



MARKETING POSITION ANALYSIS

Prepared for Hartnell College

December 2020

In the following report, Hanover assesses marketing messaging among 10 key competitors. This report includes an examination of websites and competitor program branding and marketing strategies, as well as a review of different online marketing strategies used by competitors. It is based on information from websites, social media platforms, and online advertisements.



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on its marketing assessment analysis, Hanover recommends that Hartnell College:

Develop a dedicated and clearly-labeled hub for potential students on its website and call it “Future Students.”

Most competitors maintain specific pages for prospective students that are easily identifiable and provide a wide range of information on the application process, the college’s academic portfolio, and virtual events. Hartnell’s “Enroll Now!” pathway offers similar guidance but should be expanded to more comprehensively engage prospective students and offer a wider array of relevant information, resources, and testimonials.

Create content pathways that different types of students can follow for their specific needs, especially for future, military/veteran, aspiring four-year transfer, and international students.

It is common for competitors to redirect students to specific pages depending on their background and status. This ensures that all prospective students can easily find the information they need around the application, matriculation, and financial aid processes. DeAnza College, for example, offers detailed information for dual-enrollment high schoolers and undocumented students as well as other common groups, highlighting the range of student types that would benefit from dedicated pages.

Provide direct links to the institution’s Instagram and LinkedIn accounts on the main landing page.

Instagram is a common social media platform that competitors use, and Hartnell should link to its account alongside Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube. Not many competitors redirect students to LinkedIn, but it offers a way to showcase a strong alumni network and graduates’ career success.

KEY FINDINGS

Most competitors have clearly-labeled hubs for prospective students that are linked directly from their landing pages, often titled “Future Students” or “Why Choose ___.” Conversely, Hartnell, like only a few other competitors such as Monterey Peninsula College, organizes information for prospective students within application, admission, and enrollment pages. A more comprehensive prospective student hub that provides not only logistical information but also material about supports, student organizations, and unique aspects of the college should be considered.

Like Hartnell, most competitors link to Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube channels. However, only a minority connect to LinkedIn pages. Hartnell’s social media presence is generally in-line with the competition, though it reports slightly below-average engagement on Facebook. Given the importance that many competitors and prospective students place on career advancement and success, LinkedIn offers Hartnell an avenue to connect future and past students. Engaging prospective students via LinkedIn would make Hartnell unique among its regional competitors.

Social media engagement tends to be high when posts connect real-world applications with the institution’s capabilities or highlight community supports. For example, a tweet about West Valley College’s drone simulations recorded a reach of roughly 3,000 while mentions of community food drives and provision are more often retweeted and reach a wider audience. Both strategies result in greater overall engagement with institutions’ social media, as measured by retweets and reach. Institutions also see a high level of social media engagement when they are tagged by other accounts (e.g., the City of Monterey).

Online advertisements convey a variety of themes to prospective students, including academic preparation for four-year university, degree flexibility, and career advancement. While these vary across competitors, most institutions tend to focus their marketing efforts on just one thematic message.

KEY QUESTIONS AND METHODOLOGY

METHODOLOGY

To assist Hartnell College (Hartnell) in better strategically marketing itself within the higher education landscape, Hanover Research (Hanover) conducted a messaging differentiation analysis to evaluate competitors' online marketing presence and determine how they are using messaging and marketing strategies to target prospective students. Hanover selected the 10 competitors included in this analysis based on input from Hartnell.

To conduct this analysis of competitors' marketing strategies for prospective students, Hanover considers three distinct avenues:

- Institutional-level website branding and messaging to determine how competitors are framing marketing towards their prospective student pools;
- Online advertisements and marketing profiles to showcase exemplar and high-impression messaging and marketing; and
- Social media trend data to gauge market penetration and presence.

