

IMPERIAL VALLEY COLLEGE ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN 2008

Introduction

Imperial County is a rural agricultural area with a predominantly Hispanic population. A unique characteristic of the area is being the only border region along the Mexico/USA border with a small rural community (170,000 people) bordered by a large (over one million people) metropolitan city on the Mexican side. The dynamics of this relationship create both opportunities and threats for the residents of Imperial Valley as well as Imperial Valley College. Additionally, the globalization of economic and competitive forces across all levels mandates paradigm shifts for economic and human development organizations to re-strategize its positions and delivery systems to adequately prepare our population in very competitive environments across local, regional, national and international arenas. The basic premise in the delivery of these services is the understanding of these dynamics as well as having a system that incorporates and develops the skill sets that promote global competitiveness.

It is equally important to have a thorough and complete understanding of the local conditions and forces that become the starting points for our students' development, education, and success. This environmental scan provides an initial study of the current local trends as a means of strengthening the strategic planning of the institution. This report will evaluate the existing economic, demographic, and educational environments as will a self-analysis through a SWOT (Strength, Weakness, Opportunities, and Threats) study.

Environment

Imperial County has been undergoing a transformation from an agricultural dominated base to a more diversified economic structure that takes advantage of basic infrastructure advantages (i.e. labor, water, land) available throughout the region. For the first time in modern history, farm related occupations are not the primary labor force in Imperial Valley (refer to local employment data). This labor and economic reality forces a paradigm shift for local political, business, and educational stakeholders to abandon prevailing parochialism in favor of regional efforts and collaborations. This new philosophy creates opportunities for Imperial Valley College through the re-evaluation of its core and ancillary services to react to local and regional needs. The support of these stakeholders paves the way for a more solid financial and public infrastructure to address local needs.

There are three primary resources used by this report.

