



# CPEC

## Review of Proposal for a Community College Center in Chico

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### Introduction

The Commission recognizes the importance of educational centers as a cost-effective means for meeting increased student demand. Educational centers are an economical way of serving a region's educational needs because they often involve collaboration and shared facility use with high schools, university campuses, and local businesses. Educational centers can grow as needed when students require more course offerings; they begin small and expand as the region's population expands. Attending an educational center is also a cost-effective option for students who can attend classes near their homes, cutting back on their commute time and expenses.

CPEC guidelines require that an off-campus educational facility must serve at least 500 full-time-equivalent students (FTES) annually before it can become a state-approved educational center. Once a center has state-approved status, it becomes eligible to compete for state capital outlay funding. This report reviews the proposal by the Butte–Glenn Community College District to convert its facility in Chico to a fully operational state-approved educational center.

### Recommendation

Based on review of the proposal, a visit to the facility, and review of supplemental materials submitted by the Butte–Glenn Community College District, staff recommend that the Commission concur with the Board of Governors' approval on July 13, 2009 to convert the off-campus Chico facility into a state-approved educational center.

The district is unquestionably serving more than the baseline FTES needed to qualify for educational center status and is, district-wide, anticipated to increase in student participation in the next couple of decades. Staff has determined the district is responsibly and prudently addressing capacity issues through moderate and strategic growth of the Chico facility.

**At its December 15, 2009 meeting, the Commission voted to approve the conversion of the Chico facility to an educational center**