COMPETITOR INSTITUTIONS

Institution	Location
Cabrillo College	Santa Cruz, CA
DeAnza College	Cupertino, CA
Foothill College	Los Altos Hills, CA
Gavilan College	Gilroy, CA
Monterey Peninsula College	Monterey, CA

RESEARCH QUESTIONS



Institution	Location
Ohlone College	Fremont, CA
Evergreen Valley College	San Jose, CA
San Jose City College	San Jose, CA
Mission College	Santa Clara, CA
West Valley College	Saratoga, CA



WEBSITE CONTENT BENCHMARKING AND ANALYSIS

MESSAGING TOWARD PROSPECTIVE STUDENTS

MARKETING MESSAGING THEMES: INSTITUTIONAL LANDING PAGES

Based on relevant competitor websites starting with each institution's main page. Colored blocking denotes the presence of a marketing theme. Themes may recur at lower levels as well, but those showcased on the institution's landing page tend to be the most important themes.

Institution	Registration/ Enrollment Dates	Fast Facts	Testimonials and Campus News	Event Calendar	Social Media Profiles/ Posts	Financial Aid and Cost	Campus Photos/ Videos	COVID Resources/ Response	Campus Technology	Career Supports
Hartnell College	✓		✓	✓		✓		✓	✓	
Cabrillo College	✓							✓		✓
DeAnza College	✓		✓	✓			✓		✓	✓
Foothill College	✓		✓	✓		✓	✓		✓	✓
Gavilan College	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		
Monterey Peninsula College			✓	✓				✓	✓	✓
Ohlone College	✓	✓	✓	✓				✓	✓	✓
Evergreen Valley College	✓			✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	
San Jose City College	✓		✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	
Mission College	✓			✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
West Valley College		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓	
TOTAL*	8	2	7	8	4	4	5	7	8	6

*Note: Total count does not include Hartnell.

MESSAGING TOWARD PROSPECTIVE STUDENTS

MARKETING MESSAGING THEMES: “FUTURE STUDENT” PAGES

Based on relevant competitor websites starting with each institution's prospective student-facing page. Colored blocking denotes the presence of a marketing theme. Themes may recur at lower levels as well, but those showcased on the institution's primary page tend to be the most important themes.

Institution	Dedicated “Future Students” Page?^	Student/ Alumni Testimonials	Academic Offerings	Student Supports	Campus Resources	Virtual Info Sessions	Application Assistance	Possibility for Free Tuition	Student Success Statistics	Four-Year Transfer Pathways
Hartnell College	No	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Cabrillo College	YES	✓	✓							
DeAnza College	YES			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Foothill College	No	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Gavilan College	YES		✓			✓	✓			
Monterey Peninsula College	No	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Ohlone College	YES		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Evergreen Valley College	YES			✓		✓	✓			✓
San Jose City College	YES	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
Mission College	YES		✓		✓	✓	✓			✓
West Valley College	YES		✓	✓			✓			
TOTAL*	8/10	2	6	5	4	6	7	2	3	5

*Note: Total count does not include Hartnell.

^This can include related pages/hubs specifically for prospective students, including a “Why Choose ___” page, that are linked directly on the institution's landing page.



MESSAGING TOWARD PROSPECTIVE STUDENTS

LANDING PAGE MESSAGING

Competitors focus messaging on their landing pages on upcoming registration dates, events, and campus technology/resources, as does Hartnell. These logistic considerations are common across all 10 competitors and most convey the information in a relatively uniform manner. However, Hartnell should consider expanding its landing page to provide prospective students and other first-time visitors with additional information about past student success metrics (“Fast Facts”), provide a live stream of current social media posts (to drive further engagement with these platforms), and display images and/or videos of the campus and its students. These are all messaging strategies that competitors use and would help Hartnell further align with community colleges in the area. Notably, many competitors provide links and additional information for different types of potential students (shown below).

“FUTURE STUDENTS” PAGE MESSAGING

Dedicated pages for future students are common across competitors and provide more detailed information on the application process, the college’s academic portfolio, and virtual events. These sites are clearly labeled and prominently featured on competitors’ landing pages (“Future Students” or “Why Choose ___”). Unlike the landing page, which seeks to appeal to a broad range of audiences, these pages allow institutions to go into greater detail about the issues that are top-of-mind for prospective students – such as the types of classes that are available, the supports and campus resources that they will have access to, application, registration, and enrollment assistance, and opportunities to transfer to a four-year university. Some competitors also use these more dedicated pages to provide student testimonials and convey the possibility of free or reduced tuition. Hartnell should make a page like this easy-to-identify and prominent on its main page.

