



Strategic Plan

Fiscal Years 2018 to 2022

Your Success Starts Here!

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Blanca Rochin, Principal

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Introduction

We are pleased to present our Strategic Plan for 2018-2022. The plan has been developed to guide and inspire the continuing growth and excellent performance of Downey Adult School in providing high quality services to adults in the City of Downey and surrounding areas.

The strategic plan offers a set of strategies that will guide our leadership team as we make organizational commitments and important decisions about program development, maintain a solid financial foundation, and prepare for the opportunities and challenges that lie ahead. Additionally, we reexamined our vision statement, mission statement, organizational values and crafted compelling language that best reflects DAS today and our aspirations for the future. This plan focuses on the next three years, during which DAS will face an environment of increasing demand for career training and educational services for a growing population with compelling needs and potential policy changes that could impact our population and community.

In our long history, DAS has established impressive internal and external strengths. The school has developed a strong cadre of caring, committed staff that is dedicated to continuous improvement. DAS has built an impressive network of collaborative relationships with local schools, other community nonprofits, and public agencies to aid in delivering DAS programs that serve our local community. And, most importantly, DAS has prepared thousands of students to attain jobs, further their careers, and enrich their lives. These accomplishments provide the foundation for our future endeavors.

Now we must focus attention on strengthening our infrastructure in preparation for the challenges of the future. During this time, we must consider the impact of growth and take steps to ensure that all internal functions have caught up with program expansion and are ready for the future. This strategic plan establishes that mandate and creates the blueprint for significant progress in strengthening the organizational structures and processes while also evaluating opportunities to expand programs, maintain the delivery of quality educational experiences, and continue to support the professional development of our staff.

We are now a member of a consortium with four other schools. This strengthens our relationship with the community and helps us to grow towards the goal of superior education and gainful employment for our students. We articulate several of our classes with Cerritos Community College in order to get credit for classes taken at DAS. This is a wonderful incentive for students.

We want to acknowledge the significant contributions of the members of the various advisory committees and the DAS leadership team. Their efforts ensured a successful strategic planning effort. We look forward to the exciting years ahead as we work to implement this strategic plan and invite you to join us in our ongoing and very important efforts to improve our work and provide the highest quality programs possible to our students.

Blanca Rochin
Principal

Brief History of Downey Adult School

1940s

- Downey Adult School was established under the principalship of Joseph Coss. Classes were held in the Union High School buildings in Downey and taught by high school teachers who were hired to teach evening classes. The high school diploma program began with an enrollment of 374 students.
- The initial school had the same goals as we have now, that of serving the educational and personal needs of our students with quality programs.
- Dinar Knudsen stepped into the position of Principal from 1947 through 1949.

1950s

- The school's enrollment grew to 3,700 students.
- The Downey newsletter, LIVEWIRE (dated October 25, 1951), reported, "The amazing progress of adult education in Downey can be attributed to the surge of public interest in education throughout California." Theodore R. Maurer, Director of the Division of Adult Education at the time, stated in the article that "The subjects offered by the school serve a multi-purpose goal: to support individual self-improvement, promote more healthful living and a better understanding of family life, enable a person to obtain a high school diploma, and help a person become an American citizen."
- The first graduation, the Class of '51, was held June 5, 1951, with two individuals receiving diplomas. In addition, 21 others received citizenship certificates at the ceremony.
- Theodore Maurer was the Principal from 1950 – 1966, and bargained for extra classroom space in addition to what was being used at Union High School and was granted permission to whitewash and use the basement of the junior high school building as classrooms.

1960s-1980s

- Chester Sutton, an equally dynamic and progressive leader, filled the position of Principal from 1966 to 1982.
- Being very involved in many community, civic, and service organizations, Mr. Sutton's major contribution was providing education programs that served the changing economic and cultural needs of Downey.

Today

- Downey Adult School, as it has been called since 1951, is fully accredited by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges and the Council on Occupational Education, enrolls over 6,200 students each year, and has a staff of over 110 full-time and part-time certificated and classified personnel. We are now a member of a consortium with four other schools including Cerritos Community College which helps to strengthen the educational awareness of the community. We are articulating several CTE classes with Cerritos Community College.

Vision

At Downey Adult School, members of our community acquire skills and knowledge for gainful employment, higher education, personal enrichment, and positive contributions to society.