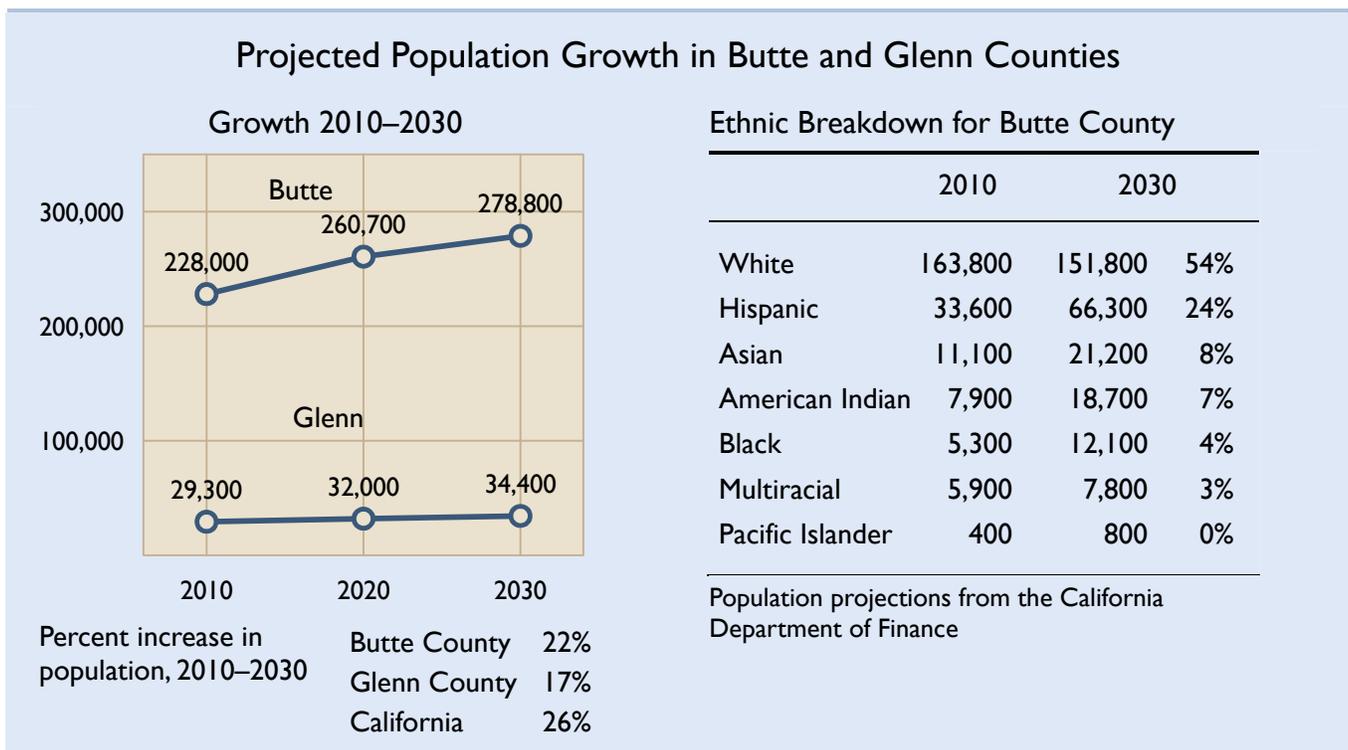
### Background

The Butte-Glenn Community College District is a single-campus district established in 1966. Classes were initially offered at a former high school facility but enrollment soon outgrew capacity and the college relocated to a 900-acre campus in Oroville. The district serves approximately 15,000 students, primarily from Chico, Oroville, Paradise, Gridley, and Biggs.

The college has an off-campus center in Orland. However, the Chico facility serves significantly more students than the Orland center and has the most comprehensive program and student service offerings. The Chico facility was built in 2004, following passage of an \$85 million bond measure, and opened for classes in January 2005.

Projections from the Department of Finance indicate steady population growth through 2030 for Butte and Glenn counties. Butte County is expected to increase in population by 22% and Glenn County is expected to increase by 17%. These growth rates are slightly lower than the state as a whole. Population projections by ethnicity for Butte County show a small decrease in the percentage of White residents and a steady increase of residents of other ethnicities.

Businesses in the area rely on graduates of the two-year degree and certificate programs offered by Butte College. Some of the primary career opportunities are in health care, automotive service, and agriculture. The district also works with CSU Chico, occasionally uses university facilities, and has about 600 students transferring to CSU Chico annually.



## General Description and Overview

The Chico facility is located on 11.4 acres off State Highway 99 at the 20th Street/Skyway exit, 25 miles from the main campus in Oroville. The site has a two-story building with a parking lot. The building has 16 classrooms, two computer labs, 13 offices to support student services, and an art lab. It has a library, media resources center, a bookstore, and a lounge and eating space. The center has the feel of a campus student union that is inviting to students and projects a collegiate environment.

The facility also serves the community with specialized space for professional development courses for local business. It has a 100-seat community room designed for use in personnel training, meetings, and community gatherings. The facility also has a room for child development demonstrations and parenting and early child development courses.

## Location of the Proposed Center



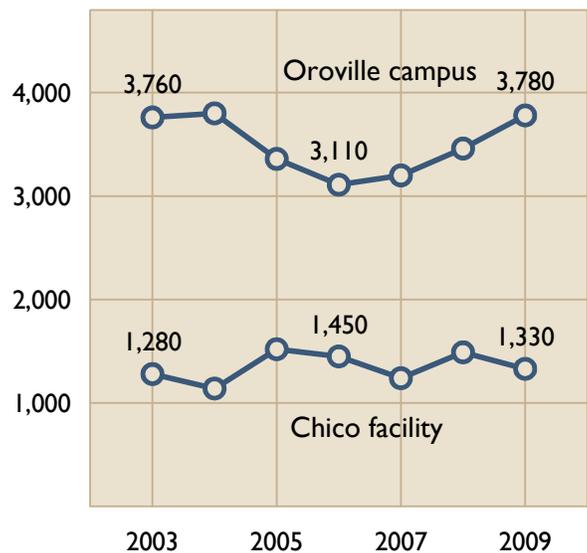
The proposed Chico Center is two miles southeast of downtown Chico, next to State Highway 99.

## Enrollment Projections

The Chico facility currently serves nearly 25% of the Butte–Glenn District’s course load, amounting to approximately 1,300 full-time-equivalent students (FTES) in fall 2009. The figure is well above the 500 FTES threshold needed to qualify for educational center status. Nearly half of Butte College students live in Chico. The graph below illustrates the shift in students from the main campus in Oroville to the Chico facility after it opened in 2005, as students living in Chico chose to attend classes closer to home. In fall 2009, enrollment at the main campus had almost returned to its 2004 level and the Chico facility had kept consistent FTES levels.

Projected enrollments at the Chico Center are shown on page 4. These are based on an average per-student course load of 6.3 units. The district foresees a steady increase in FTES, so long as they are able to schedule courses efficiently to accommodate student demand. Budget cuts have limited the college’s ability to hire the

Enrollments 2003–2009  
Full-time-equivalent students



number of new faculty that would optimally accommodate student demand. However, by making creative scheduling rearrangements, the district has been able to maximize capacity for the courses that are offered, and maintain steady FTES levels.