STUDENT TYPES WITH DEDICATED INFORMATION ON LANDING PAGES

	Current	Future	First Time	Working Adults	Military/ Veteran	Online	High School	Int'l	Four-Year Transfer	Parent
Hartnell College	✓									
DeAnza College	✓	✓		✓					✓	
Foothill College				✓		✓		✓	✓	
Ohlone College	✓	✓				✓		✓		
San Jose City College	✓	✓	✓		✓			✓	✓	
Mission College	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓		✓
West Valley College	✓	✓			✓					

SPOTLIGHT: DEANZA COLLEGE FUTURE STUDENTS

FUTURE STUDENT PAGE

DeAnza College maintains a robust Future Students page that offers current students, prospects, and parents a hub where they can access most relevant resources. It is maintained by the Office of Outreach at the institution. Shown right, its primary messaging to prospective students centers on **academic support, student diversity, and tuition/affordability**. Within each messaging theme, DeAnza College provides links to dedicated pages where students and parents can go for more detailed information on the topics (e.g., student services, student Learning Communities, financial aid).

Of note, the page also has videos to walk prospective students through the admission and enrollment process. These videos (“Apply for Admission” and “Get Priority Enrollment”) not only show the campus and its student body, but also make clear what steps prospective students need to follow to successfully apply and matriculate. For new students, there are additional videos explaining the financial aid process and the “DeAnza College Promise.”

Lastly, DeAnza College provides redirect links for **students in unique circumstances**, such as current high schoolers, international students, and undocumented students:

Are You ...

A **high school student** who's interested in taking college classes while you're still in high school? Visit our [Dual Enrollment](#) webpage.

An **international student** who wants to know more about studying at one of California's leading colleges? Visit our [International Student Programs](#) webpage.

An **undocumented student** who has attended a California high school? You may qualify for exemption from out-of-state tuition rates under the California law known as [AB 540](#).

Source: [DeAnza College](#)



HIGHER EDUCATION

Welcome to De Anza College!

The Office of Outreach is here to provide information and support – whether you're a [future student](#) who's thinking about applying to De Anza or a [new student](#) in your first or second quarter at the college.



New Students: Remember to Complete Orientation

Our orientation program will **answer your questions** about classes, making an educational plan and other important topics. Scroll down for more info that's **important for new students**.

[Sign Up for Orientation](#) ▶

Future Students

Here's What You Should Know!



We're Tops in Transfer

De Anza consistently [ranks at the top](#) in the state for the number of students who **transfer** to the University of California, California State University and other four-year schools.

At De Anza, you will find **vibrant** student life, **state-of-the-art** facilities, **supportive** learning communities and **helpful** student services.

Academic Support

De Anza has extensive [student services](#) to help you succeed, including [tutoring](#), a [Transfer Center](#) and special programs for first-time college students – such as [First Year Experience](#), [Summer Bridge](#) and [Math Performance Success](#).

Diverse Student Body

De Anza attracts students from all background and communities around the Bay Area, and from all around the world. You'll find a network of friends in our [Learning Communities](#) and other programs that [promote equity](#) for all.

De Anza College Promise

If you're worried about paying for college, our [Financial Aid Office](#) can help. With the [De Anza College Promise](#), eligible students get **FREE tuition** for two years, plus **\$1,000** for books and materials.

And More!

De Anza has all kinds of [services for students](#), plus great [arts programs](#) and [championship sports](#), too.

[More About De Anza](#) ▶

[APPLY NOW](#) ▶



SOCIAL MEDIA USAGE AND MARKET PENETRATION

SOCIAL MEDIA ACCOUNTS

SOCIAL MEDIA TRENDS FOR SURVEYED INSTITUTIONS

Based on competitor social media accounts as of December 2020.