Mission

Downey Adult School Career and Education Center, an institution of higher education, provides high-quality, relevant, and accessible programs for adults in a variety of areas, including English as a Second Language (ESL), High School Diploma (HSD), General Education Development (GED), and Career Technical Education (CTE), resulting in personal enrichment and/or gainful employment

Values

Adult education **improves the quality of life** of members of our community.

We are responsive to the **needs of our community**.

We embrace **diversity**.

We provide a **caring environment**.

We take time for our own **professional development**.

We are dedicated to **continuous improvement**.

We maintain high standards of **professionalism**.

We are **customer service oriented**.

We foster **partnerships**.

Downey Adult School Today



Programs and Courses

Downey Adult School plays an important role in the educational and career development needs of the local community and economy. The school provides courses in the following Career Technical Education program areas:

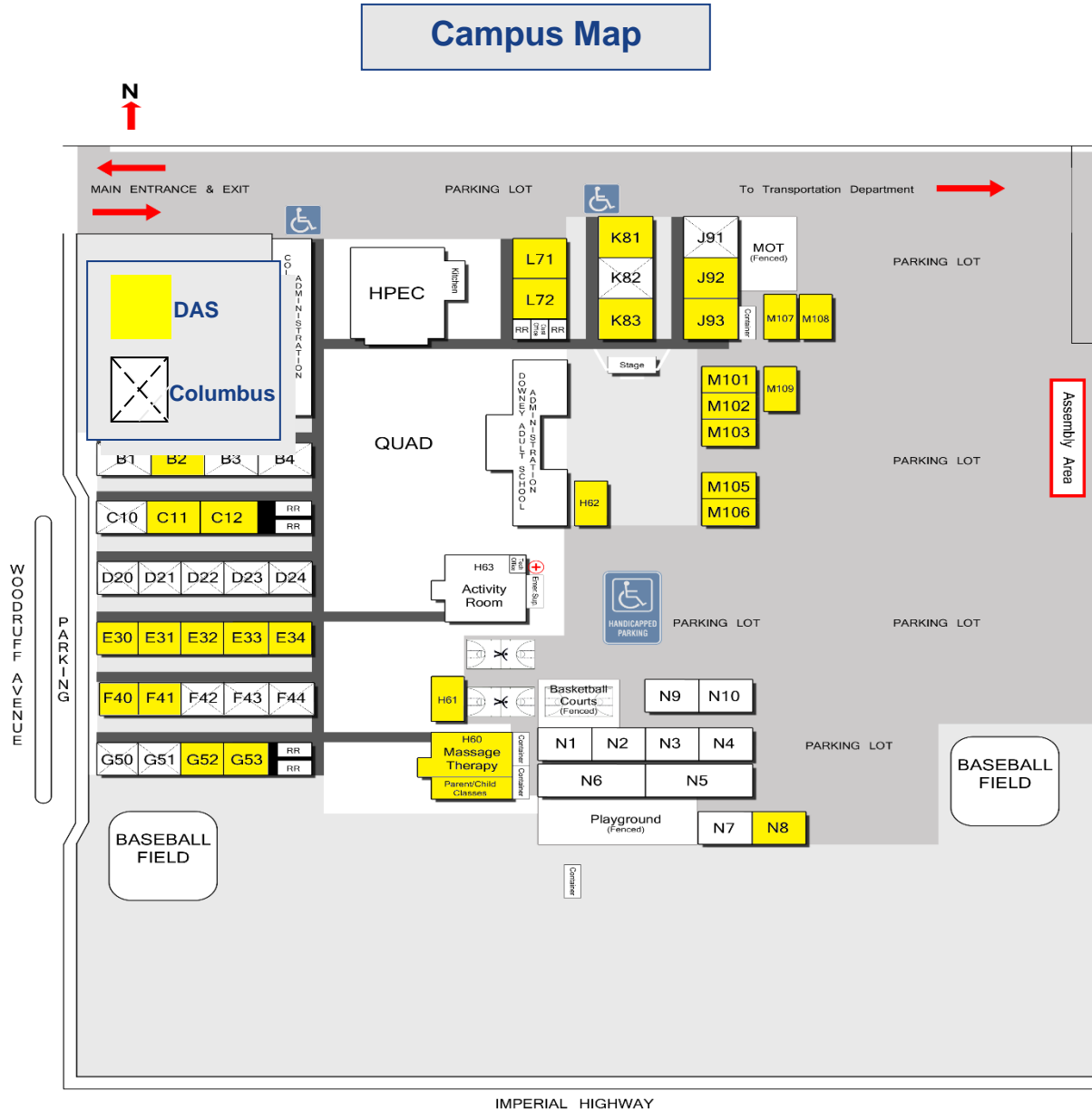
- Court Reporting
- Clinical Dental Assistant
- Emergency Medical Technician
- Massage Therapy
- Medical Assistant
- Medical Assistant-Phlebotomy combination
- Paralegal
- Pharmacy Technician
- Phlebotomy Technician
- Vocational Nursing
- Orthodontic Assistant
- Medical Biller/Coder
- Advanced Private Security Academy