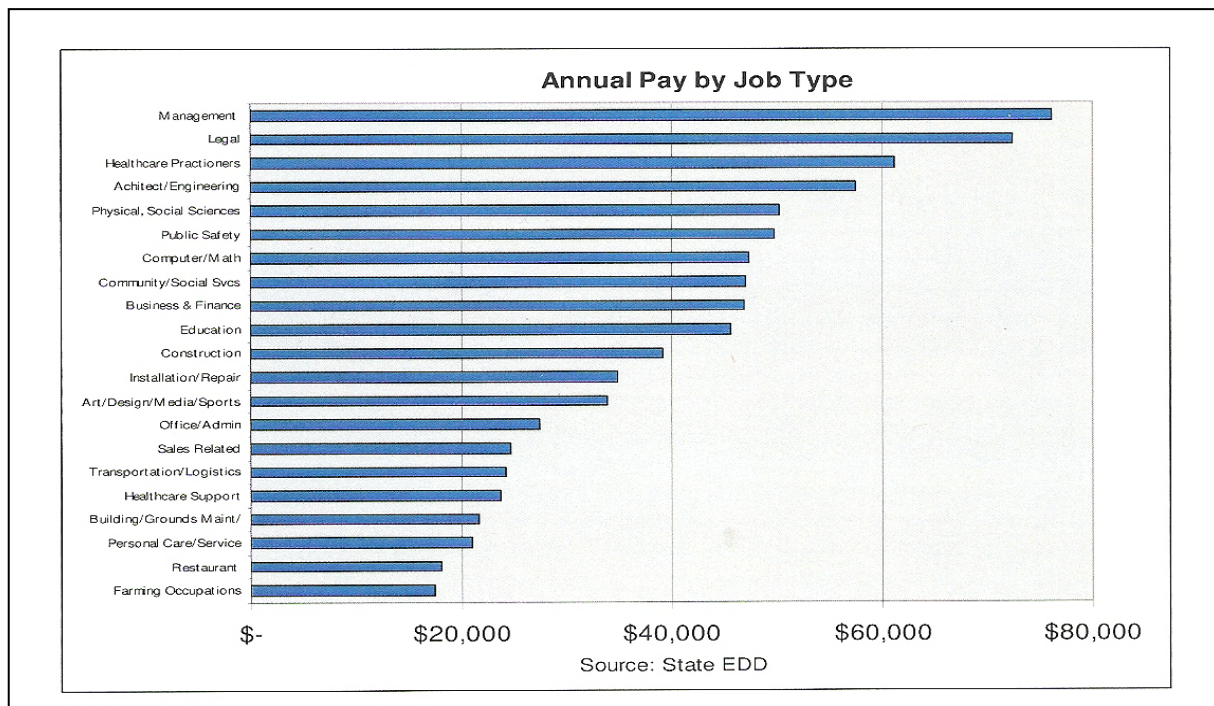
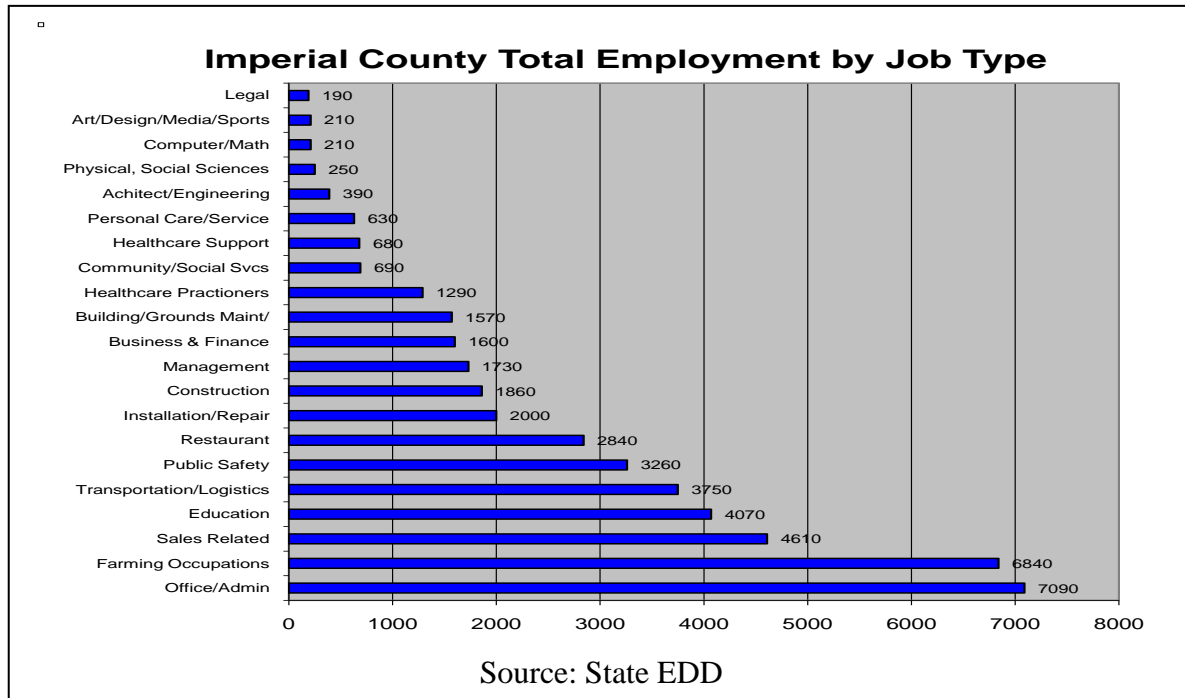
1. Local and State labor market information from the Employment Development Department.
2. The 2007 Economic Development Strategic Plan completed by the Imperial County Economic Development Corporation.
3. The 2007 Imperial Valley College Environmental Scan by Claritas, Inc.

Although agriculture remains a dominant economic force, the 2007 Economic Development Strategic Plan, identified the region's growth industries, retail opportunities, and quality of life initiatives that will make our region prosper with a more diverse economy. Although Imperial

