



History of Berkeley City College

Berkeley City College, formerly Vista Community College, was founded in April 1974 as the fourth of the Peralta Community College District's community colleges, replacing the existing North Peralta Community College. Its original name, the Berkeley Learning Pavilion, was changed in October 1974 to the Peralta College for Non-Traditional Study (PCNS) and its mission expanded to that of, "... a public community college offering alternative post-secondary educational programs and services for students of the [Peralta Community College District]. The college [was] expected to assess unmet learning needs, to devise flexible and diverse ways of responding to those needs, and thereby to increase access to educational opportunities."

(Educational and Resources Plans 2001-2016)

Initially PCNS's charge was to provide degree and certificate programs to the northern cities of Alameda County—Albany, Berkeley, and Emeryville. For the first three years of its existence, PCNS was a "college without walls" with widely dispersed locations, offering classes at sites throughout the service area, including the West Berkeley YMCA, Berkeley High School, the North Berkeley Community Center, St. Mary Magdalene School, the Summit Educational Center, and the Oakland Army Base. The college assumed the administration of courses offered through the Peralta External Program and the UC/North Peralta Experimental Program, a grant-funded endeavor the purpose of which was to provide a smoother transition to UCB for low-income, minority community college students. The grant afforded PCNS the use of UCB facilities at times when they were minimally used, a facilities relationship that persists to this day.



PCNS also operated an outreach program, offering courses found at the other three Peralta colleges. By 1977, in response to requests from various businesses, community organizations and agencies, PCNS had established classes in over twenty locations throughout the district service areas.

Largely aimed at adults in transition, these alternative programs flourished, pioneering some of the first alternative delivery methods in the district, including telecourses. By 1979 the college was offering approved courses in over 100 locations throughout the community, and by 1981 the number of sites had grown to 200.

In 1976 the college applied for candidacy for initial ACCJC accreditation. This was granted in June 1977. In 1978, the district voted to change the college's name to Vista College.

Candidacy was renewed in 1979, and the college was granted full accreditation in June 1981.

From 1981 to 1986, Vista continued to offer classes and programs at multiple off-campus sites, developing new services to meet public and private sector needs. It created the East Bay Small Business Development Center, the International Trade Institute, and the American Sign Language Program. The college directed programs offered through the Downtown Oakland Business Education Center at the Fruitvale Community Education Site, at business locations, and at community and senior centers. The college opened the first computer laboratory in the Peralta Community College District (PCCD). At this time, the college served more than 1,200 disabled students per year.

(continued on next page)





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(from previous page)

In 1987, in response to continuing budget pressures at the state and district level, the college's budget was substantially reduced and several of its programs transferred to other Peralta colleges. The Downtown Oakland Business Education Center was closed and the college reduced many of its off-campus classes.

The passage of Assembly Bill 1725 in 1987, which redefined the intent of the community college and the proportion of full-time to part-time faculty, significantly impacted the mission and design of Vista College's classes and programs. The college's faculty and administration reviewed its programs and classes in order to shift resources away from alternative education and focus instead on the comprehensive mission of the California community colleges as we now know it. That year, the district's governing board approved the final modification of the institution's name to Vista Community College.

Even as it broadened its mission and offerings to reflect those of a more comprehensive California community college, Berkeley City College has continued, within that context, to follow its tradition of providing creative and innovative programs in response to community needs. It was the first college in the Bay Area to offer a guaranteed schedule that provides all classes necessary for the completion of degrees for its afternoon college and its evening/Saturday college. College faculty designed a highly acclaimed American Sign Language program, which became a national model in the 1980s.

Berkeley City College's Program for Adult College Education (PACE) provided the first opportunity in Northern California for community college students with full-time jobs to find a suitable route to their educational goals; founded in 1988, it is the largest degree-granting program at the college. Its biotechnology program received state commendations when it was implemented in 1994. New programs that respond to community needs include biotechnology, multimedia arts, office technology, global studies, and social services paraprofessional.

In 1995, a group of community members signed a petition seeking to create the Vista Community College District out of a portion of the existing Peralta Community College District (PCCD) by "deannexing" the cities of Albany, Berkeley, and Emeryville. This was done for a variety of reasons, including lack of a permanent site for the college and a lack of parity in resources.

In response to the community's deannexation efforts, PCCD proposed Measure A, a capital



improvement bond initiative which allocated eight million dollars to construct a permanent college facility and also stipulated that \$7.5 million would be used from Measure B, a previous Peralta bond issue, to augment Measure A funds. Measure A passed in November, 1996.

Construction of the new facility is now complete. PCCD also allocated an additional \$36 million to build the site from Measure E, a bond measure that was passed in November 2000. Funds also are from state Proposition 47, passed in 2002.

In June 2006, Peralta Measure A was approved by Alameda County voters. Funds from Measure A have helped the college to expand and build new classroom space so that Berkeley City College's campus can fully accommodate up to 7,800 students. Also in June 2006, Vista Community College's name was changed to Berkeley City College.

The college has consistently grown in full-time equivalent students (FTES) for the past 16 years at a rate, far exceeding the three to five percent annual growth rate projected in the *Educational and Resources Plans 2001-2016*. Enrollment in spring 2015 reached more than 7,600 students.

To accommodate its growing student body, the college's 2015-16 expansion includes a facility at 2118 Milvia St., which was purchased in 2015 by the Peralta Community College District Board of Trustees.