DAS also offers an array of enrichment courses that are popular, such as floral arranging, and brain fitness. DAS serves an abundance of students in the following departments:

- High School Diploma/GED
- ESL
- Parent Education
- Health and Safety
- On-Line Classes

Facilities

DAS shares its facilities with Columbus High School, the alternative/continuation school for Downey Unified School District, located on the north east corner of Imperial Highway and Woodruff Avenue in Downey. The campus map below illustrates the classroom, office, and parking layout of the DAS campus and how these spaces are shared with the high school.



DAS has reached its capacity limit on the classroom and office space available on this shared campus; there is minimal opportunity to expand classrooms or common areas, especially during the morning and afternoon sessions. We bring in portable classrooms when space and funds are available.

WASC Review and Accreditation

WASC – the Western Association of Schools and Colleges – is the accreditation agency for many different kinds of educational institutions, public and private, including adult schools. WASC offers accreditation to those organizations that provide for successful student learning based on evaluation by a WASC committee and internal evaluations, or self-study, conducted by the school. A small committee that makes trips to school campuses, a WASC visiting committee, provides the evaluation for each school.

COE Accreditation

COE – the Council on Occupational Education – is the accreditation agency for many different kinds of educational institutions, public and private, including adult schools. COE accreditation is necessary for students to qualify for federal student Pell grants. COE offers accreditation to those organizations that provide for successful student learning based on evaluation by a COE committee and internal evaluations, or self-study, conducted by the school. A small committee that makes trips to school campuses, a COE visiting committee, provides the evaluation for each school.

In November 2012, DAS hosted an initial four day accreditation visit by Council on Occupational Education (COE) and were joined by WASC for a joint accreditation visit. We were proud to announce that we have been accredited for six years by both agencies.

This will be a continuous work in progress as we must submit information to the council annually in order to keep our accreditation current. This accreditation enables our students to qualify for federal student loans and should improve our graduation and placement rates. The main items that are submitted to COE annually are completion rates, placement rates, and licensure rates for each career technical program.

Strategic Planning Process

In August 2012, to continue the momentum generated by the success of the school's WASC and COE accreditations and to plan for future success of the school, the Principal of DAS initiated a strategic planning process. We are now updating the strategic to reflect any new objectives.

As the winter trimester of classes began in January 2018, the leadership team was assembled to guide and shape the strategic planning process. All of the various advisory committees for the school were also asked for input.

Throughout the process, the leadership team offered valuable perspectives and insights, leading to a well-informed strategic plan. DAS's students, faculty, and staff were offered opportunities to participate in the School's strategic planning effort – through interviews and leadership team meetings.

The outcome of this process is a set of five objectives and sixty-two associated strategies for Downey Adult School, which reflect a commitment to its mission, values, and the community served by the school. The Strategic Plan for 2018-2022 was presented to the staff in May of 2018.

Strategic Direction

To make a distinctive impact...

The school prepares students for success in their careers, increases their academic achievement, and enriches their lives. In the future, DAS will continue to deliver and expand excellent programs that respond to the needs of the community. In a highly competitive environment, DAS will continually seek ways to improve upon its curriculum and services to set the school apart from the other providers of adult education in the region. Upholding a culture of professionalism and service within the organization will strengthen the professional learning community and motivate staff to deliver the highest quality programs to students.

To increase its impact, DAS will also look to mission-aligned local organizations and individuals for collaborations in programs, professional development, and marketing. Educational agencies in general have a tendency to be insular, or inwardly-focused, but DAS has demonstrated its commitment to serving its students and staff by seeking collaborative partnerships to improve program delivery. As demand for courses increases along with enrollment, DAS will continue seeking strategic alliances to maintain a competitive advantage in adult education.

To deliver superior performance...