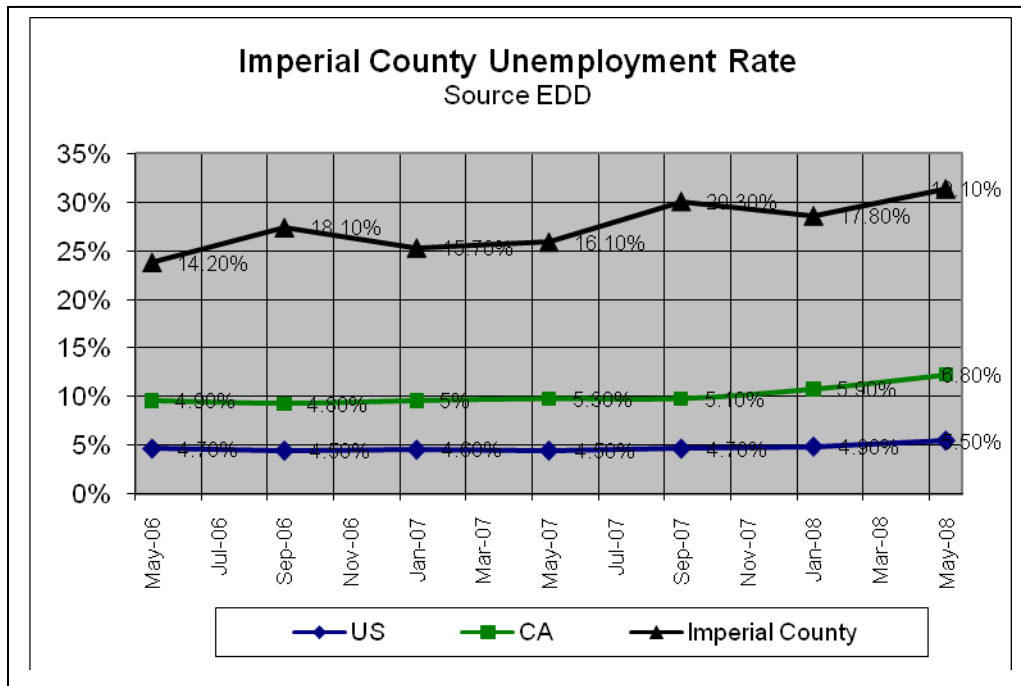
County still ranks low state wide among key economic indicators such as income levels, employment opportunities, and educational attainment, the County’s strategic study describes our local economy as being in “renaissance” given the economic growth of our region. It appears that the educational, governmental, and private economic forces are paving the way towards regional collaborations for the betterment of our region.

Economy

Imperial County remains an agricultural region dominated by almost one-third of all jobs in agriculture. However, these positions are also categorized as among the lowest paid in the County.



Imperial County has also seen a significant growth in retail opportunities driven by an expansion in national and local stores opening within three shopping malls. These jobs, however, are also characterized by low wages, limited benefits, and part-time hours. These local economic realities combined with the state of Federal and State budget shortfalls are responsible for a steady climb in our unemployment rate which is almost three times the state and national average.



Growth Industries

The California Employment Development Department (EDD) designates the following occupations as the fastest job growth occupations in the area:

Occupation	Job Growth
• Carpenter	55.6%
• Pharmacist	45%
• Cement Masons & Concrete Finishers	44.4%
• Heating/Air Conditioning & Refrigerant Workers	40%
• Detective and Criminal Investigations	37%

Given the nature and timing of the EDD data, we estimate that the optimistic projection for construction related positions is driven by housing construction trends that were prevalent in 2004 in Imperial County and across the state. As we know, the construction of new housing units has decreased significantly and this trend will impact the EDD projection. The housing market is not expected to improve soon due to an inordinate amount of foreclosures that increases the availability of housing supply as well as driving home prices down.

Another study by the Imperial County Economic Development Corporation evaluated new industry opportunities not yet present in our county but feasible given the availability of basic infrastructure and unique labor opportunities. The study also looked at the quality of life initiatives that are necessary to attract new industries and workers.

Growth Opportunities

1. Food Processing

The report identifies that the region must seize the opportunity to bring additional food processing to Imperial County. The availability of said products combined with available labor, abundance of water and electricity and access to major consumption markets provides an ideal opportunity for the region.

2. Energy Generation

Overall growth in California and throughout the Southwest United States is creating additional demand for energy. Further, there is increased consumer and regulatory awareness of the need for “greener” energy. Imperial County has an opportunity to expand geothermal generation as well as become the center for solar power creation. To this point, permitting is in process by Sterling Energy System, Inc. to create the largest solar energy plant in the world. Construction is expected to begin in 2009 and will generate about 700 construction jobs and 150 permanent positions.

3. Distribution/Warehousing/Transportation

Imperial County has seen limited economic development benefits as a result of the growth of the Maquiladora industry and NAFTA. Our Mexican neighbors to the South (Mexicali) has positioned itself as a global competitor with multi-national corporations present and plans for a 10,000 acre industrial development project known as the “Silicon Border” project.

Imperial County should look to become more than just a “pass through” of NAFTA related projects and look to develop distribution hubs and more direct NAFTA benefits. The Imperial County is attempting to position itself to take advantage of these opportunities through three major projects:

1. The designation of a new Empowerment Zone in Imperial County.
2. The implementation of the International Trade Zone in Calexico.
3. The complete funding of the Hwy 111 corridor that will improve the transportation infrastructure for the region.

