

Marketing Program Review

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A. Program Information

Program Mission Statement

1. Please enter your mission statement here.

The Foothill College Marketing and Public Relations Department supports Foothill College students by connecting them with the information they need to achieve their educational and life goals, and we build strong relationships with the communities we serve to grow the college's enrollment and reputation, locally and nationally.

Program Level Service Area Outcomes

2. Please list the program-level service area outcomes.

1. Student Retention and Success: To support student success by connecting students with information and resources that will help them achieve their educational goals at Foothill College.
2. Recruitment and Enrollment: To increase the number of students who enroll at Foothill college
3. Brand Development and Management: Communicating the college's mission and values utilizing a consistent messaging strategy.
4. Community Engagement and Public Relations: Connecting Foothill College to the communities we serve to nurture relationships with local businesses and organizations and curate public opinion via press releases, events, and collaborations
5. Content Creation and Digital Presence Management: Website, social media, and other digital platforms are regularly updated and present engaging content

B. College Website

The data table below shows the metrics used to measure the performance of the college website.

	2020-21	2021-22	2023-24
Number of unique visitors	N/A	749,601	808,080
Number of clickthroughs	N/A	871,171	833,523
speed and performance	N/A	N/A	LCP (image loading) = 3.3s

3. What are your program's goals in respect to college website performance?

The college website is the most important interface between the college and prospective students and the communities we serve. The increase in unique visitors from 21/22 to 23/24 reflects the upsurge in enrollment and increased community interest in our college. The Foothill Marketing team is in the final six months of a two-year website redesign project; the specific goals of this redesign are to i. improve accessibility (WCAG 2.2 compliance), ii. improve ease of navigation (reduce 'clicks' required to find information), iii. better organize information for ease of use, iv. feature the diversity of our students and staff with more graphics/video content, v. grow enrollment. Our LCP/CLS/INP (loading) metrics are acceptable, but need to improve; our website is hosted on an older server with security patches which explains the slower loading time for images and pages. The new website (live by July 2025) will be on a new server.

4. What do you observe in the data above in relation to your goals? What do you want the college to understand about the college website performance?

The college website is, for many students, their first Foothill experience. The current website is now eight years old and its interface and navigation is showing its age. It is also a text-rich site which can make it difficult for students to access information. Finally, the website was not designed to drive (increase, encourage, facilitate) enrollment. The number of unique visitors increasing and the click-throughs decreasing is a clear sign that the website is no longer user-friendly. The new website (currently being built - to go live in July 2025) will be faster, easier to navigate, and fully accessible.

It is important to note, that we can have the best designed and fastest website on the planet, but the content has to be accurate and constantly updated. While the Marketing team facilitates this, each department editor is responsible for maintaining the currency of their pages. It is a collective responsibility.

5. What actions does your program plan to take in order to achieve your goals?

1. Website Audit and Google analytics data analysis (complete)
2. Students, faculty, and staff website focus groups (complete)
3. Proposal for new design - based on focus groups and data analysis (complete)
4. Webpage templates developed (in progress)
5. Meet with departments/scrape their webpages/review tasks/edit current page content for accuracy (in progress)
6. Finalize program and department templates (in progress)
7. Navigation (URL) architecture (decided and implementation in progress)
8. Content Migration to DEV site (January/February 2025)
9. March - April 2025 Content cleanup, update images, graphics, add new video content
10. April-June Testing, UX analysis, and final editing based on feedback. This will include assessing the performance of the new site in terms of loading speed, navigation, etc. Our expectation is that we'll see an LCP (image/video loading) drop below 2.5 seconds (from 4 seconds currently), INP (input delay - response time to user instructions) improve from less than 500ms to below 200ms.
11. July 1 2025 - Go live with new website

6. What does your program need to execute this action plan?

The content-editor-writer position is working out of class as a web technician to direct the migration and content editing. The Web Administrator is overseeing all analytics and navigation decisions, and the department has hired a 50% TEA to support this work. As we move into February and March, we will engage student workers to assist with images and content migration work.

The website design and migration were paid for using Enrollment and Retention funds. Please see below for a more nuanced budget and staffing assessment, but the Marketing team is small with a massive workload which is increasing year-on-year.

C. Communication and Messaging

The data table below shows the rate of students opening messages.

	2020-21	2021-22	2023-24
Constant Contact Messaging open rate	N/A	60%	67%
Text Message Open Rates	N/A	N/A	N/A

The data table below shows the rate of students by ethnicity opening messages sent through constant contact.

	2023-24
Asian	72.3
Black	66.1
Filipinx	73.37
Latinx	68.87
Native American	61.43
Pacific Islander	63.75
Unknown Ethnicity	64.27
White	65.0
Total	67.311

The data table below shows the number of students engaging with Foothill social media.