### Alternatives

The district recently implemented a number of cost-saving measures in order to meet increasing student demand, while weathering challenging budget times. It has stopped renting classroom space at local high schools and is using free classroom space at CSU Chico. Some recreational classes have been cut, but the district increased overall offerings by 2%, rearranged class schedule to maximize space utilization and cut costs, and accommodated a 5% increase in FTES.

*Expansion of Existing Institutions.* The district is planning on increasing its capacity by relocating the automotive technology program to a new lab at the recently acquired Chico Skyway Center near the existing Chico facility. The college is planning on moving the automotive program to Chico by January 2011. The college is investigating conversion of the old auto facility into science lecture and instructional laboratory space to accommodate pre-nursing students for its registered nursing and allied health programs. The college will also require additional science lecture and laboratory space as more students in academic programs are diverted to the community colleges from UC and CSU due to enrollment reductions.

*Increased utilization.* Increased use of space at the Chico facility is projected to marginally decrease the Capacity/Load Ratio (Capacity to Weekly Student Contact Hours) for lecture and laboratory space. However, those percentages will remain over 75%. In addition, office, library, and AV/TV space will increase, in Capacity/Load Ratio between now and 2015.

*Shared use of facilities.* The district has discontinued renting space at the local high school and switched to rent-free facilities on the CSU Chico campus. The district is using some shared facilities, however, the Chico facility is able to provide increased administrative, library, and laboratory space that cannot be provided by the local high schools and university campus.

*Non-traditional modes of instructional delivery.* The Chico facility and the main campus work closely to deliver distance education to students. The Chico facility is equipped with a media library where students can attend main campus classes live by teleconference. The library maintains a video catalog of all classes offered on cable television so that students can watch any lectures they missed. Distance learning education already accounts for 5% of the district's credited FTES. Online courses show significant growth: enrollments increased 63%, from 1,650 to 2,690, and the number of sections offered increased 37%, from 57 to 78. The Chico facility has a lab for English as a Second Language programs, basic skills classes, and foreign languages.

### Enrollment Projections for the Proposed Chico Center

	Headcount enrollment	WSCH	FTES
2009	6,333	39,900	1,330
2010	6,490	40,890	1,363
2011	6,652	41,910	1,397
2012	6,819	42,960	1,432
2013	6,990	44,040	1,468
2014	7,162	45,120	1,504
2015	7,343	46,260	1,542
2016	7,524	47,400	1,580
2017	7,714	48,600	1,620

WSCH — Weekly student contact hours  
 FTES — Full-time equivalent students

## Guidelines for the Contents of a Needs Study

### General Description and Overview

A physical description of the site, and a social and demographic analysis of the surrounding area, must be provided. Data describing the socioeconomic profile of the area or region should be included, with income levels and racial-ethnic makeup provided.

### Enrollment Projections

For a new community college or educational center, enrollment projections for the district proposing the center should exceed the planned enrollment capacity of existing district colleges and educational centers.

### Alternatives

Districts must consider alternatives other than establishing an educational center. This includes consideration given to (1) expanding existing institutions within the region, (2) increasing classroom and laboratory utilization, (3) sharing facilities with other institutions, and (4) greater use of technology and distributed learning arrangements.

### Academic Planning and Program Justification

The District must include a preliminary description of the proposed academic and certificate programs to be offered, along with a description of the proposed academic organizational structure. The description must demonstrate conformity with the Commission's program review guidelines and with state goals such as access, quality, intersegmental cooperation, and diversification of students, faculty, administration, and staff.

### Student Services and Outreach

The district is required to describe the student services available and planned at the educational center. A description of outreach services to historically underrepresented groups must be included.

### Capital Outlay and Support Budget Projections

Proposals must include five-year capital outlay projections and five-year projections of support costs, including costs for administration, academic programs, academic support, and other standard expense elements.

### Geographic and Physical Accessibility

The physical and geographic accessibility of the location and surrounding service areas must be included. There must be a plan for students, faculty, and staff transportation to the proposed location. For locations that do not plan to maintain student on-campus residences, reasonable commute time for students must be demonstrated.