4. Inbound Call Centers

The digital and technology revolution has increased the importance of customer support centers. The availability of land and labor positions Imperial County for prime development in this industry.

5. Specialized Manufacturing/Assembly

One segment of growth for Imperial County will be specialized manufacturing and assembly. The types of companies that will prosper will be either ones that are homegrown or are very small companies (usually with less than 25 employees) that relocate to the region.

6. Tourism

Tourism in Imperial County appears to be an economic resource that is not well known locally and under utilized. Potential tourism industry for Imperial County is that of Indian Gaming. Imperial County is home to two Indian casinos, although neither one is close to the major population centers in Imperial Valley. Paradise Casino, located on the eastern border of the County (50 miles away) is undergoing a major expansion to include a large casino, hotel accommodations, and entertainment venues. Red Earth Casino is located on the north edge of the county also about 50 miles away from the County's population centers. Although, these casinos provide some jobs to locals, the primary labor force for these casinos comes from neighboring counties.

Plans are underway for a new gaming casino in Calexico and will be in close proximity to the city of Mexicali with a population of well over a million people. This casino is expected to be the largest gaming casino in California with 4,000 jobs to be created.

7. Applied Biotechnology

Imperial County should explore alignment with the San Diego Region to host some applied biotechnology industries. The ability for these companies to utilize inexpensive land to create the facilities and the availability of both water and energy provide a competitive advantage. To this end, Imperial County is working with San Diego through a "Mega-Regional Grant" to create action and marketing plans for regional business attraction.

Quality of Life

Along with new industries and economic growth, quality of life is an important criteria that is included in the relocation/expansion decisions. Quality of life is defined as the aspects of life where people can "live, work, and play." Within the IVEDC plan, the most notable aspects of quality of life that are important for economic growth include:

1. Bi-National Culture, meaning the influence of two different country's culture that exists in a geographic location within a short distance to a major city in another country. Further, the freedom that many (from both sides of the border) have to spend time in each country adds to the flavor of the super-region. Local government is discussing the economic impact of the excessive wait times to cross into the United States and measures for mitigation. Both of the existing ports of entry have planned expansion plans and a new port of entry is planned in connection with the Silicon Border project.
2. Small Town Atmosphere, the concept of knowing ones neighbors and working within a community that has a reputation for taking care of itself.

3. Blue-Collar Work Ethic, which is stated as common in mid-western cities across the United States, Imperial County's agriculture based economy, lends itself to strong work ethics and values.

Most specifically, the items that are needed to enhance the quality of life in Imperial County include:

1. Executive or Move-Up Housing
2. Performing Arts Center/Theatre
3. Increased Medical Facilities and Specialists
4. Entertainment
5. Formal/Fine Dining Restaurants
6. Local and Regional Park(s)
7. Golf Courses
8. Facilities and Activities for Active Adults

Imperial County is also poised to prosper from a major industrial project in Mexicali known as the "Silicon Border." This project includes the industrial development of 10,000 acres in Mexicali and will become among the largest high-tech manufacturing areas in the world and will create over 100,000 jobs. The residual impact for Imperial County from this project will be in housing, retail, trucking, logistics, manufacturing, and transportation.

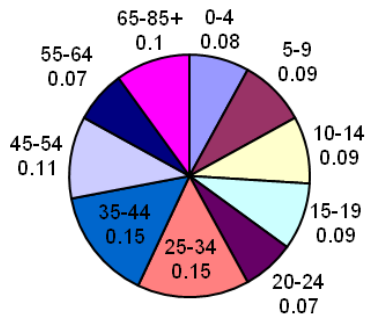
Population

Imperial County has seen a population growth of 10.3% from 2000-07. The largest population centers remain El Centro, Calexico, and Brawley. Growth projection for 2012 is 6.92% which will make the County surpass 175,000 residents by 2012.