Hartnell's social media presence is generally in-line with competitors. When looking at measures of engagement, such as check-ins on Facebook, Hartnell generally matches its competitors and meets average engagement and activity levels. It tracks slightly below average in terms of Facebook activity, but above average in Twitter presence. Two social media platforms where Hartnell should consider growing its following are YouTube and LinkedIn. YouTube can be an effective avenue for marketing to prospective students, while LinkedIn provides a hub for alumni activity. Notably, however, most competitors do not link their LinkedIn accounts to their main institutional websites. Hartnell could do so to grow its following on LinkedIn and use the platform to highlight alumni success stories and demonstrate the strength of its graduates to prospective students. Outside of the standard social media platforms, Foothill College has a [SmugMug](#) account, and Ohlone College maintains a [Social Media Directory](#) for specific academic units and student organizations.

Institution	Facebook		Twitter		YouTube			Instagram		LinkedIn	Flickr	
	Followers	Check-Ins	Followers	Tweets	Videos	Views	Subscribers	Followers	Posts	Followers	Followers	Photo Count
Hartnell College	6,888	30,487	2,934	4,947	59	18,779	329	1,952	826	10,498	1	12
Cabrillo College	9,111	44,482	2,788	2,054	59	33,239	161	2,214	428	22,543	4	9,599
DeAnza College	15,824	93,125	2,536	3,286	123	354,951	849	3,784	1,452	58,130	--	--
Foothill College	16,836	41,152	5,002	8,777	83	106,394	511	2,923	1,271	31,949	21	3,003
Gavilan College	4,413	20,343	1,668	7,640	25	6,553	32	1,169	3,924	7,644	15	6,417
Monterey Peninsula College	5,029	27,462	1,798	3,282	5	5,618	N/A	1,345	144	13,186	--	--
Ohlone College	7,882	32,687	1,712	2,015	139	117,010	292	740	271	21,545	33	7,292
Evergreen Valley College	3,689	11,803	770	966	35	32,411	51	421	137	14,079	1	156
San Jose City College	7,404	32,634	837	2,259	153	1,209,232	511	1,721	645	19,697	4	765
Mission College	6,381	34,381	1,991	8,058	164	1,145,703	251	1,452	629	15,215	96	28,854
West Valley College	6,278	32,534	1,849	1,802	287	2,361,924	25,100	1,910	995	26,401	225	12,166
Average	8,285	37,060	2,095	4,014	107	537,304	3,084	1,768	990	23,039	50	8,532

*Note: Average calculations do not include Hartnell College.

^Note: Institutions may maintain social media accounts on other platforms, but the ones with direct and visible links are considered to be the most important. *Red text* indicates the existence of a page that is not linked directly from the institution's page.

SOCIAL MEDIA ANALYTICS – MONTEREY PENINSULA COLLEGE

MOST RETWEETED

MPC.EDU @MPCMonterey
US | Aug 13 • 3:48 PM

MPC CARES! All students who enroll full-time (12+ units) in the Fall semester will receive \$500! No paperwork required - just enroll full-time by August 31, 2020 and you'll get \$500! Click here for details... <https://t.co/HrZLTmXyle>
<https://t.co/RBXZtP46IV>

2k Reach 22 Retweets

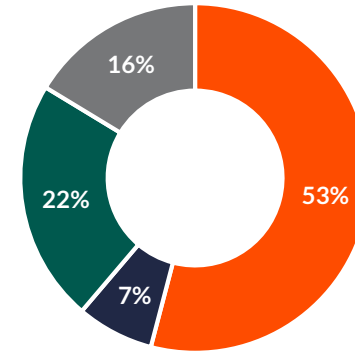
Monterey Peninsula College's most retweeted Twitter message speaks directly to the financial considerations that prospective students face ("you'll get \$500") and highlights the easy matriculation process ("no paperwork").