	2020-21	2021-22	2023-24
Social Media	N/A	N/A	IG: 5,404 followers FB: 17,096 followers

7. What are your program's goals in communication and messaging?

One of the Marketing team's primary responsibilities is to support student success by connecting them with information and resources that will help them achieve their educational goals at Foothill College. The primary method for passive communication is the website. Direct communication is via both the Banner Content Messaging system (BCM) from 2022-2023 and Constant Contact 2023-2024. BCM does not allow us to assess open rates, thus the move to Constant Contact.

Our goal for 23/24 was to i. increase the open rate for all student communication ii. track the open rates by race and identify disparities iii. assess communication strategies and adjust/update as necessary iv. maintain a robust social media presence that promotes the college and communicates our values.

8. What do you observe in the data above in relation to your goals? What do you want the college to understand about communication and messaging to students?

From 2023 to 2024, the Marketing team focused on the language used in all student communication. The emphasis is on supportive language and making it easier for students to access information and services. From November 2023 to May 2024, in support of our annual 13-55 SVE goals, we disaggregated our messaging by race. The data shows that opening rates for Black and Latiné students was higher than the average 2022 opening rate and that Latiné students read Foothill communications at a higher rate than white students. Black students also read Foothill communication at a higher rate, although still one point below the average.

Student Emails - The opening rate for all student communication in 2023/24 was 69% - industry average is 40%. This is significantly higher than 60% in 2021/22.

Our social media presence has been affected by staffing (see below). Still, we have 5,404 followers on Instagram and 17,096 on Facebook.

9. What actions does your program plan to take in order to achieve your goals?

In 2024-25 we are continuing to monitor opening rates for all student communications via Constant Contact. The goal is to achieve an open rate of 70% for all student populations. We will retain the same supportive, positive approach used in 23/24 and feature more graphics with clickable links.

A thorough analysis of our social media presence is noteworthy: 93% of Foothill College students are Gen Z/Millennials/GenX and they primarily gravitate to IG, FB, X/BlueSky, and TikTok. We have 17.1K Facebook (FB) followers (compare to 7.1K for West Valley, 7.4K for Mission, 9.7K for San Jose City, and 17K for De Anza). We have 5,404 Instagram (IG) followers (compare to 4,110 for West Valley, 3,430 for San Jose City, and 7,409 for De Anza). Our goal is to increase IG followers by 10% by incorporating more video and human interest content (top rated posts). We plan to drop X and adopt BlueSky.

10. What does your program need to execute this action plan?

Starting in January 2025, the Marketing team will once again be complete (no Web Admin from March - September 2025 and no Supervisor from June to December 2025). The Web Admin will be focusing on improved website performance (via a new website hosted on a new server) and the Supervisor will take over social media duties and all student communications (including texting). We are currently drafting a comprehensive communication plan and this document (to be completed in the winter quarter and shared with the college community via MIPC) will guide Foothill College's communication and marketing efforts for the next three years. Focus Group data (both qualitative and quantitative) will inform our 25/26 strategic marketing plan. This will be implemented in spring/summer of 2025. The goal is to support student retention and recruit more students to Foothill College.

D. Service Area Addendum

1. What are the service area outcomes & strategic objectives for the coming year?

- 1. Student Retention and Success: To support student success by connecting students with information and resources that will help them achieve their educational goals at Foothill College.** The Marketing AVP is working with the Strategic Enrollment team to coordinate college wide messaging.
- 2. Recruitment and Enrollment: To increase the number of students who enroll at Foothill college:**
- 3. Brand Development and Management:** Communicating the college's mission and values utilizing a consistent messaging strategy. The marketing Communication plan will guide all work the unit does and provide a template for all college communications
- 4. Community Engagement and Public Relations:** Connecting Foothill College to the communities we serve to nurture relationships with local businesses and organizations and curate public opinion via press releases, events, and collaborations. Increase connection with the community via alumni networks, Chambers of Commerce, and Rotaries, increased the cadence of press releases and positive news stories
- 5. Content Creation and Digital Presence Management:** Website, social media, and other digital platforms are regularly updated and present engaging content. Grow followers on all SM platforms by 10% in 2025. Increase engagement and reach more potential students

2. What is your implementation plan for the above-mentioned objectives?

Student Retention and Success: The Strategic Enrollment Management (SEM) team will present a unified communication strategy (internal) by the end of the 24/25 academic year. The AVP of Marketing and the Marketing team will be primarily responsible for coordinating the SEM plan. We will agree on metrics for success (i.e. increase in retention rates and persistence rates from year to year).