Population Growth - 2000-2007 and 2007-2012					
City	2000 Population	% Pop Growth 2000-2007	2007 Population	% Pop Growth 2007-2012	2012 Population
Calexico City	27759	44.68	40,163	22.18	49,071
Imperial City	10113	34.08	13,560	18.98	16,134
Westmorland City	2444	14.89	2,808	10.51	3,103
Calipatria City	9316	10.11	10,258	6.34	10,908
El Centro City	45327	8.85	49,339	8.02	53,295
Heber CDP	3571	7.98	3,856	7.05	4,128
Brawley City	23241	5.25	24,462	6.15	25,966
Holtville City	8005	-0.66	7,952	2.34	8,138
Niland	1067	-2.62	1,039	-8.57	950
Ocotillo CDP	441	-5.44	417	1.68	424
Winterhaven	4203	-11.09	3,737	-2.97	3,626
Totals	135,487	106	157,591	72	175,743
Average		9.64		6.52	

Imperial
County

Imperial County Population by Age



Source: U. S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2005

Population by land area

The population for Imperial County is concentrated within three major population centers in El Centro, Calexico, and Brawley. The student population for Imperial Valley College closely resembles the distribution for Imperial County.

Population by Land Area **Base Comparative Data**

City	Population	Households	Student Headcount
Brawley City	24,462	7,425	1,138
Calexico City	40,163	10,207	2,631
Calipatria City	10,258	1,882	164
El Centro City	49,339	14,597	2,717
Heber CDP	3,856	872	272
Holtville City	7,952	2,304	431
Imperial City	13,560	4,056	777
Niland	1,039	566	33
Ocotillo CDP	417	144	2
Westmorland City	2,808	846	84
Winterhaven	3,737	1,382	3
Totals	157,591	44,281	8,252

Source: Claritas, Inc.

Although the general population for Imperial County residents is relatively young, the aging of the population must be considered relatively to the development of programs for older adults including non credit courses.

Population by Age: 50+ and Selected Age Groups - 2007

City	Population	Households	Student Headcount	Selected Age Groups								Median Age	
				50 - 54	55 - 59	60 - 64	65 - 74	75 - 84	16+	18+	21+		65+
Brawley City	24,462	7,425	1,138	1,415	1,194	860	1,217	912	17,390	16,407	15,269	2,494	30
Calexico City	40,163	10,207	2,631	2,376	1,869	1,311	2,099	1,669	28,686	26,956	24,802	4,230	30
Calipatria City	10,258	1,882	164	487	393	257	381	273	8,637	8,399	7,945	738	33
El Centro City	49,339	14,597	2,717	2,894	2,360	1,734	2,418	1,704	35,500	33,591	30,986	4,761	30
Heber City	3,856	872	272	189	163	127	187	132	2,785	2,619	2,385	350	29
Holtville City	7,952	2,304	431	530	419	278	448	374	5,768	5,462	5,094	997	32
Imperial City	13,560	4,056	777	842	634	440	571	335	9,581	9,049	8,494	1,014	31
Niland	1,039	566	33	38	51	100	297	236	940	925	912	583	67
Ocotillo CDP	417	144	2	21	25	24	42	36	346	339	324	85	37
Westmorland City	2,808	846	84	161	130	103	142	122	1,987	1,879	1,727	297	29
Winterhaven	3,737	1,382	3	181	231	214	339	232	2,729	2,597	2,418	649	34
Totals Average	157,591	44,281	8,252	9,134	7,469	5,448	8,141	6,025	114,349	108,223	100,356	16,199	35

Source: Claritas, Inc.

Population by Education Attainment

As the following chart shows, the number of adult residents with less than a high school diploma is 52% of the overall adult population. This low educational attainment creates an opportunity and a responsibility for Imperial Valley College to continue to provide basic skills education and opportunities for this underserved population.

Population by Education Attainment, Age 25+

City	Population	Households	Student Headcount	High School				Degrees			
				Less than 9th Grade	Some Diploma High (Includes School Equivalency)	Some College, No Degree	Associate's	Bachelor's	Master's	Prof. School	
El Centro City	49,339	14,597	2,717	6,045	4,227	5,354	6,026	2,189	2,289	933	450
Calexico City	40,163	10,207	2,631	7,868	3,695	3,707	3,883	1,074	1,405	410	281
Brawley City	24,462	7,425	1,138	3,446	2,480	2,612	2,938	855	1,026	257	130
Imperial City	13,560	4,056	777	820	864	1,753	2,140	737	821	376	122
Calipatria City	10,258	1,882	164	1,239	1,443	2,532	1,287	221	141	31	17
Holtville City	7,952	2,304	431	1,122	693	840	1,142	312	348	105	47
Winterhaven	3,737	1,382	3	416	502	695	452	71	43	24	6
Heber CDP	3,856	872	272	782	440	393	298	94	87	18	5
Westmorland City	2,808	846	84	543	354	279	239	70	45	15	4
Niland	1,039	566	33	102	176	299	173	17	76	37	7
Ocotillo CDP	417	144	2	13	57	114	54	14	26	6	1
Total Percent	157,591	44,281	8,252	22,396	14,931	18,578	18,632	5,654	6,307	2,212	1,070

Source: Claritas, Inc.