MPC.EDU @MPCMonterey
US | Jun 25 • 4:22 PM

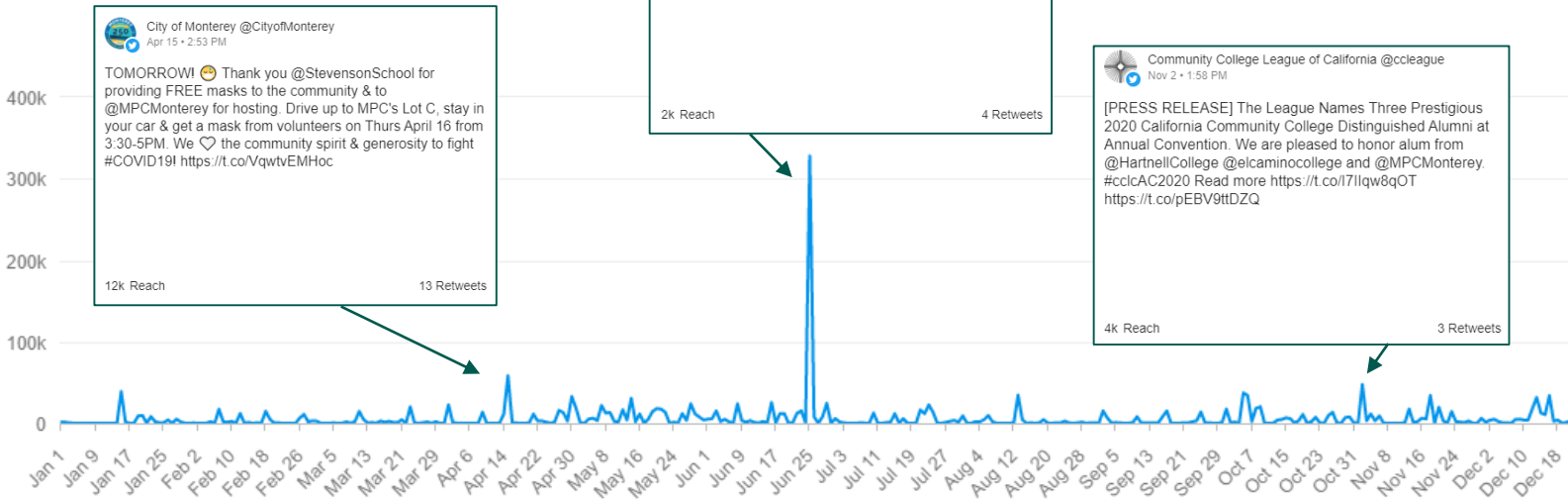
We understand times are still challenging for many - please reach out if you need a food bag from our ASMPC Food Pantry. Email admissions@mpc.edu and request an appointment. [@mpc_health](https://t.co/smlHqdVq0o) <https://t.co/smlHqdVq0o>

2k Reach 4 Retweets

TWEET TYPE BREAKDOWN



- Retweets
- Replies
- Quoted
- Original Tweets



Annual Totals

2.05M
Impressions

375
Users

1.3k
Mentions

Source: [Meltwater](https://meltwater.com). Note: Meltwater's impressions value is a proprietary count of how many times a tweet has been viewed. Sentiments expressed by an individual social media post are determined via an Artificial Intelligence model. Tweets were filtered to originate out of the United States.