Recruitment and Enrollment: Focus Group data will drive the development of a 20-25/26 strategic marketing plan to be implemented in spring 2025. The focus will be on responding to what students need and are looking for in a college. The marketing strategy is based on solving the students' problems. This approach parallels the "Way of the Owl" campaign for faculty and staff responsiveness to student needs. The 2025-26 Marketing campaign metric will be to improve recruitment from our service area by 5%.

Brand Development and Management: The college-wide Communication Plan will be completed in the winter 2025 quarter. It will be reviewed and approved by MIPC and will then serve as THE go-to document for all communication and marketing activities. The Communication plan will be reviewed and updated in the spring of 2027.

Community Engagement and Public Relations: Continue advocacy with local business and charitable organizations and coordinate with the District Director of Public Relations to advocate for political support and increased funding. Foothill College will increase annual representation to three local community summer fairs (Los Altos and Palo Alto, Mountain View).

Content Creation and Digital Presence Management: Foothill College will add BlueSky as a new platform in 2025. If Tik Tok is not banned, we will endeavor to post one engaging video each week. Foothill will expand its already positive SM presence by increasing followers on FB and IG by 10%.

3. What barriers has the program faced in implementing improvements?

The Marketing team consists of four FT staff. A supervisor, senior graphic designer, web administrator, and a writer/editor. This is a small team to manage the increasing college-wide demands for more promotional collateral, website updates, communications, and program promotion. For comparison, De Anza has eight FTE covering their communication and marketing needs. To compound our recent challenges, the web administrator position has been unstable (three people in that position since 2020) and was vacant from April to September 2024. A dear colleague, our marketing supervisor, tragically passed in May of 2024. The team managed to fulfill all its 2024 commitments in spite of losing two colleagues, but this put a severe strain on everyone. We were joined by a FT web administrator in October of 2024 and she is doing a great job and our new supervisor will start on January 2. We are optimistic as we look to the future. We are advocating for a new position (Communications Associate) to focus on media content creation (video), social media, story creation, and to support the supervisor by managing vendors.

In addition to staffing issues, the annual marketing and communications budget has not been increased since 2018, despite the fact that all costs (advertising, messaging, vendors, promotional materials, TEAs, etc.) have increased 20-30%. If the college wishes to maintain its positive profile, branding identity, extensive marketing services, and grow enrollment, it should review the marketing and outreach budgets and consider increasing these investments.

In conclusion, the increased pace of on-campus events, the number of community commitments, and the new programs and initiatives, while indicative of a dynamic and growing institution, all require Marketing support and the existing team is stretched to the limit. We provide great service to the college, but the current model is not sustainable.

E. Summary

Use this opportunity to reflect on your discussions above and include any closing thoughts.

The Foothill College Marketing and Communications team are doing good work. In spite of staffing challenges and a tragic loss, we continue to provide necessary services and support to every single program and office on campus. In addition, we will go live with a new website in July, will publish the college's (first?) communication plan to guide the college for years to come, and develop an annual strategic marketing protocol (based on student feedback). The website, communication and marketing plans, and social media activity are all data driven. We have clear metrics for success and can assess our efforts in real time.

Foothill College's brand is well established in the community and this is evidenced by the increased enrollment from our service area over the last three years. This is despite the fact that high-school graduation rates are dropping and the overall enrollment outlook is not positive for our traditional 18-23 demographic. The college is pivoting to focus more on dual enrollment, adult education, and career training. This is the right thing to do, but it also requires innovative staffing solutions and, as always, marketing support to establish these new programs and promote them. The Marketing team also supports retention from quarter to quarter and is an integral player in the college's overarching 13-55 Equity work.

The volume of work has increased dramatically since 2020. In 2024, the graphic designer oversaw 239 separate project work orders (everything from the Commencement program to promotional materials); this only records the actual submitted work orders and the total number of requests, including web-related work, averages about eight requests each week. This cadence of requests continues to increase and we anticipate a 10% increase in work requests in 2025 based on the increase from 2023 to 2024.

There is a real possibility that the District 'somos uno' initiative will bring the De Anza and Foothill Marketing teams into alignment and this is positive if it means we can access their digital media production team. Having said that, this process will take time and we hope the college will support the Marketing team in the meantime with an increase in B-Budget to offset inflation.

As an end note, the texting data was not included as the Marketing team did not control texting communications this last year. Admissions and Records oversaw the regular text communications (enrollment, financial aid, last day to drop, etc.). With a full team on board in 2025, Marketing will partner with A&R on the texting campaign and will include all metrics in the 2025 program review.

F. Rubric

Click on the link below to view the Marketing Rubric.

https://foothilldeanza-my.sharepoint.com/:w:/g/personal/20078222_fhda_edu/Ebyjp529dT1Dn6lVIZMy9CoBOiAuw4Fe0E18vA25Y9h-Sg?e=EUofmJ