DAS will maintain its efforts to optimize the current facilities in terms of classrooms, parking, and traffic flow in order to provide the best access to and experience at the school. In the same vein, program opportunities that do not put additional strain on the facilities – such as on-line classes – will be considered a way to expand programs that serve the community while mitigating the limitations of the current campus. To reinforce internal controls and monitor staff satisfaction, DAS will develop the management tools necessary in an entrepreneurial and complex organization.

A comprehensive brand development process will support the school's execution of superior performance by building consensus internally around the identity and mission of the school, as well as increasing public awareness and raising the profile of DAS in the community. Branding initiatives also serve to invigorate staff and emphasize the organization's aspirations to greatness in providing educational and training services to customers.

To achieve lasting endurance...

DAS will work to ensure that the structure of the organization is one designed to respond to the needs of staff and students and to accommodate the anticipated growth of the school. Executive responsibilities will be aligned with school functions to best manage programs and resources, and greater distributive leadership will be needed to oversee the complex operations of the school as it grows. Mentoring, and professional development activities will be implemented to maintain high morale, increase staff skills and knowledge, and support high levels of efficiency and satisfaction.

Financial sustainability of the school is, of course, fundamental in achieving outputs of greatness in all of these categories. DAS will budget and allocate resources strategically while enhancing revenue generation by establishing a competitive program pricing structure that will keep us self-sustaining.

The goals and supporting objectives of the strategic plan are presented on the following pages.

School-wide Strategic Objectives

Objective One: Excellent Programs

To expand the array of excellent educational, enrichment, and training programs that best serve and respond to the current and emerging needs of the community

Objective Two: Facilities

To optimize the use of the current campus – classrooms, offices, and traffic flow – and to act on program opportunities that serve the community’s demand but do not require additional facilities

Objective Three: Leadership and Organization

To strengthen leadership and organizational structures to support the collective effort to make it the best school possible

Objective Four: Strategic Management

To develop the management tools, processes, and communication pathways to promote satisfaction, accountability, effectiveness, and productivity throughout the organization

Objective Five: Revenue Generation

To enhance revenue generation efforts to ensure the school’s long-term financial health and stability

Strategic Area One: Excellent Programs

Programs for adult learners are in high demand in Downey, especially those classes for Career Technical Education, High School Diploma, and learning English. Local response to DAS's programs has been very encouraging.

The City of Downey has been undergoing seismic changes in its demographics, a trend that also promises to continue. A significant portion of the population in Downey is Hispanic/Latino (71.8% in the most recent census. DAS students reflect the demographics of its community in terms of ethnicity (70.0% are Hispanic).

Additionally, DAS must respond to major developments in terms of employment and private sector organizations moving to the area. Data presented by the Employment Development Department projects almost 85% of all new wage and salary jobs will occur in education and health services (28.4%), professional and business services (18.6%), leisure and hospitality (19.4%), retail trade (13.7%), and government (3.7%) over the next ten years in Los Angeles County. Higher-skilled and higher-paying occupations – such as registered nurses, managers, sales representatives, administrative assistants, and accountants and auditors – are also forecasted to have a substantial number of job openings over the ten-year period, representing significant opportunities for DAS and its students.

As DAS looks forward to the next three to five years, the school will need to maintain its core of high-demand, state-supported offerings as well as explore program areas that will align with the demographic and economic shifts in the City of Downey and Los Angeles County.

Objective One: Excellent Programs

To expand the array of excellent educational, enrichment, and training programs that best serve and respond to the current and emerging needs of the community

Strategies

1. To develop programs and courses related to the careers, fields, and industries with the greatest potential for employment of students
2. To expand the programs, courses, and access to career pathways that better serve men and women
3. To reach more students outside DAS's immediate environs and improve access to learning through online classes
4. To tailor DAS's offerings in part to the needs and opportunities of the city's and county's largest employers
5. To augment individual counseling in order to better educate students about career opportunities available to them at all levels of their education/training and help them stay on track
6. To evaluate the quality of programs and achievement of measurable outcomes on a regular basis
7. Meet the challenging needs of students in our community by increasing the number of CTE course offerings
8. Create a learning community whose goal is to examine student learning within DAS programs and share good methods with all departments
9. Improve the job readiness component of each CTE program
10. Compile and analyze a Job Market Survey