SOCIAL MEDIA ANALYTICS – MISSION COLLEGE

MOST RETWEETED

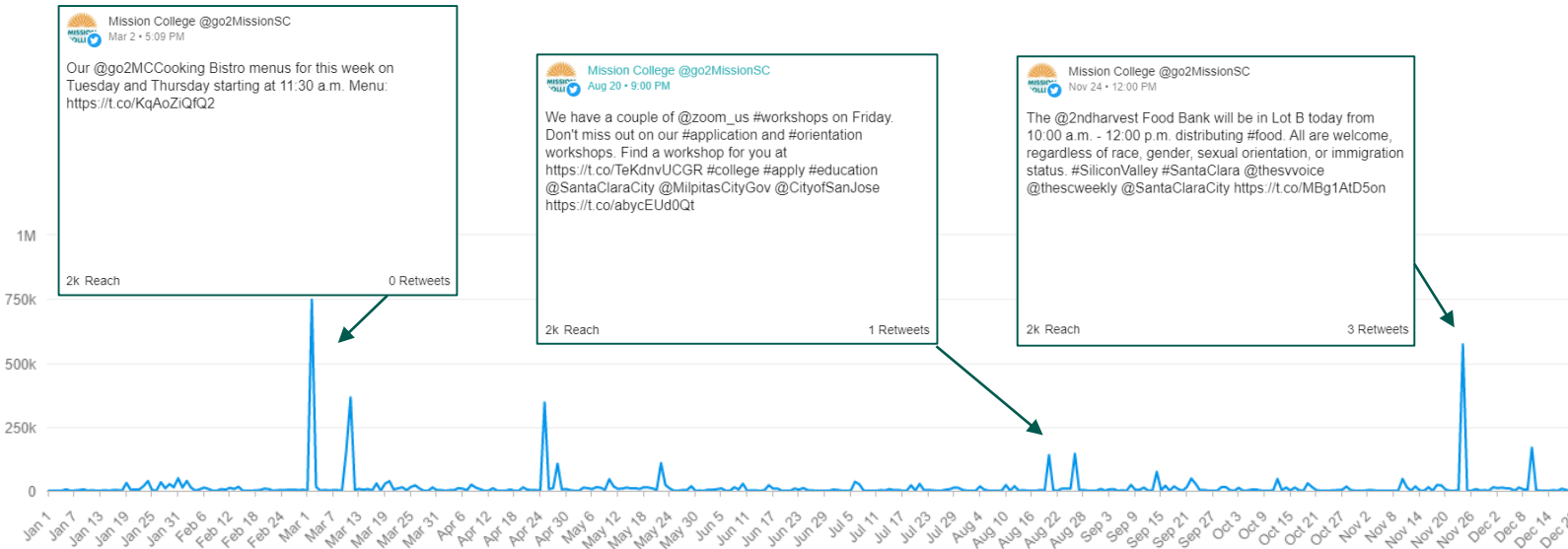
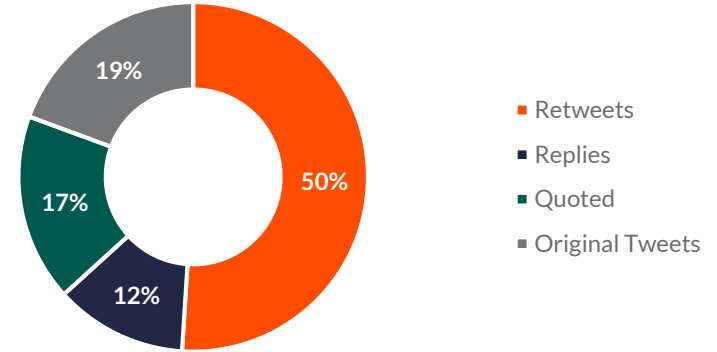
Mission College @go2MissionSC
Mar 10 • 8:30 PM

Mission will suspend in-person classes from March 11 to April 5 (including Spring Break). Online classes will continue. In-Session Classes in an online format or other method resume April 6. Info: <https://t.co/UjBGt40FZy> @KPIXtv @thesvoice @KTVU @KGOdesk @nbcbayarea @mercnews

2k Reach 20 Retweets

Mission College tends to use its Twitter account to update its followers on news about the school. Its most retweeted Tweet provides details on the institution's move to online courses in March at the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. Mission's other high-engagement Tweets, below, show a similar strategy.

TWEET TYPE BREAKDOWN



Annual Totals

5.0M Impressions

308 Users

1.4k Mentions

Source: [Meltwater](#). Note: Meltwater's impressions value is a proprietary count of how many times a tweet has been viewed. Sentiments expressed by an individual social media post are determined via an Artificial Intelligence model. Tweets were filtered to originate out of the United States.

SOCIAL MEDIA ANALYTICS – WEST VALLEY COLLEGE

MOST RETWEETED

West Valley College @WestValleyCC
Oct 13 • 6:18 PM

Can you believe the election is only 21 days away? Your vote matters! If you haven't registered yet, please visit <https://t.co/dPtvjDdGX> for more information. The last day to register online or by mail is next Monday, the 19th. #LifeAtWVC <https://t.co/iPr0Bq88eQ>

2k Reach 4 Retweets

West Valley College's Twitter activity is the most varied, as the institution uses it for a number of different goals. Its most retweeted Tweet involves the November election. Notably, most activity on the account comes from community members tagging the college, as seen below.

