes that will prepare them for college. Basic skills has a very negative connotation. 3) Maybe we can advertise the swap meet as well. How others really see us.*
- *The first one seemed a bit long, but I really like the words. I participated in the Leadership Team project, so I realize it's not easy to be brief and still convey all that should be conveyed though.*

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- *I like the first one, but I would change the part that says "a bachelor's degree" to baccalaureate degrees (like in the second statement) to account for the possibility of future degrees.*
- *The mission statement is too long. Should be one sentence.*
- *1) I think we should say "basic skills/ESL" (per the state's wording and it's more accurate) 2) The 2nd sentence about delivery seems odd in a mission statement. Methods are not missions. Perhaps at least wording it to put the diverse needs front and center would help: Cypress College meets the diverse needs of our students by delivering course content in a variety of modes.*
- *I don't think you need "several" since you list the different pathways.*
- *Academic ESL is not actually basic skills. It is foreign language and the state recognizes it as separate from basic skills. Please consider the wording "..... as well as basic skills, English as a Second Language, and opportunities for lifelong..... "*
- *Number clearly state Cypress' mission. Great!*
- *Equally important are those pathways from the high schools and our own School of Continuing Education. If we are truly a welcoming campus, we will make clear there are multiple pathways from these two constituents. Indeed, recent research and state endeavors are currently focused on linking us with dual enrollments, hinge courses, and 'college pathways.' As our campus is 40% CTE (BUS, CTE, some FA, and HS) the emphasis MUST shift. We are CTE-strong! We've already made efforts to 'flip the classroom'...now let's 'FLIP the COLLEGE' in the direction it is has been and continues to be headed!*
- *Please include Basic Skills/ESL*

#### **Mission Statement Option #2 Feedback**

Employees provided their feedback regarding the second mission statement option:

- *Dislike the word "premier."*
- *Including various types of coursework formats caught my eye. Important for working student to know we provide online coursework.*
- *The middle choice is of better length with more concise and clear language. I did like the wording of the first option "Courses are delivered in a variety of methods to meet the diverse needs of our students."*
- *I like this one the best but I think baccalaureate degree should be singular and not plural.*
- *Diversity should be embraced (accepted), to foster (to help to grow or develop) implies that diversity is more important than other aspects of a person or population.*
- *Cypress College enriches students' lives by providing high quality education by the BEST INSTRUCTORS IN THE WORLD for transfer to four-year institutions, .....*
- *I like the second one because it specifies the various modes of delivery. I also prefer "embracing" diversity to "fostering" diversity. In the third option, I don't think "premier", meaning first in rank, chief, or leading, is the right adjective; "high quality" is better. However, I do like that 3rd option breaks up the first sentence into two sentences, with the first ending in "a baccalaureate degree".*
- *Loved # 2*

#### **Mission Statement Option #3 Feedback**

Employees provided their feedback on the third mission statement option:

- *I like the third option.*
- *I think option number three really covers everything.*
- *"fostering diversity" sound better than embracing... Clearer and more direct*
- *The reference to baccalaureate degrees in statement two is misleading in that it sounds as if we offer them in multiple disciplines.*
- *I think that the last statement was easiest to comprehend. However, the closing sentence is better in the second statement: The college is dedicated to supporting the success of students and enriching society, embracing diversity, and contributing to both the economic and social development of the surrounding community and broader society.*
- *I think this 3rd one covers everything and sounds better.*
- *Option 3 groups the educational outcomes, the academic offerings, and delivery modes in a logical manner. Of the three options, the third option uses compact language to communicate clearly (as clearly as possible within the ACCJC requirements) what we do. I specifically like the thread of "premier" from here through the vision, and into the campus positioning. This is the best option far and away.*
- *first one is too limiting. We may have more baccalaureate degrees in the future*
- *Yes, we offer only one BS now. IN 7-8 years we may offer more: then we can modify the mission statement again. This can be shorted and read better by as follows: "...basic skills, and lifelong learning via multiple educational-delivery methods." So the intended student population is those from our community and beyond.*
- *I like the ideas of including the "premier" in this description. We have been pushing that idea in the other promotional material.*
- *The third one seems the most simple. The first one was a little wordy.*
- *'Premier' does not accurately modify 'opportunities'. Word choice is odd...*
- *To paraphrase Oxford Dictionary, a mission statement should be a formal summary of the aims and values of a company, organization, institution, etc. A mission statement is more effective when it is brief and makes an inspirational impression that people can remember easily, and will want to repeat. None of these examples are able to do that.*
- *I choose option 3 with minor modifications: Cypress College enriches students' lives by providing premier educational opportunities including transfer to four-year institutions, associate degrees, certificates, and a baccalaureate degree. The college also offers comprehensive career technical education programs, basic skills, and lifelong learning, and provides multiple instructional delivery methods to meet the varied needs of our students. The college is dedicated to supporting the success of students, fostering diversity, enriching society, and contributing to the economic development of our community and beyond.*
- *The statement I selected is concise, yet covers the broad range of educational opportunities we offer our students and community members.*
- *Very long for a mission statement. I chose the third option, but I would omit the word "premier". It comes off like a braggart statement when we know not everything we do is stellar. Can we skip the basic skills and move right to lifelong learning? I think basic skills though a necessary approach, needs a verbage make over. Our mission is much needed support for lifelong learning. To provide lifelong learning, we have to promote equity, meeting students where we find them and assisting with the move forward.*
- *I like these aspects of #3: - use of "premier" rather than "high quality" in #1 - use of "fostering" Please use the CCCCO word choice of "basic skills and ESL" rather than simply 'basic skills'.*
- *I like the bottom one best. Not too fond of the adjective "premier," however.*
- *"certificates" in #3 is vague.*