The following graph identifies the diversity of the region with a breakdown of language spoken at home.

Population by Language Spoken at Home-2007

<i>City</i>	<i>Population</i>	<i>Households</i>	<i>Student Headcount</i>	<i>Language Spoken at Home</i>					
				<i>English</i>	<i>Asian/ Pac Isle</i>	<i>Indo/ European</i>	<i>Spanish</i>	<i>Other Languages</i>	
Brawley City	24,462	7,425	1,138	7,553	149	113	14,070	74	
Calexico City	40,163	10,207	2,631	2,100	703	80	33,524	14	
Calipatria City	10,258	1,882	164	5,506	95	20	4,057	5	
El Centro City	49,339	14,597	2,717	13,349	950	376	29,817	29	
Heber City	3,856	872	272	377	26	5	3,801	3	
Holtville City	7,952	2,304	431	2,492	64	25	4,614	24	
Imperial City	13,560	4,056	777	6,104	179	79	5,794	0	
Niland	1,039	566	33	893	0	37	50	24	
Ocotillo CDP	417	144	2	252	112	2	124	1	
Westmorland City	2,808	846	84	0	0	0	1,860	2	
Winterhaven	3,737	1,382	3	2,220	24	13	850	247	
Total	157,591	44,281	8,252	40,846	2,302	750	98,561	423	
<i>Percent of Study Area</i>									

Source: Claritas, Inc.

This report highlights the predominance of Spanish being spoken at home with some communities being primarily Spanish speaking. It is evident that Imperial Valley College must continue to expand and strengthen its ESL program to adequately serve the needs of its residents.

Health

The shortage of health care professionals across the nation has been documented and discussed across many local, state, and federal reports. Imperial Valley College will continue to develop and review programs to maximize opportunities for local residents and satisfy industry needs. Imperial Valley College's health programs currently include Registered Nurse (RN), Licensed Vocational Nurse (LVN), and Certified Nurse Assistant (CAN). Imperial Valley College has also heard from the dental industry that indicates that there are no local programs that can prepare residents to enter the industry as dental assistants. To this end, Imperial Valley College will be exploring the feasibility to address this industry need by developing a dental assistant program.

SWOT

SWOT (Strength, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) analysis provides a scan of the internal and external environments as a foundation for strategic planning.

Strengths

One of the strengths of Imperial Valley College is its position as the only community college in the region. It has an illustrious history of serving the community with thousands of alumni and a strong presence in the entire region including three comprehensive external campuses within each of the three main population corridors. It has a dedicated and active staff, faculty and administration interested in strengthening its strategic planning for the betterment of our students and our community. It operates within a balanced budget with adequate resources for program operation and development. Although the state's budget projections look dim, the college will continue to invest in educational programs that create opportunities for students.

Opportunities

As indicated earlier, the changing political, economic and business environments create opportunities for the enhancement and development of services to serve the community. Partnerships need to be developed with educational and business partners to take advantage of economic opportunities and new industries. The construction of the largest solar plant in the world will create new direct and ancillary opportunities for our residents. The Silicon Border Project on the Mexican side will also create opportunities for educational partnerships with Mexican colleges and universities that will need to fill thousands of engineering and technical positions for this project. The Calexico casino, also projected to be the largest in California, will create thousands of jobs in both gaming and non-gaming industries.

Weaknesses

The "warning" status from the accreditation body places a "cloud" from the public perspective on the college. The financial well-being of the college will be challenged in the future given the budget deficiencies at the State level that channel down to the local operation. With increasing operational costs and decreasing or limited growth in revenues, the college's financial resources will be stretched in the near future.

Threats

Although technological advances create opportunities for the college, these same advances also open opportunities for competing colleges to provide courses to local students. Private universities are offering instructional programs locally which are enticing for students. Local students are enrolling in college courses outside Imperial County through long-distance and/or on-line opportunities. The local economy also becomes a factor.

Summary

This environmental scan is limited in scope to the general demographic, economic, and educational environments within the college district. Each environment creates a set of challenges and opportunities for Imperial Valley College to include and consider in the development of the master plan.