FAA Drone Zone @FAADroneZone
Jul 8 • 3:00 PM

Chris Cruz @WestValleyCC: "I wanted to bring something new to our #students. We were limited due to COVID-19. We used the @DroneRaceLeague sim. It was a really cool opportunity for them to learn about flight dynamics." #UAS2020 #STEM <https://t.co/S8smd8cwkI>

3k Reach 3 Retweets

Aldo Toledo @aldot29
Mar 11 • 3:46 PM

A petition asking the @deanza_college and @Foothillnews administration to move classes online or cancel them have together garnered over 3,400 signatures in the past 20 hours. @WestValleyCC has suspended in-person classes. via @mercnews <https://t.co/qdGwmlavxY>

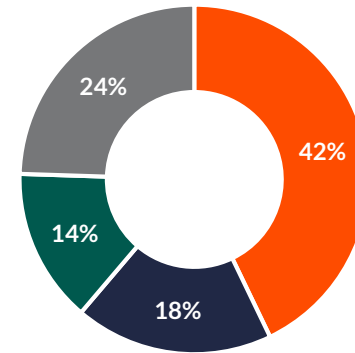
993 Reach 1 Retweets

Garvin Thomas @garvinthomas
Dec 17 • 12:35 PM

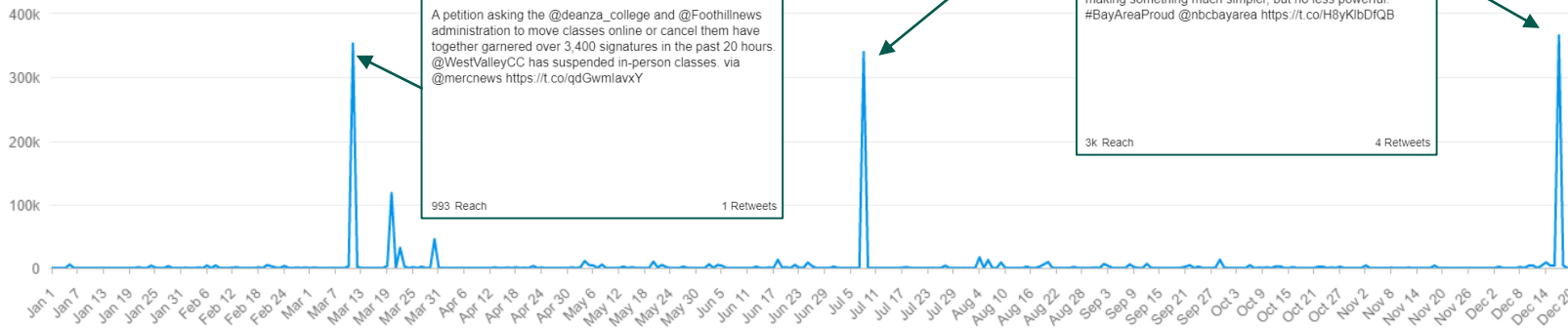
Over the years, Andrew Breithaupt has built some fantastic creations for @WestValleyCC's theater productions. With no shows happening this past year, Andrew has shifted to making something much simpler, but no less powerful. #BayAreaProud @nbcbayarea <https://t.co/H8yKlBdFQB>

3k Reach 4 Retweets

TWEET TYPE BREAKDOWN



- Retweets
- Replies
- Quoted
- Original Tweets



Annual Totals

1.6M
Impressions

166
Users

326
Mentions

Source: [Meltwater](#). Note: Meltwater's impressions value is a proprietary count of how many times a tweet has been viewed. Sentiments expressed by an individual social media post are determined via an Artificial Intelligence model. Tweets were filtered to originate out of the United States.





ONLINE ADVERTISING

ONLINE ADVERTISING ASSESSMENT – FACEBOOK

COMPETITOR ONLINE ADVERTISING

Based on competitors' active Facebook ads as of December 2020.

Although competitors use Facebook ads to target prospective students, they adopt a variety of strategies for doing so. Common themes are represented below. For example, Ohlone College's ads on Facebook tend to focus on the college as a steppingstone to a four-year university, whereas Gavilan College promotes its specific academic programs and how they prepare students for career success.

Active Ads: 8
Primary Audience: Prospective students
Key Point(s): Transferability, academic preparation

Active
Started running on Nov 16, 2020
ID: 361361431604213
This ad has multiple versions.

