De Anza College is an institution dedicated at its core to diversity and to a multicultural learning environment.

After extensive discussion about what a De Anza graduate needs to be successful, the college in spring 2010 updated its mission statement (see page 1) as part of its Educational Master Plan 2010-2015. The statement retains the essence of the college’s previous mission statement and incorporates new language that uniquely defines De Anza. The updated mission statement, with the inclusion of its Institutional Core Competencies (ICCs) adopted in 2009 (see page 4), clearly articulates student learning goals and outcomes and the importance of civic engagement to democracy. It emphasizes success for every student in multiple areas of intellectual, personal and social development and competence. The mission statement also distills the results of strategic planning begun in 2005: commitments to Outreach, Student Success and Retention, Cultural Competence and Community Collaborations.

De Anza College offers 67 degrees, 97 certificates and more than 1,700 courses.

History

De Anza was established in Cupertino on Sept. 11, 1967, as the Foothill Junior College District worked to meet local community demand for a second campus. Planning for De Anza began soon after the district’s first campus, Foothill College, launched in temporary quarters in 1958 and filled to capacity after moving in 1961 to its permanent location in Los Altos Hills. Just four years after approving a $10.4 million bond measure for Foothill, community members readily voted in favor of a second bond measure, in the amount of $14 million, to build De Anza College.

De Anza was constructed on 112 acres of what was once a turn-of-the-century wine-producing estate that the district purchased for $1.1 million. Guiding principles for the new college called for creating an ‘open door’ institution to serve students with a wide variety of abilities, aptitudes and interests; an atmosphere of “friendly informalities between faculty members and students”; and a campus that conveyed a sense of “quiet dignity” and “higher learning.”

From 3,000 students in its first year, De Anza College in 2012 serves more than 21,000 students over that number. Students, faculty and staff reflect the highly diverse ethnicities, cultures and backgrounds that comprise contemporary Silicon Valley.

From its earliest days, De Anza has embodied a set of fundamental values that remain embedded in its culture. A deep concern for equity and social justice took root during the college’s formative years, influenced by the sweeping social and political changes of the 1960s and 1970s. In intentionally cultivating a new educational community, the founders of what became the Foothill-De Anza Community College District placed a premium on excellence and innovation, and searched out faculty with a passion for teaching.

These foundational values continue to shape De Anza’s institutional character today. They are evident in De Anza’s deep commitment to providing a learning environment that is inclusive and welcoming to all students, and the college’s concerted effort over the past decade to achieve educational equity across racial and ethnic groups.

Student Success

De Anza College has long focused on access and success for all its students. From its founding, the college has recognized the importance of establishing programs and organizations that direct support and attention to historically underserved students.

In 2012, all De Anza students can find support through the Student Success Center. The SSC provides an entry point from which students can connect to a supportive community of instructors, counselors, advisers, tutors, peer mentors and study groups across the disciplines, or be directed to study skills classes or workshops on critical thinking and time management. Learning Communities integrate instruction and support services for students.

These support systems are among the reasons De Anza has one of the highest university transfer rates among community colleges in California. A 2008 case study by the California Community Colleges Research and Planning (RP) Group concluded that De Anza’s high transfer rate is attributable to its strategic approach to institutional development; its encouragement and support of academic excellence and achievement; its tradition of innovation; and its experimentation with ways to integrate student services with instruction. The college recently was ranked second in the state in transfer to four-year institutions, according to the State Chancellor’s Office Velocity Data Mart.

De Anza’s commitment to historically underserved students also is seen in its long history of programs for students with disabilities, which date to 1973. In 2010-11, the college served 1,704 students with disabilities. For the past two decades, the High Tech Center Training Unit based at De Anza College has helped faculty and staff at the state’s 112 community colleges acquire skills to better serve the approximately 100,000 community college students in California with disabilities.

Sustainability, Learning Facilities and Bond Measures

Just as the civil rights movement shaped De Anza in its early days, the environmental movement has galvanized a wide range of activities on the campus among students, faculty and staff. De Anza’s commitment to sustainability as a core value is evident in daily improvements ranging from 100 percent biodegradable containers and utensils in the cafeteria to drought-tolerant landscaping and weather-responsive irrigation on the grounds.

Through the work of its College Environmental Advisory Group (CEAG), De Anza in 2007 became the first community college in the nation to develop its own Sustainability Management Plan to guide continual improvement. The college’s Environmental Studies Department, housed in the Kirsch Center for Environmental Studies, has provided inspiration for the campus as the first “green” demonstration
Community and Civic Engagement

Community and civic engagement is a focus of the college. The Institute of Community and Civic Engagement (ICCE) was launched in 2006 to work with students on civic and leadership skills and provide them with opportunities to be agents of social, economic and political change in their communities.

ICCE offers a range of opportunities for students, including a certificate in Leadership and Social Change. ICCE facilitates service learning for more than 2,000 students annually and maintains active relationships with more than 25 community partners that work with students in their service learning placements. Classes that include at least 12 hours of mandatory service are designated with an "S" and totaled on student transcripts. ICCE also sponsors an annual "Youth Voices United For Change" conference at which De Anza hosts hundreds of historically underrepresented high school students in learning about college and becoming active in the community. ICCE has worked with a local food bank and the Office of College Life to develop the De Anza College Cupboard, a student food bank. ICCE is working to promote a national initiative, The Democracy Commitment, to engage community college students in civic learning and democratic practice.

De Anza students also have extensive opportunities to become engaged through the active leadership of the De Anza Associated Student Body (DASB), which in addition to on-campus and community activities mobilizes in statewide advocacy efforts for public higher education.

Equity, Social Justice and Multicultural Education

De Anza College defines student equity not as providing each student with the same support, but rather connecting with students, in their unique range of circumstances, and supporting them in their individual journeys to academic success.

To achieve this goal, the Office of Equity, Social Justice and Multicultural Education (Equity Office) partners with college leadership, faculty, classified professionals and the Equity Action Council to provide ongoing resources, measurements and focused attention on enhancing student success. De Anza College is committed to increasing transfer rates, the awarding of degrees and certificates, improving access, course completion, course retention and persistence, and equalizing student success rates by gender, race, ethnicity and disability. The college works to address achievement and opportunity gaps by providing developmental opportunities and educational forums across the campus, and through the Equity Office, enhancing the ability of faculty, classified professionals and administrators to provide culturally responsive support and guidance for students and each other, with the goal of creating a fully inclusive community.

Using the philosophy and approach of social justice and multicultural education, student equity is achieved through rigorous ongoing accountable processes that will work toward ensuring equality of outcomes in all measurements of student access and achievement.

More information on the Equity Office is available on page 10.