### Effect on Other Institutions

The proposal must show evidence that other institutions were consulted during the planning process. Establishing a new community college center must not reduce existing or projected enrollments in nearby campuses of adjacent districts to a level that would damage their economy of operation.

### Environment and Social Impact

A copy of the final environmental impact report must be included. To expedite the review process, the Commission should be provided with all information related to the environmental report process as it becomes available to responsible agencies and the public.

### Economic Efficiency

The Commission encourages economic efficiency and gives priority to proposals for new institutions where the state is relieved of part of the financial burden. Assuming that all other criteria are satisfied, higher priority will be granted to proposals that include gifts of land, construction costs, or equipment, as opposed to proposed projects that anticipate all costs to be borne by the state.

## Academic Planning and Program Justification

Wanting to maintain the main campus feel of the Oroville campus, the district made a decision that no more than 50% of a department's course load would be taught at the Chico facility. This encourages students to take courses at both locations. District representatives feel this fosters student investment in their education by promoting a greater sense of college community.

Despite the 50% rule, a large number of classes are offered at the Chico facility. More than 300 courses were offered in Spring 2009. These include arts and music, social sciences, communication and business management, English as a Second Language, and the lower-division prerequisite courses needed to pursue math and science degrees. The district evaluated the workforce needs of the community and is considering increased focus in the areas of business computer information systems, fashion design, and computer-aided design. The [CPEC College Guide](#) offers information about Butte College's programs, students and other information. Butte College's page is at [www.cpec.ca.gov/CollegeGuide/Institution.asp?ID=C0007A](http://www.cpec.ca.gov/CollegeGuide/Institution.asp?ID=C0007A).

## Student Services and Outreach

The Chico facility offers counseling and advising, admissions and records, financial aid, disabled student services, career planning, and tutoring. There is an office for the community colleges' Extended Opportunity Programs and Services program. The district plans to add student orientation, skills assessment, and student activities. The facility also has a professional development center available for local businesses to conduct employee training.

The library has a distance learning center where students can participate in teleconference lectures taking place on the main campus. Lectures that are broadcast on television are recorded and stored in the library. The library allows access to the full catalog on the main campus and students can order a book to be delivered to the center.

## Capital Outlay and Support Projections

The Chico facility was built in 2004, following passage of an \$85 million bond measure. Its annual baseline operational cost is \$4.6 million. These costs are funded from state appropriations, local property taxes, and student fees. Instructional costs make up the bulk of operational expenses, with 12.4 salaried FTE and 58.2 hourly FTE, accounting for \$3.4 million. Academic administration costs are about \$500,000 annually. An additional estimated \$900,000 in restricted funds — financed by grant, categorical, and contract funding — supports special programs.

## Geographic and Physical Accessibility

The Chico facility is located in south Chico, on the east side of State Highway 99 near the 20th Street–Skyway off-ramps. The center is accessible by city bus, with a line stopping every half hour at the center. The district operates the largest student transportation system of all of the community colleges, serving 1,000 students a day. Buses run from Chico, Paradise, Gridley, and Briggs. Buses are equipped to provide full access to disabled students, and include 11 wheelchair-friendly stops. The building is visible from the freeway, and the entry point is easy to find. The parking lot accommodates the needs of students, faculty, and visitors.

## Effects on Other Institutions

The facility has not had, and is not expected to have, any adverse impact on other community colleges. Letters of support were submitted by Lassen Community College District, Shasta College, and Yuba College. The nearest, Yuba College, is an hour's drive away. Butte College has the highest transfer rate to CSU Chico, so it is plausible that meeting increased student demand at the Chico Center may increase transfer enrollments from Butte College to CSU Chico.

## Environmental and Social Impact

Before building the facility in 2002, the district hired an environmental compliance consultant, Quad Knopf and Associates, to conduct an environmental screening of the site. The evaluation included “environmental reviews, agency screenings, and a public review process” and satisfactorily met environmental requirements.

The district has achieved national recognition as a leader in sustainability and environmentally friendly practices. It has installed solar panels on the main campus and at the Chico facility, operates the most-used bus system in the California Community Colleges system, provided parking incentives for car pool participants, and developed a wastewater management system.

## Economic Efficiency

The district is achieving economic efficiency through using shared facilities, maximizing capacity during prime weekday hours, cutting back on energy use, and generating its own energy for future sustainability. The district is expanding capacity on an as-needed basis, and their slow-growth approach demonstrates economic efficiency.