

Focus Group with Marin Commission on Aging Members 10/10/18 at Kentfield Campus

4 members of the Marin County Commission on Aging attended. COM Mission & Values were posted on the big screen along with the following questions asked, in order of asking:

- In a quick phrase, what describes COM? What words or images occur to you when you think of this College?
- What does COM do well?
- What should COM improve?
- What new opportunities do you see that COM should engage in?

Quick Phrases:

COM is in a beautiful setting

As a local college, it's very accessible, close by

Part of CA Master Plan for Education – how do we get back to that plan? Good first step for young people to discover which way they want to go

Open to all residents—anyone who wants to attend can.

Affordable – can get 50% of undergrad classes at a low cost

Image - COM attracts and retains fabulous faculty given its location and proximity to the city. (Respondent says not sure about retention of faculty)

Subject of critical grand jury reports

Impressive nursing program

Can do math program at self-pace and be supported

Does Well

Provides first 2 years – 60 units of high quality education at low cost – allows students to find their interests

Bridge, transfer from CC to state university

Technical education provided – opportunities for people who want practical skills

Music, art, cultural events, clubs are valued, supported and encouraged

Improvements Needed

Affordable housing for employees/students who aren't Marin County residents

As people age they can't afford to live here anymore

Tough system to get into a credit class, online system is hard to navigate, three separate systems to apply, register and pay. Prevents older adults from participating, yet desire more substantive classes and different subject matter than some of the continuing ed classes. System for older educated adults to have easier access to credit classes (but do agree degree seekers should get preference). The draw would be high and would produce more revenue.

How does COM continuing ed classes align with OLLIE program at Dominican? Offer same or different types of classes?

Opportunities for COM

Class about the Civil Grand Jury System in California and how to volunteer for Marin County's Grand Jury. Potential civics class for COM.

Volunteer fair for seniors where seniors are made aware of the various opportunities to volunteer in Marin County.

Classes for people age 55+ that would help them find a job and use their lifetime of skills.

Sociology class on ageism. Age is social justice issue. The FrameWorks Institute (DC) does lots of good work on social justice issues, ageism, elder abuse and has local trainers in Marin.

Technology related classes – hands on related to topics like social media, avoiding online scams, opportunity to partner with COM CIS students? Internships or credit for them? Volunteer work looks good on college application. Maybe share knowledge and activities that are internal to the college (e.g., IT info about security and scams that users are subject to).

Nursing program – continuum of care, do nursing students work with the older population in the community?

COM housing solution– students who live with older adults in exchange for assistance (e.g., laundry, go to store or other errands, change lightbulbs, 2 hours of heavy cleaning, and company).

Discussion

Interested in having a volunteer opportunity event where organizations exhibit ways for seniors to volunteer and become involved. Also invite orgs that provide services for seniors. Helps combat senior isolation.

Interested in intergenerational activities between old and young. Cited as an example – intergenerational storytelling event at Martin Luther King/Bayside Academy that centered on food.

Also discussed the need for a better system for older adults to register for credit classes. Interested in more in-depth classes for educated older adults, so streamlining the registration or audit process is important.