11. Continue to expand the number of students who take the GED
12. Continue to increase the number of students transitioning from ESL to high school/GED and into CTE programs
13. Develop and maintain student handbooks for all students
14. Monitor the number of students achieving ASE Certification, CTE completers and job placements
15. Expand CTE programs based on the analysis of the Job Market Survey, community surveys, advisory committee input and staff input
16. Survey teachers annually to identify professional development needs
17. Continue to provide in-house professional development workshops based on survey results
18. Continue to develop partnerships and articulation agreements with local colleges and businesses
19. Continue meeting at least semi-annually with program specific Advisory Committees. Develop program specific Advisory Committees as CTE programs are expanded
20. Use placement rates, follow-up surveys with graduates and employers, and Advisory Committee feedback to evaluate the success of CTE partnerships
21. Continue documenting formalized meetings with students regarding resumes, interviews, and job placement by the Job Development Office

Strategic Area Two: Facilities

DAS's continued growth in CTE enrollment and rise in demand for its programs have created a need for greater physical capacity. DAS needs more space to accommodate its students in rapidly growing programs, especially those that require special equipment, such as nursing court reporting, and dental assisting.

DAS shares its facilities with Columbus High School, the alternative/continuation school for Downey Unified School District. DAS students and staff have expressed concerns and complaints over sharing the campus with the continuation school. They cited a lack of respect for classroom environments (e.g. noise levels) and campus facilities, and voiced concerns over their safety on the campus. There is a strong sentiment among staff and students that the presence of Columbus High School compromises the learning environment of DAS.

Currently the DAS Woodruff Avenue campus is at capacity in terms of its classroom usage, and parking/traffic flow is a major issue. Of the 31 DAS classrooms:

- During the morning hours, 94% of available classroom space is used.
- During the afternoon hours, 65% of available classroom space is used.
- During the evening hours, 71% of available classroom space is used

As the school expands and the adult and aging population of Downey continues to grow, DAS will need to explore additional ways to accommodate the high demand for its courses. DAS will explore the usage of facilities within the Downey Unified School District and local environs, and will also look to build its on-line classes, and other revenue-generating opportunities that do not require additional facilities.

Objective Two: Facilities

To optimize the use of the current campus and act on program opportunities that do not require additional facilities, while examining relocation options for the school

Strategies

1. To explore changes to the layout of classrooms, offices, and shared spaces on campus in order to optimize usage and separate DAS from the continuation school
2. To explore a better utilization of the school's parking capacity and traffic flow
3. To seek additional classroom spaces in Downey to serve as a second, or satellite, campus for programs
4. To form relationships with local organizations willing to host DAS programs at their facilities
5. To advance cosmetic and maintenance upgrades to the current campus

Strategic Area Three: Leadership and Organization

The current DAS model divides responsibilities between the two administrators by program area and/or department within DAS. While this model of organizing and aligning responsibilities is standard for many public schools, DAS is not a typical public school. To best serve its students and manage employees at all levels, DAS needs to examine its organizational structure with an eye to re-aligning positions and responsibilities, making more use of resource instructors.

In meetings of part-time and full-time staff, comments were made that indicate a need for distributive leadership throughout the organization. Currently, the Principal and Assistant Principal field and resolve any conflicts or issues that arise and are responsible for communicating important information.

Additionally, changes in the organizational structure of the school can focus on continuing to promote a culture that is collegial and entrepreneurial, which is so vital in a highly competitive marketplace. While DAS continues to distinguish itself in these areas, it must also be ensured that it fosters a culture for staff that rewards innovation, customer service, and professionalism.

The following three strategic goals and their supporting objectives focus on three key elements to sustaining a positive and efficient environment for working and learning at DAS: leadership and organizational structures, strategic management, and organizational culture.

Objective Three: Leadership and Organizational Structures

To strengthen leadership and organizational structures to support the collective effort to make DAS the best adult school possible

Strategies

1. To restructure the roles and responsibilities of the senior management team to reflect best practices in organizational models and plan for continued growth of the student body
2. To provide opportunities to further strengthen and expand the leadership capacity at all levels
3. To promote distributive leadership to broaden decision-making authority throughout the school
4. To ensure that the school is making the best use of district resources, leadership, and relationships
5. Continue to expand student support services in order to keep pace with the growth of the CTE Programs
6. Continue to form Advisory Committees for all CTE programs and establish regular meeting schedules with additional advisory committees formed as new programs are created
7. Adjust and align the roles of Job Development and Financial Aid Offices as CTE expands
8. Improve the process for follow-up with students in all programs related to job placement
9. Improve the process of obtaining feedback information from employers
10. Continue to compile data using surveys, the EDD website, Bureau of Labor Statistics, other national data bases and local advisory and employer input