Ohlone College
Sponsored
Within the Bay Area's 10 Community Colleges, Ohlone College has the highest UC acceptance rate and second highest CSU acceptance rate. Don't put your future on hold. Start this spring.



OHLONE.EDU
Stay Safe. Keep Learning. Succeed Online.
Spring Semester Begins January 25. Apply Today!

Learn More

Source: Facebook Ad Library

Active
Started running on Nov 30, 2020
ID: 676589206335653
This ad has multiple versions.

Foothill College
Sponsored
Kick off the new year at Foothill College. Named the #1 online community college in the country, we can help you start your future. This is the place to be with our selection of 39 fully online degrees. Classes start January 4. Register now.



FOOTHILL.EDU
Start Your Future
Apply & Register for Winter 2021

Learn More

Active Ads: 8
Primary Audience: Prospective students
Key Point(s): Flexibility of online classes, range of degrees offered

Active
Started running on Dec 18, 2020
ID: 382294799501442

Gavilan College
Sponsored
Take the fast track to a better career in 2021! Learn about our online certificate program in Water Technology and build the skills you need to advance your career in environmental science, water & wastewater treatment, industrial engineering, and more. Get started today: <https://bit.ly/3aQ3QWA>



Active Ads: 2
Primary Audience: Prospective students
Key Point(s): Career progression, personal fulfillment

Active Ads: 2
Primary Audience: Prospective students
Key Point(s): Available resources, financial aid and affordability

Active
Started running on Dec 20, 2020
ID: 122199096304239

San José City College
Sponsored
San José City College is online for Winter Intersession and Spring Semester offering excellent opportunities to help you finish your degree and jumpstart your career. Free loaner laptops and tutoring. First-time, full-time college students pay no tuition or fees!



San José City College
Community College
7,054 people like this

Like Page

ONLINE ADVERTISING ASSESSMENT – OTHER

COMPETITOR ONLINE ADVERTISING

Based on competitors' online ads from 2016 to 2020.

Most competitors purchase online advertisements to further reach new student audiences. In line with institutional websites, these online ads focus on financial aid and affordability, registration information, and key deadlines. Ohlone College uniquely runs ads in Spanish, as well.

FOOTHILL COLLEGE

FALL INTO
Fall

VIRTUALLY

FOOTHILL COLLEGE

PROMISE

FREE Tuition and up to \$1k for textbooks

Learn More NOW

Get Your Degree or Transfer FREE!

THE DE ANZA COLLEGE

PROMISE

deanza.edu

OHLONE COLLEGE

Somos una familia

Y al igual que tu familia, estamos aquí para ayudarte a tener éxito

¿LO QUIERES? LO TENEMOS ¡EMPIEZA!

El semestre de primavera comienza el 28 DE ENERO

¡Aplica Hoy!

OHLONE COLLEGE

STAY SAFE. KEEP LEARNING.

Succeed Online.

我們提供:

- 與下列UC大學有轉校合約: UC Davis, UC Irvine, UC Merced, UC Riverside, UC Santa Barbara and UC Santa Cruz.
- 就業技能的多種課程
- 最新的科學、技術、工程及數學課程(STEM Programs)

Classes begin JAN 25

APPLY Today!

Have Family Overseas Interested in Studying in Silicon Valley?

OHLONE COLLEGE OFFERS:

- First two years of a bachelor's degree with transfer guarantees to UCs
- Low cost tuition for high quality instruction
- Guidance on applying for an F-1 student visa and more

OHLONE COLLEGE Apply for Fall by JUNE 15

Cabrillo College

Breakthrough! Happen here!

REGISTER NOW!

So many cool things to learn and do at Cabrillo College...

Spring Semester Starts January 29th!

Classes only \$46/unit and Financial Aid is available.

@cabrillocollege | www.cabrillo.edu

Cabrillo College

REGISTER NOW for SPRING 2020

Classes Start JANUARY 27

Train for a New Job | Earn a College Degree Transfer to a Four-Year College or University

@cabrillocollege | www.cabrillo.edu

Source: Moat.com
Note: Low volume online advertising may not show on Moat.com due to Moat.com methodology.



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