Strategic Area Three: Leadership and Organization (Continued)

Objective Four: Strategic Management

To develop the management tools, processes, and communication pathways to promote satisfaction, accountability, effectiveness, and productivity throughout the organization

Strategies

1. To develop and use management tools to effectively guide the growth and success of DAS in future years
2. To utilize an annual climate survey of staff to monitor and enhance individual and team satisfaction
3. To have in place effective and transparent communication avenues and processes throughout the organization
4. To continue to seek and implement information technology solutions to better serve students, staff, and administration

Objective Five: Organizational Culture

To strengthen the professional learning community to support a culture of professionalism and service

Strategies

1. To embrace and demonstrate our core values
2. To promote professionalism as a matter of everyday practice through the appearance, actions, tone, and program delivery of staff
3. To uphold a culture of customer service, supported by ongoing training and demonstrated in everyday examples
4. To honor employees who continue to excel in the area of professionalism and customer service
5. To support an environment of caring, teamwork, and dedication among staff

Strategic Area Four: Strategic Management

DAS has been very successful in forging meaningful relationships with mission-aligned organizations within the local area and has maintained good relationships with the school district and local schools. In the future, DAS should extend its reach beyond the Gateway communities. In this way, the school will attract additional students.

As DAS continues on its entrepreneurial and competitive trajectory, strategic alliances with the school's neighbors will become increasingly important. Bridges to local community colleges, regional occupational programs (ROPs), and major employers are opportunities to develop and augment offerings for DAS students and staff. Community colleges and professional schools present an opportunity for DAS to develop an articulation, or pathway, for students to attain higher levels of academic credentials and career training. Alliances with these kinds of organizations may also help to alleviate the burden on DAS's facilities by increasing the number of off-site classroom locations and distance learning programs. Major employers, and in particular large corporate newcomers and health service providers, represent possibilities for DAS to generate contracts (e.g. for training and consulting) and to develop career connections for DAS students

DAS has taken several steps to increase its visibility and recognition through campus improvements, signage, and related marketing efforts. Increasing consistent and relevant communications and executing a brand will help DAS strengthen relationships with constituents and develop new relationships that support the mission of the school.

Objective Six: Strategic Alliances

To identify and foster collaborative relationships with organizations and individuals that represent programmatic and organizational opportunities and that are aligned with the mission and values of Downey Adult School

Strategies

1. To pursue collaborative relationships with local community colleges as part of DAS's commitment to career development and pathways to higher achievement
2. To explore partnerships with local adult schools
3. To build connections to the city's largest employers, especially in industries experiencing growth, such as healthcare
4. To develop a forum to reach out to and maintain contact with key people and organizations in Downey, such as an advisory board/council
5. To ensure DAS commits the necessary resources to develop and sustain its collaborative relationships
6. Continue to strengthen partnerships with businesses for all CTE programs

Strategic Area Five: Revenue Generation

The current sources of revenue for DAS are the tuition/fees charged to students, Adult Education Block Grant, WIOA and Perkins Grants and CalWORKs which support DAS courses. Revenue from tuition/fees is 64% of income; AEBG is 26% and the other grants and CalWORKs make up 10%.

Students have acknowledged the significant economic value DAS offers them compared to other programs in the area.

In order to accomplish its strategic objectives and achieve its program goals, DAS will need to diversify its sources of revenue and strategically manage its financial reserves. New employers arriving in Downey are good sources for contract, training, and consulting projects, which would help the school diversify its sources of income.

Objective Seven: Revenue Generation

To enhance revenue generation efforts to ensure the school's long-term financial health and stability

Strategies

1. To explore additional opportunities to contract with local organizations to provide educational services
2. To explore additional opportunities to provide DAS's expertise and consulting services as revenue-generating activities
3. To examine the potential for increasing contributed income, such as grants or training services
4. To allocate budget resources strategically in order to balance the needs of the school
5. Continue to research grants and alternative income streams
6. Continue to document grants that have been awarded and how funds were used

Strategy for Evaluating

The Strategic Plan is of great importance to the school and a record of progress must be journalized and communicated to all stakeholders. The plan will be evaluated using the following procedures:

1. Review by faculty and staff via email
2. Review by faculty and staff at meetings each September, January, and June
3. Review by advisory committees via email
4. Review by advisory committees at meetings twice annually
5. Student evaluations will be customized to include related items of the plan